

**‘It has got to be dynamic assessment’: an exploration into Trainee Educational Psychologists learning and application of dynamic assessment practice in the UK**

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**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology**

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**Date of resubmission for examination (January 2023)**

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the participants who took the time to contribute to the research.

I want to express my gratitude to the supervisors I have had on my course and at placement. I am grateful for your support and reflections.

A big thank you to the friends who have been there for me along the way.

I want to acknowledge my Tavistock cohort who have completed this course with me and say how proud I am that we did it together.

A special mention to my course buddies whom I spent long days studying with. The laughs, your kindness and reflections have been invaluable.

My biggest appreciation goes to my mum, dad and sister. You have never failed to give me your love and encouragement. You are a fantastic family! I am so grateful for your support on this journey. I wish to thank you for always believing in me.

## **Abstract**

Assessment of children and young people is essential to Educational Psychologists' work (BPS, 2015). Criticisms of traditional psychometric assessments and hopes for a person-centred way of working with children and young people have led to dynamic assessment (DA) methods becoming a more popular form of assessment. In the UK, DA is less commonly used than standardised tests; there is an ongoing exploration of why this is and how DA practice can be enhanced. This research aimed to describe and explore Trainee Educational Psychologists' (TEP) DA practice, including how they develop their understanding of DA and apply DA. The study employed a mixed methods design combining a nationwide questionnaire to present an overview of TEPs' experiences and interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of TEPs' experiences of learning about DA and using DA in their practice. The questionnaire received 190 responses from TEPs, with 175 analysed using descriptive statistics. The researcher interviewed nine TEPs, and a Reflexive Thematic Analysis was used. Overall the findings have been able to provide an overview of TEPs experiences of learning about DA in the UK. The findings indicate a high amount of TEPs are trained to use DA tools, and many have enhanced their understanding of DA using other means (e.g. discussions, reading and additional training). Furthermore, the research provides in-depth insight into the experiences of using DA with children and young people. Many TEPs used a range of DA tools in their practice. TEPs were keen to use DA but were aware of the challenges of using this assessment tool; for example, using DA could be anxiety-provoking for the TEP and they were aware that others have an expectation of EP assessment methods. The TEPs' Educational Psychology Service placement, university and supervisor play key parts in supporting them to learn and use DA.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1. Chapter overview**

This chapter will introduce the thesis by outlining the context for Educational Psychology assessment practice, including the relevant legislation. Following this, the researcher will focus on offering insight into dynamic assessment (DA). A definition of dynamic assessment will be provided, along with descriptions of DA models. The researcher will then offer specific considerations of dynamic assessment practice in the UK. The application of dynamic assessment, including the benefits and limitations of using a DA approach, will be provided. The current context of COVID-19 and reflections on its impact on Educational Psychologist (EP) assessment will be discussed. Lastly, the researcher will share the reasons for their interest in this area.

### **1.2. The context for assessment practice**

#### ***1.2.1. Why do Educational Psychologists assess?***

Assessment of children and young people is a longstanding activity for Educational Psychologists. Assessment in Educational Psychology dates back to the early 1900s when Cyril Burt was appointed the first Educational Psychologist in the UK (Leadbetter & Arnold, 2013). At this time, theories of intelligence and measurement of intelligence were prevalent. Educational Psychologists were tasked with assessing and scoring the intelligence or IQ of children and young people so they could be categorised and placed in an educational setting based on their intelligence score (Sewell & Ducksbury, 2013). For example, those deemed to have a lower intelligence would be placed in specialist settings rather than a mainstream school.

Assessment remains an essential part of professional activity for Educational Psychologists, with many schools requesting individual assessments of children and young people (MacKay & Boyle, 1994; Ashton & Roberts, 2006). The British Psychology Society (BPS) outlines assessment as one of the core activities for Educational Psychologists (BPS, 2017). In 1993 the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (CoP) and the more recent 2015 SEND CoP gave Educational Psychologists the responsibility to assess children and young people's areas of strengths and needs. Educational Psychologists are required to assess as part of Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCP). In some ways, the role of the Educational Psychologist continues to be measuring the intelligence of children and young people. In some cases, Educational Psychologists' involvement can lead to learners being placed in a specialist rather than mainstream provision. Assessment practice has been ongoing throughout the last century; what has changed is how Educational Psychologists assess.

### ***1.2.2. How do Educational Psychologists assess?***

The traditional assessment method in EP practice are psychometric tests; these tests provide scores for a child or young person's cognitive skills and are traditionally known as IQ tests. Psychometric tests are standardised on groups of children, and percentiles are used to compare a child's intelligence against a child of the same age. Criticisms of psychometric testing have been expressed as early as the 1920s (Buckingham, 1921). Dockrell and McShane (1993) recognised that psychometric tests fail to transfer easily into classroom interventions as it does not provide information about what a child can and cannot do. Furthermore, psychometric tests have been shown in previous research to provide inadequate information about an individual's ability and potential to learn, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds or belonging to a vulnerable group. For example, this could include children who have experienced trauma and people from culturally different backgrounds (Lidz, 1987; Haywood & Tzuriel, 1992; Lokke et al., 1997; Tzuriel, 2001). Although psychometric testing is still used,

other methods such as criterion-referenced and dynamic assessment have been developed and are used within Educational Psychology practice (Freeman and Miller, 2001).

The Equality Act (2010) emphasises inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice. Educational Psychologists must assess in a way that is inclusive of the child and prevents unfair assessment due to personal characteristics, such as culture, disability (e.g. visual or hearing need) and race. More recently, the Children and Families Act (Department for education, 2014) and SEND CoP (2015) guidance specifies the requirement for person-centred and personalised support for children and young people with special educational needs. This includes the assessment and advice provided by an Educational Psychologist. A dynamic assessment approach offers a way to assess the cognitive and affective aspects of learning using a person-centred and individualised approach. Thus this shift in assessment practice from psychometric to dynamic assessment is a way for Educational Psychologists assessment fulfils the SEND CoP (2015) guidance and ensure '*the needs of the individual child and young person...sit at the heart of the assessment and planning process*' (p. 147).

### **1.3. Defining Dynamic Assessment**

The literature on dynamic assessment has revealed varying views on how it is defined. Broadly, dynamic assessment can be thought of as an approach, rather than a specific test, that focuses on assessing and improving the ability and potential of an individual to learn (Lidz, 1992). Much of the literature suggests that dynamic assessment is an approach aimed at assessing thinking, perception, learning and problem-solving using an active teaching process that intends to modify cognitive functions (Tzuriel & Samuels, 2000). Tzuriel (2001) recognised that a commonality between assessment approaches is mediation from the assessor. Building on this, Haywood and Tzuriel (2002) viewed DA approaches as '*a subset of interactive assessments that includes deliberate and planned mediational teaching and the*

*assessment of the effects of that teaching on subsequent performance'* (p.40). Thus, a DA approach involves the assessor actively intervening during the assessment with the aim of creating changes in the learner's functioning, this involves evaluating and modifying the approach so that the learner can access the assessment task.

Dynamic assessment differs from the traditional psychometric tests which were discussed in section 1.2.2. In psychometric tests refer the assessor offers items to a child and records their response without attempts to mediate to alter, guide or enhance the child's performance (Storygard, et al, 2010). These tests aim to measure individuals prior learning (Burns, 1985) rather than identify information about learning processes, the cognitive functions that are responsible for learning needs and mediational strategies that enable learning (Storygard et al., 2010.). Psychometric testing is underpinned by the idea that intelligence is static and stable.

In comparison, dynamic assessment approaches are a shift away from seeing intelligence and ability as fixed to viewing cognitive functioning as flexible. The key viewpoint of the DA approach is an individual has the capacity to learn (Feuerstein, 1980). Feuerstein expanded upon this idea to define the process by which a more experienced other intervenes between the learner and the task in order to modify the task and enable cognitive change. Therefore, the idea everyone is capable of learning is an underlying principle of the DA approach.

### ***1.3.1. Dynamic assessment models***

Dynamic assessment is a universal term that describes a variety of models or approaches (Lauchlan & Elliot, 2001). The approaches defined as dynamic assessment vary in terms of the goals and information gathered (Green and Birch, 2019). There are several various terms which are described as dynamic assessment (see Table 1.1). The notion of dynamic assessment is nearly as historic as the idea of intelligence testing but there is less research on

it (Grigorenko, 2009), therefore DA approaches are less understood. In some models, the assessor intervenes gradually in a fixed and standardised way (Guthke et al., 1997). While other models are not standardised and involve responding to each child's needs in a gradual way, for example, the Learning Potential Assessment Device (Feuerstein et al, 1979) and the Cognitive Modifiability Batter (Tzuriel, 1995). Defining dynamic assessment is complex and needs to be understood in terms of differences in models.

**Table 1.1**

Terms described as dynamic assessment

<b>Name of dynamic assessment approach</b>	<b>Link to founder</b>
<b>Assisted assessment</b>	Elliot (1993)
<b>Learning potential assessment</b>	Elliot and Lauchlan (1997)
<b>Clinical dynamic assessment</b>	Feuerstein (2002)
<b>Interventionist and interactionist assessment</b>	Lantolf and Poehner (2004)
<b>Needs-based assessment</b>	Bosma and Reising (2006)
<b>Dynamic testing</b>	Beckmann (2006)

A commonality between the different models is the aim to offer an alternative theoretical perspective to psychometric testing by focusing on intervention within the assessment and evaluating the effect of the intervention on the child (Tzuriel, 2001; Green & Birch, 2019). There appears to be a lack of consensus within the literature regarding how to identify similarities and differences between models. Green and Birch (2019) offer one way to distinguish between various models by considering the theoretical roots. There are two key theories which dynamic assessment approaches can be seen to have developed from. 1) The

work of Vygotsky and his idea of the Zones of Proximal Development. 2) The work of Feuerstein and theories of Structured Cognitive Modifiability and Mediated Learning Experience. These two theoretical approaches are discussed further in section 1.4. These two approaches are the basis for dynamic testing (Vygotsky) and dynamic assessment (Feuerstein).

### ***1.3.2. Dynamic assessment vs dynamic testing***

Green (2015) offers definitions and information about dynamic assessment which highlight the similarities and differences between these two models. Dynamic assessment can also be referred to as clinical assessment, this form of dynamic assessment tends to be a qualitative approach to assessment. This approach uses the Mediated Learning Experience and is therefore a non-standardised way to use dynamic assessment. The assessment process involves observing, describing, interpreting, and mediating to influence performance and cognitive structures of learning (Feuerstein et al, 2002). Whereas dynamic testing focuses on the child's learning potential and provides a quantitative view of this. This approach uses scripted or clearly defined prompts to modify the child's performance and measure their learning potential. The method focuses on measurement and standardisation, therefore is influenced by psychometric principles and theories of intelligence. However, the approach differs from the methodology and beliefs which psychometric testing is based on. Dynamic tests consider the process of learning rather than the product of learning and offer feedback to the child during the testing. They assume that performance can be enhanced by teaching rather than intelligence and performance being fixed.

## **1.4. Theoretical Basis of Dynamic Assessment**

Dynamic assessment can be thought to be based on the work of Vygotsky and Feuerstein.

### ***1.4.1. Vygotsky***

Dynamic assessment has roots in Vygotsky's work, particularly Dynamic Testing approaches. Vygotsky's view of intelligence and ability as fluid and changeable challenged the idea that intelligence is static and genetically determined (Feuerstein et al., 2010; Lidz, 1987). According to Vygotsky, cognitive development could only be understood within an individual's socio-cultural context (Tzuriel, 2001). A fundamental notion of Vygotsky's thinking which can be applied to dynamic assessment practice is the zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development is the *'distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving and the adult guidance in collaboration more capable peers'* (Vygotsky, as cited in Lunt, 1994, p. 85-86). The zone of proximal development helps to understand the gap between the actual level and potential level of achievement. A child's development happens through the interaction between the child and more competent other; this forms the basis for bridging the gap between what a child can do independently and their potential level of achievement. Vygotsky's thinking and the zone of proximal development have been used in many approaches to dynamic assessment (Tzuriel 2001; Feuerstein et al. 2002). In a dynamic assessment, what is happening within the zone of proximal development is deliberated; that is, how the assessor enables the child or young person to learn and access the DA task.

### ***1.4.2. Feuerstein***

A second key figure in the development of dynamic assessment is Feuerstein. Feuerstein's theory of 'structural cognitive modifiability' was created in response to his work with 1) holocaust survivors and his work with 2) Jean Piaget and 3) Andre Rey at the Geneva institute

in the fifties (Feuerstein & Rand, 1979; Feuerstein et al., 2002, 2010). Firstly, Feuerstein and colleagues found that psychometric tests on young Jewish refugees, who had experienced loss and trauma, often underestimated their abilities and did not reflect their learning potential. Secondly, Feuerstein's thinking was influenced by Piaget's view of the malleable nature of human development in reaction to interactions in the environment (Feuerstein, 2010). Thirdly Feuerstein was mentored by Rey, who encouraged the investigation of assessing cognitive functioning differently and argued for a dynamic approach to evaluating intelligence (Feuerstein et al., 2002). Consequently, the theory of structural cognitive modifiability suggests the possibility of creating fundamental change in children's thinking and that cognitive processes are open to change with the correct input from a human mediator (Feuerstein, 2010).

Feuerstein came up with the idea of a mediated learning experience. He suggested that the mediator (i.e. dynamic assessor) scaffolds support to help the learner complete a task. The scaffolding is gradually removed as the learner internalises the learning process and is thus able to use these skills independently and in various contexts (Tzuriel, 2013). Mediation aims to give learning meaning and support independent learning.

Interestingly, two similar theoretical bases of dynamic assessment were formed simultaneously. It perhaps speaks to the global context of that time and the requirement for a shift in psychological thinking to see the potential of human learning. In Vygotsky and Feuerstein's theories, there are commonalities in their view of intelligence. Firstly, intelligence and learning skills are changeable. Secondly, the key to individuals' learning is the environment and the requirement for tailored support/mediation by a more competent other.

### **1.5. Key considerations around defining dynamic assessment**

In this thesis, the researcher has considered the issues around defining dynamic assessment and the associated models considered as DA. The researcher held in mind the key assumptions of a dynamic assessment approach throughout the research. This included that a dynamic assessment approach will be of the view an individual has the potential to learn in response to mediation (Feuerstein et al., 2002; Haywood & Lidz, 2007) and considers the individual's response to mediation to progress learning (Tzuriel, 2001; Lidz, 2014).

### **1.6. Dynamic assessment training**

Effective training in dynamic assessment is essential for this approach to be successfully used as an assessment method. Previous research has suggested that there is a lack of training and support for dynamic assessment approaches which means EPs lack confidence and DA practice is limited (Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000; Haywood & Lidz, 2007). Further to this, a lack of consensus regarding the necessary qualifications and training needed for dynamic assessment means there is no guidelines around how individuals are trained to use this approach leading to a lack of consistency in knowledge and skills (Haywood & Lidz, 2005; Green & Birch, 2019). There are a small number of dynamic assessment training pathways available for EPs. These include the Feuerstein Institute, Tzuriel, Haywood and Lidz and Lachlan.

Green and Birch's (2019) research considering the competencies needed to carry out dynamic assessment provided insight into its training. Their study found an agreement that dynamic assessment users should be educated to a graduate level however there was no consensus that this needed to be a degree in psychology. There was a large variation in the number of hours needed for supervision and training to carry out dynamic assessments confidently. Green and Birch (2019) concluded that practitioners in dynamic assessments

have differing levels of expertise and that is a lack of understanding of the basic competence in DA which could be problematic for practice.

There is limited understanding about the dynamic training pathway for TEPs. Within their research, Green (2015) contacted all training courses in the UK to find out what courses offered dynamic assessment training. A total of 10 out of 13 responses were received. This revealed that all 10 courses provided teaching on dynamic assessment, but this varied in terms of the amount of training and support that was provided. This highlights a lack of consensus and understanding in relation to trainee EPs (TEP) learning and support of using dynamic assessment. Additionally, due to the lack of consensus around definitions it is likely that tutors and supervisors of TEPs talk about DA approaches differently. A literature search has been completed to further understand dynamic assessment training in Chapter 2.

### **1.7. Dynamic assessment practice in the UK**

Although DA is practised worldwide and has been established in other countries, for example, by Feuerstein in Israel and Vygotsky in Russia, this study is interested in how DA is used in the UK context. Dynamic assessment practice is limited (Deutsch & Reynolds, 2000) and is less widely used than psychometric testing in the UK (Lidz & Elliott, 2000; Elliott, 2003; Lidz, 2003; Woods & Farrell, 2006). Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) explored the experiences of Educational Psychologists who had training in dynamic assessment between 1994 to 1999. Deutsch and Reynolds concluded that the Educational Psychologists in the survey expressed a positive attitude to dynamic assessment; however, the current use of DA by most EPs in the UK is very limited. This is the only paper that specifically explores the use of dynamic assessment in the UK and was conducted over two decades ago; therefore, a more up-to-date look at dynamic assessment practice in the UK is needed.

Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) suggested the under-represented use of dynamic assessment in the UK was due to a lack of training opportunities and limited support for the use of dynamic assessment. In their recommendations, Deutsch and Reynolds suggest that dynamic assessment practice should be further extended in Educational Psychology practice. One way they propose to achieve this is for Educational Psychology training courses to offer dynamic assessment training which focuses on underlying theory and application of dynamic assessment. Similarly, to Deutsch and Reynolds (2000), Green (2015) acknowledged the challenges in obtaining training in DA approaches in the UK. Green's (2015) study found that there was no overall consensus about the level of qualification needed to access DA training, the length of DA training (the EPs who participated in this study felt that between 1 and 15 days was required) or the number of assessments to be moderated before deemed competent at DA. Therefore, these studies suggest that Educational Psychologists training in the use of DA is not adequately defined.

In a review of journal articles, Green (2015) identified 'clinical' dynamic assessment to be the most practised in the UK. As previously mentioned in this DA approach, an assessor will fluidly observe, describe, interpret and mediate. It will include using a Mediated Learning Experience and offers qualitative data on the child or young person's performance, cognitive profile and potential to learn (Feuerstein et al., 2002). Examples of dynamic assessment tools from a clinical DA approach include Feuerstein's Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD) and Tzuriel's test (Green, 2015).

### **1.8. Application of dynamic assessment**

DA was developed in reaction to the lack of satisfaction with psychometric tests. However, it is not necessarily meant to replace these tests but instead offer an alternative approach to understanding individuals' cognition and learning. Hayward and Lidz (2007), emphasise that

dynamic assessment is not for all children in all circumstances. They view dynamic assessment as a valuable part of the EP assessment repertoire when used along with other forms of assessment, such as standardised and psychometric tests, observations and consultation with adults around the child.

DA can add helpful information about learning that is not readily available from other sources. The literature suggests dynamic assessment may contribute in the following circumstances: when scores on psychometric tests are low; a Special Educational Need impacts learning; there is a language barrier; there is a cultural disparity between the individual and the societal culture, and there is a need to inform intervention (Lidz, 1991; Frisby & Braden, 1992; Haywood, 1997; Haywood & Lidz, 2007). Considering this view, dynamic assessment would be relevant for nearly all children with whom Educational Psychologists work with. Dynamic assessment can play an essential role in these situations. For example, DA can help identify the barriers impacting learning, find ways to overcome these and assess the impact of eliminating these on subsequent learning.

### ***1.8.1. Benefits of using dynamic assessment***

Dynamic assessment is an inclusive form of assessment (Lidz, 1991). It provides a way to adapt the assessment and give adult support so all children, regardless of their SEN (e.g. emotional, social or cognitive), culture, language and so on, can access the task. There is evidence that dynamic assessments are a less culturally biased and equitable way of assessing (Frisby & Bradan, 1992; Deutsch & Reynolds, 2000). Stacey (2017) described DA as ethically sound.

DA takes an optimistic view of children's learning (Stacey, 2017). In a case study by Elliott et al. (1996), a dynamic assessment method was discovered to alter a teacher's view to be more optimistic toward a pupil's learning difficulties and offered the teacher insight into how their teaching approach could be tailored to suit this pupil's needs. Additionally, dynamic assessment

is perceived by teachers in mainstream and specialist settings as more positive than psychometric tests (Bosma & Resing, 2012).

This assessment method can provide insightful information on the type of interventions beneficial to learning. Thus, it offers valuable information to Educational Psychologists making recommendations as part of their involvement and advice (Lidz, 2014). Freeman and Miller (2001) investigated Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCo) views of different forms of assessments used by Educational Psychologists. The study concluded that SENCos considered dynamic assessment to recommend helpful strategies to support children's learning compared to psychometric tests, which provided a description of cognitive abilities.

### ***1.8.2. Reasons why dynamic assessment is not widely used***

Despite its development happening a century ago, dynamic assessment is not widely practised around the globe (Elliott, 1993; Lidz, 1991; 1992). Research has suggested a variety of reasons for this. As previously mentioned, there is a lack of ongoing supervision and support for those using dynamic assessment (Deutsch & Reynolds, 2000; Green, 2015; Stacey, 2017); this has been suggested to be the main reason for failure to use dynamic assessment in practice. Furthermore, it's practice may be limited as it can be time-consuming to administer (Lidz, 1991; Haywood & Tzuriel, 1992; Guthke, Beckmann & Dobat, 1997). To effectively use this approach, extensive training and experience are needed (Lidz, 1991; Karpov & Tzuriel, 2009); it could be that some Educational Psychologists do not feel they have had the necessary training and experience to use DA. For these reasons, the researcher is interested in exploring what is happening at a TEP level, as this is where the career of an Educational Psychologist can be thought to begin.

## **1.9. Covid-19**

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic changed our way of living worldwide. The UK has undergone numerous government-imposed lockdowns and restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Social distancing was used to reduce the spread of Covid-19, and many aspects of life adapted to an online way of working. Many courses delivering the doctorate in Educational Psychology programme continued to provide training using remote teaching. This meant many TEPs experienced remote teaching around assessment practices, including dynamic assessment. Educational settings and schools were required to close and restrict access to external professionals. The way Educational Psychologists practised had to adapt to this new way of life which meant, in many cases, direct assessments of children and young people had to be conducted online. Furthermore, Trainee Educational Psychologists may have been presented with fewer opportunities to go into schools to complete direct assessment work, and some may have used dynamic assessment remotely. Therefore for some TEPs, their learning and experiences of using dynamic assessment would have been impacted, and some TEPs may have used DA remotely.

## **1.10. Explanation for interest in the research area**

This area of research is of interest to me due to my personal experiences of being assessed for a learning difference and my professional experiences of using assessment. As a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I underwent a cognitive assessment to investigate a learning difference. During this assessment, standardised and psychometric forms of testing were used. This experience highlighted for me the impersonal nature of such an assessment. I felt there was much emphasis on what I could not do rather than my strengths. After the assessment, I was left with various emotions, including frustration, stress and confusion. As an adult

undergoing such an assessment, I reflected on how I felt uncomfortable that children were put through a similar experience.

I understand that assessment is a key part of an Educational Psychologist's work. In my professional experiences of assessing children and young people's cognitive skills, I have been keen to explore a variety of assessments and ensure that I practice in a way that is culturally competent and centred around the individual. I have noticed that children and young people often seem to become anxious and concerned with what they are getting right in standardised and psychometric tests. In comparison, when I have used dynamic assessment, children and young people seem somewhat calmer, and many enjoy receiving support to access and complete the task. Thus, as a TEP entering a profession where assessment is a core part of my role and is child-centred, I feel it is essential to explore dynamic assessment further. Being aware of my personal and professional experiences of assessment and the impact that this may have on my role as the researcher within this thesis, I feel that reflexivity will be key to my research and considered throughout the research process.

### **1.11. Chapter Summary**

This chapter has provided context around dynamic assessment practice. It has covered the historical movement of assessment practice. The researcher has considered the relevance of dynamic assessment in the current UK context. The complexity of defining DA and the varying models have been thought about. The impact of COVID-19 on TEPs learning and the use of this assessment tool was described. The researcher has proposed their interest in this area from a personal and professional view. In the next chapter, a literature review will be completed to understand the current literature on DA training.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1. Chapter overview

This chapter provides an account of the literature on DA training. Braun and Clarke (2021) suggest two purposes for a literature review, 1) '*establishing the gap model*'<sup>1</sup> and 2) '*making an argument model*'<sup>2</sup> (p.120). A mixture of both will be included in the literature review to capture the gap between what is known and not known about DA training and position the research within current knowledge, theory and context. A narrative literature review approach was used to identify and explore relevant research in this area (Baumeister & Leary 1997; Siddaway et al, 2019). Firstly, this chapter will outline the purpose and question used to focus the literature. The method of the literature review will outline the process of getting to the question used and summarise the search strategies to identify the relevant papers. The papers will then be critically evaluated and synthesised to understand the current literature on dynamic assessment training. Lastly, guidance on assessment practice from key professional bodies relating to EP work will be outlined and the literature will be considered in relation to this.

### 2.2. Purpose and question for literature review

The literature review aims to establish an understanding of TEP's dynamic assessment training and therefore practice of DA within the UK. Due to the limited research on TEPs dynamic assessment training, as outlined in section 2.3, the current literature review has been conducted around the following question: 'What is currently known about training in DA?'. Furthermore, due to the limited literature, the researcher has included information from key

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<sup>1</sup> The '*establishing the gap model*' provides a justification for the research question by summarising existing knowledge about a topic and the gaps in existing knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> The '*making an argument model*' provides a justification for the research question by contextualising and locating it within the current knowledge, theory and/or context.

guidance from the British Psychological Society (BPS) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and considered how this relates to the literature on DA training.

### **2.3. Method for literature review**

Braun and Clarke (2021) suggested that for a Reflexive Thematic Analysis the researcher engage with the literature throughout the research process but write the final review towards the end of the analysis of the research findings. Therefore the current researcher took this approach in this research.

The original question ‘What is currently known about TEP training in DA?’ was proposed. An initial scoping of the literature was completed to identify key terms related to this question and then synonyms of these key terms were considered. The psychology and education databases, PsychINFO, ERIC and Education source, were used to identify pertinent articles in this area. These were felt to be the most appropriate databases for the search. The use of three databases was in line with Siddaway et al.’s suggestion to use at least two databases (Siddaway et al., 2019). The search terms are shown in Table 2.1. The Boolean operator 'OR' was used to combine the equivalent keyword search terms. The Boolean operator 'AND' was then used to connect the search terms. This search was conducted in November 2022 and did not identify papers relevant to the original literature question.

Therefore the question and approach were adjusted to capture broader literature referring to DA training (see section 2.2 for the literature review question used). A narrative literature approach was taken to address the literature review question (Baumeister & Leary 1997; Siddaway et al, 2019). At the time of this review in November 2022, the researcher was aware of one paper, by Green and Birch (2019), which considered the competencies needed to carry out DA. A ‘snowball technique’ (Ridley, 2012) was used to find other relevant published peer-reviewed literature by going through the reference list of Green and Birch. This elicited two

additional papers. Therefore a total of three literature papers were critiqued and discussed in relation to the literature review question. The researcher also completed a hand search to find guidelines produced by the BPS and HCPC which would be relevant to understand training within the psychology profession and link this with DA training for TEPs.

**Table 2. 1**

*Initial search terms and rationale relating to the question ‘What is currently known about TEP training in DA?’*

<b>Subject term</b>	<b>Keywords used in search</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>1. Dynamic assessment</b>	'Dynamic assess*' OR 'Dynamic test*' OR 'Interactive assess*' OR 'Learning potential assess*' OR 'Assisted assess*' OR 'Needs-based assess*'  AND	To capture the variation of terminology for DA.
<b>2. Trainee Educational Psychologist</b>	'Trainee Educational Psycholog*'  AND	To capture references to Educational Psychology Services and Trainee EPs practice
<b>3. Training</b>	'Training' OR 'Learning'	

## 2.4. Review of the quality of the literature

Critical appraisal tools were drawn upon to support the researcher to review the papers critically. 1) Critical Appraisal of a Survey (Centre for evidence-based management (CEBM) was used to support the review of studies which used a survey as the method of data collection. 2) The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) was used for studies which utilised a qualitative design. An overview of the studies included in the review can be seen in Table 2.2.

**Table 2. 2**

*Overview of studies included in the review*

<b>Author (Year)</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Participants (number)</b>	<b>Research design and tool for data collection</b>	<b>Data analysis</b>
<b>Deutsch and Reynolds (2000)</b>	To explore the effectiveness of DA training, DA practice, and perceptions of DA among EPs.	EPs who had been on a DA training course (119 with a 74% response rate)	Research design not explicitly specified. Gathered data through surveys which provided statistics and used open-ended questions to provide qualitative data.	Analysis not explicitly described. Offered a descriptive account of the quantitative data and information from qualitative data.

<b>Green and Birch (2019)</b>	To identify competencies required to use DA adequately.	Experts in DA (5) and EPs using DA (17)	Qualitative using interviews.	A Delphi method
<b>Haywood and Lidz (2005)</b>	To seek information from DA trainers about their opinions and recommendations for DA training at an international level	DA trainers (29)	Quantitative data with qualitative data using surveys	Offered a descriptive account of the quantitative data and occasionally offered additions comments made by participants

#### ***2.4.1. Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) The Use of Dynamic Assessment by Educational Psychologists in the UK***

The research by Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) aimed to explore the effectiveness of the training, practice, and perceptions of DA amongst EPs. They provided a clear focus for their study and used surveys to gather data relevant to their research aim. 119 EPs who had been on a DA training course from 1994 to 1999 were asked to be part of the questionnaire through mailing lists and letters to key organisations (the BPS and Association of Educational Psychology (AEP)). Deutsch and Reynolds did not specify what mailing lists were used and

whether these were linked with specific training (e.g. certified training courses, such as Lauchlan's training, which ran for a certain amount of time). They sent letters to organisations associated with EPs; it is vague how many participants were obtained this way. Furthermore, there is an element of selection bias in the recruitment of participants as only people interested in DA were chosen to participate in the study. This excluded participants who had received the training but did not present as interested in DA; therefore, the views of those who had been training but were not using DA were missed, which could have provided vital information about DA training and the reasons for not using DA in their practice. The response rate to the survey was 78%, equating to 88 EPs; although the response rate is high, 88 participants are a relatively small sample for the total of EPs in the UK. The study provided details on the questions used in their questionnaire, which makes the questionnaire easy to replicate over time to see if there are any changes to EP's DA practice. The benefit of using a questionnaire is that they could reach EPs from all over the country; however, the information about where participants were located has not formed part of the paper, and therefore it is unclear whether they obtained EPs from various places in the UK.

The study lacks transparency regarding the methodology, including research design and data analysis. From reviewing the paper, it seems that the study is a mixed-methods design as it collects quantitative and a small amount of qualitative data through surveys. Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) did not specify the data analysis and shared limited details explaining how they got from the data to their findings and conclusions. The presented findings suggest that descriptive statistics have been used for the quantitative analysis, and the researcher categorised qualitative responses but has not used a formal analysis. Due to the lack of information about their analysis method, the study is challenging to replicate and lacks rigour.

Deutsch and Reynolds's research provided an overview of DA practice and training for EPs within the UK. The results showed 58% of participants identified themselves as DA users.

Deutsch and Reynolds concluded that this suggests that EPs DA practice is limited. From their findings they concluded that the lack of DA use was due to limited training opportunities and support, indicating a significant unmet need. Many participants (39%) were pleased with the quality of training but expressed that the training was insufficient for them to feel confident in DA. A high number of EPs reported having been on a three day training course but felt a lack of confidence in many aspects of their DA practice. This included interpreting DA, using the materials, writing reports and linking their assessment to intervention. Participants felt there is a need for longer training sessions and follow-up support. According to a number of participants (25%) training in DA is hard to access. Although this research is over two decades old, Deutsch and Reynolds's research highlighted issues with training which are a significant barrier to EPs use of DA.

#### ***2.4.2. Green and Birch (2019) Ensuring quality in EPs' use of dynamic assessment: a Delphi study***

Green and Birch's (2019) research sought to establish competencies that could be considered essential for quality DA. Green and Birch used a Delphi method; this method employs sending a round of surveys to relevant people in the field. Firstly, these were sent to a panel of experts to rate the items on a questionnaire about how important a range of assessment competencies are for DA; these were then analysed. Green and Birch defined an expert as someone with a published paper in DA however the credentials of the expertise of this panel are unclear as their ratings of statements about their training and experience highlighted a range of experiences and lack differing views of the definition of DA. Following the expert panel ratings, questionnaires were sent to EPs who used DA; the researchers analysed the responses and then sent them back to EPs to re-rate items. Green and Birch provide a clear description of the participants used within the study and their recruitment through the

use of purposive sampling. They have provided a figure to summarise the Delphi method and ensure transparency in their approach to the reader.

In their findings and conclusions, Green and Birch (2019) identified 13 knowledge and 12 skills competencies for quality DA. For example, an EP using DA should have knowledge of its origins, knowledge of the Mediated Learning Experience (Feuerstein, 2002) and skills in adjusting the task in a graduated way. Additionally, Green and Birch identified a number of challenges related to training in DA. These include an absence of consensus regarding the necessary qualifications and training for a DA assessor, the qualification needed to use DA (e.g. an undergraduate degree, whether a degree in psychology is needed) and the training pathway in DA. Regarding training, Green and Birch queried whether DA's theory and essential features were being thoroughly and clearly taught. They felt that in some cases, DA is being used without the practitioner fully understanding or being conscious of key theoretical features. Green and Birch have provided useful information to inform DA training and a self-assessment tool for EPs wishing to learn DA despite a relatively small sample size.

#### ***2.4.3. Haywood and Lidz (2005) International Survey of Dynamic Assessment Trainers***

The research by Haywood and Lidz (2015) aimed to examine the opinions and recommendations of DA trainers at an international level. In order to collect relevant data they used an email survey which was sent to individuals who trained others in DA. The participants were selected by examining a range of sources related to DA (e.g. books, journals and the membership directory of the International Associations for Cognitive Education and Psychology). Out of 85 people who were invited to complete the survey, 29 surveys were fully completed by individuals who identified as DA trainers and used in the analysis. The responses were from 14 different countries. Therefore, the survey had a relatively high response rate considering the small number of people who are DA trainers and represented views from a range of countries. Although Haywood and Lidz sent this survey to individuals from a range

of countries the communication and questionnaire were conducted in English. This may have meant for many participants from non-English speaking countries who did not speak English that this research was not accessible and therefore their views were missed. Although Haywood and Lidz have not offered a clear list of questions asked in the survey, it is possible to pick out the questions from their results and discussion section which means it would be possible to replicate this study. The researchers collected minimal background information on the DA trainer, this had the advantage of keeping the questionnaire short and so more appealing to participants to complete however the findings lacked an understanding of the context for the DA trainer (e.g. experience of DA, preference for theoretical orientation).

The research provided quantitative data presented as descriptive statistics. The findings are clearly presented for each question which was asked in the survey. Qualitative data is provided for some of the questions to further elaborate on the quantitative data. Although it is useful to read comments from the participants, it is difficult for the reader to get a sense of the main themes coming up for each participant and across participants as the researchers do not seem to have used any particular type of analysis. Haywood and Lidz (2005) noted that using a quantified approach to gathering information may not have suited the participants who were keen on using a DA approach which tends to gather qualitative information. Quantitative data gathering may have been more suited to the participants and allowed an in-depth consideration of individuals views on DA training.

Haywood and Lidz (2005) provided an overview of the views and recommendations of the DA trainers who took part in the survey. At the time of the survey, it appeared that the number of people who trained practitioners in DA was limited to 50 people in the world. Their findings emphasised the varying views on key aspects of training. The research suggests that DA training should be offered to various professionals such as psychologists, special educators and speech and language therapists. Haywood and Lidz view assessment teaching as needing to

cover a wide range of assessment methods which should include DA approaches as well as standardised and psychometric ones. Views on the minimal and optimal training varied widely with many trainers wanting at least 1 to 2 weeks for training and perceiving an academic semester as optimal. The participants felt strongly that follow-up in terms of further training, supervision and sharing experiences were vital to using DA. Their study highlighted key concepts that should be taught in DA, these included mediation, the zone of proximal development, metacognitive procedures, understanding of ability and social-developmental sources of poor performance. Participants felt that the principles of DA were critical to training rather than learning special DA tests while also suggesting that equal time should be given to learning theory, principles and tests to use in DA. This finding is contradictory and suggests that it is important to teach principles while recognising some tests are more likely to produce useful information than others. Their research suggests there is a need to ascertain training standards in DA, particularly around the optimal amount of training and expectations of content to be included within the training. Haywood and Lidz suggested that it would be useful to address training issues through qualitative means such as focus groups or interviews.

## **2.5. Synthesis of the literature review**

The findings of the studies in the review have been synthesised to consider what can and cannot be reliably known in relation to training in DA. The researcher generated three key areas of interest from the literature which inform our understanding of DA training. 1) *Access to training* relates to the limitations of accessing DA training, qualifications needed to access and the amount of training needed. 2) *Training content* considers the theories, tests and resources that the literature highlights that could be provided in DA training. 3) *Access to supervision* relates to the need for supervised practice alongside and after DA training.

### ***2.5.1. Access to training***

The three studies in this literature review highlight the challenges relating to accessing training in DA. Deutsch and Reynolds's (2000) study indicated that EPs felt there was a lack of training and support for DA. A high percentage (25%) of participants in this study expressed that the training was difficult to access. Furthermore, at the time of Haywood and Lidz's (2005) study, there were only 50 trainers in DA worldwide, further suggesting that training in DA can be hard to come by.

The literature revealed a lack of consensus about the number of hours/days of training needed in DA. Green and Birch's (2019) recent study indicated a wide range in the amount of training needed. Their study suggests from one to fifteen days is the minimum amount of training needed and that 41% of participants thought that 4 days or less was adequate to practice DA. This is a contradictory finding to the previous study by Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) who found participants felt that less than 3 days of training was not adequate for them to confidently practice DA. Of the participants that took part in Deutsch and Reynolds's survey, 39% felt that their training was not sufficient enough for them to feel confident to use DA, however, it is unclear about the content of the training participants had received. From their survey data, Haywood and Lidz (2005) recommended that DA training should be between one to two weeks. The lack of agreement about the amount of training needed in order to practice DA needs to be further explored. This would enable an understanding about how much time is needed to cover the necessary content for DA training so practitioners have the confidence, knowledge and skills to practice DA. The lack of consensus on the amount of time needed for training means that there will be a considerable variation between practitioners using DA which is suggested to affect confidence and therefore means that DA is practised less.

There is currently no agreement regarding the necessary qualifications and experiences needed prior to accessing DA training (Haywood & Lidz, 2005; Green & Birch, 2019). The findings from Green and Birch suggested that 80% of respondents expressed DA practitioners should be educated to a graduate level. Overall, the respondents in this study did not feel that individuals needed to have a degree in psychology or specifically in educational psychology to use DA. Haywood and Lidz's study indicated that individuals who took part in the survey felt DA training should be offered to various professionals who work in a helping profession, these included psychologists, special educators and speech and language therapists.

### ***2.5.2. Training content***

The literature has provided some useful information regarding the necessary content for DA training, including the theory, skills that should be taught and resources that should form the training in DA. Participants in Haywood and Lidz's (2005) study felt training should include learning theory, principles and DA approaches. The findings were unclear as to how much time should be given to each. This research highlighted key ideas that should be learnt in DA training, these included mediation, the zone of proximal development, metacognitive procedures, understanding of ability and social-developmental sources of poor performance.

Green and Birch (2019) offered a framework of the competencies needed for DA practice this included 13 knowledge and 12 skills-related items. These competencies are related to 1) generic DA, 2) the learner, 3) mediation and 4) the task. Generic DA includes having knowledge and skills regarding theory, using DA tests and the purpose of DA. The learner relates to the formation of hypotheses about the learner and the linking between cognitive and affective factors. Mediation relates to understanding the theory of mediation and being able to apply mediation in an assessment. Lastly, the task relates to the parameters of task analysis and adapting the task gradually to support the learner. This framework provides a self-

assessment tool and offers content for a training programme for TEPs and EPs driven to develop their DA skills. The researchers of this study were aware that an evaluation of training sessions using this framework was needed to assess the impact on DA practice. They have noted that this study offers a beginning in specifying and describing competent DA practice in the UK and that it is likely that the DA competencies could be expanded upon in further research.

### ***2.5.3. Access to supervision***

In addition to training, follow-up supervision is suggested in the literature as vital to the practice of DA (Haywood & Lidz, 2015; Green & Birch, 2019). Deutsch and Reynold's (2000) highlighted that a lack of supervision and support was repeatedly stated by the participants as a reason for failing to start or maintain the use of DA. Green and Birch recommended that those trained in DA needed between 10 to 50 hours of supervised practice to be competent DA practitioners. The literature does not provide specifics about the content of the supervision or the proficiencies of the supervisor.

## **2.6. Understanding the literature within professional guidelines**

To further understand the literature within the EP profession, the researcher has considered guidelines from key professional bodies. This section will discuss the BPS and HCPC guidelines around assessment practice.

The lack of consensus around many aspects of DA training and practice highlighted in the literature could be because there is no established standards for training and practice of DA. Many other forms of assessments used by EPs have clear guidelines around the training to use these assessments. The BPS Psychological Testing Centre has updated guidelines for the competent practice of using standardised and psychometric tests (BPS, 2017a). Practitioners

can be assessed using a list of Educational Test User (ETU) standards relating to psychological knowledge, psychometrics, and practitioner skills. For example, in order to use psychometric tests a practitioner should be a qualified psychologist, which would now require up to 3 years of doctoral training (Pearson, 2022). The absence of a well-defined training and professional development pathway for DA could lead to a lack of confidence in EPs to use this approach as suggested by Deutsch and Reynolds (2000). EPs may feel uncertain about whether their level of training and experience ensure that they are competent enough to be practising DA.

The BPS and HCPC outline ethical codes which guide EP practice (HCPC, 2012; BPS, 2017b). Competence is indicated by both professional bodies as essential for assessment practice (HCPC, 2012; BPS, 2017b). The Professional Practice Guidelines states *‘Educational psychologists should make known the limitations of their professional competence and skills and offer only those skills, services or techniques that meet professional standards’*. Green and Birch (2019) have shed some light on the competencies needed for DA practice which EPs can use as a self-assessment tool to check their competency in DA and a framework for training. Having a clear framework of competencies would support EPs to obtain the necessary training in DA so that they can work within their level of competence and therefore remain an ethical practitioner.

The BPS Professional Practice Guidelines offered a Framework for Psychological Assessment and Intervention (BPS, 2017b). This framework provides useful information for assessment practice which should be used to inform training for EPs in DA approaches. Firstly, an understanding of current psychological theories and research is suggested to be an essential principle of EP assessment in these guidelines. This was also expressed in the literature as essential for DA training (Haywood & Lidz, 2005; Green & Birch, 2019). Secondly, assessment should inform intervention. Green and Birch suggested that users of

DA should be competent to link assessment results to cognitive intervention, therefore understanding of as mentioned by this Framework, intervention would be essential for EPs. Thirdly, the literature suggests ongoing support and supervision around DA practice is needed (Deutsch & Reynold, 2000; Haywood & Lidz, 2015; Green & Birch, 2019), the Framework for Psychological Assessment and Intervention also mentions the importance of supervision and support for assessment practice. This Framework has also provided essential considerations when conducting assessments such as that assessment should be over time. The aim of this literature review was to focus on DA training and therefore it is unclear from the current literature whether practitioners are able to use DA approaches over time or whether it is one-off sessions.

## **2.6. Chapter Summary**

Overall, the literature on DA training highlights the lack of established standards for training and practice, suggesting that both continue to be ill-defined and unregulated. Therefore, it is difficult to evaluate the quality of training. There are several factors identified within the literature which are problematic in regard to DA training. These include a lack of training and support available, consistency with the amount of training and a lack of understanding of the content in training. The literature has indicated competencies for DA and information about the knowledge and skills DA training is required to provide, however formal guidelines on its training are yet to be established. A consideration of the professional bodies' guidance on assessments used by EPs highlighted a discrepancy concerning DA approaches and psychometric tests. The latter has informed guidelines to support its training and use whereas these are yet to be established for DA. From the literature, the researcher has concluded that agreement on training standards and practice of DA is needed to ensure EPs

adhere to ethical principles relating to working within their competency (HCPC, 2012). It would be important to further understand the current context for DA training in EP practice. Particularly for TEPs as this is yet to be researched and would provide insight into what is happening at the start of EP careers around DA training and practice.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1. Chapter overview**

This chapter will discuss the methodology used in the research. Firstly, the research questions and aims will be outlined. This will include the purpose of the study. The researcher will reflect on their research position, including ontology and epistemology, and how this will influence the research. A description of the research design and data collection method will be provided, along with the rationale. The researcher will present the approach to data analysis, including a justification for the decisions made. Issues around the validity and trustworthiness of the research will be outlined and considered. Finally, the researcher will present the ethical considerations for the research.

### **3.2. Research questions**

The study aimed to address the following research question.

*What are TEP experiences of developing their understanding and practice in DA?*

As discussed in the previous chapter there is little research into this area and limited understanding the current context around TEP's learning and use of DA. Therefore, the current study used a mixed methods design (see section 3.6.) to obtain an up-to-date understanding of the current context for TEPs learning and practice while exploring their views. Due to the mixed methods design, the following sub research questions were asked at each phase of the research.

Phase 1 (Quantitative): *What training have TEP's received and what opportunities to practice have they undertaken?*

Phase 2 (Qualitative): *What do TEP's say about their training and practice experiences?*

### 3.3. Research aims

The literature review provided insight into DA training. The literature highlighted the need for further exploration into how EPs are developing their understanding of DA at the first steps of training as a TEP. The current research aimed to contribute to understanding TEP's DA learning and practice at different levels; these include the following.

*Educational Psychology training programme level:* The study sought to provide Educational Psychology doctorate training programmes with an overview and in-depth look at the experiences of TEPs to develop their understanding of DA and use of DA while completing the three-year training programme. At a university level, this study provides university tutors with insight into how the course can prepare TEPs to use DA through teaching and supporting opportunities to use this assessment in practice. The research will include an understanding of the practicalities of training (e.g., number of training hours, perceived usefulness of training, chances to use DA in practice, and ways in which TEPs have developed their understanding of DA) as well as the theory-to-practice. The researcher hopes to enable universities interested in teaching TEPs about DA insight into ways to support this practice so that DA can be embedded into the Educational Psychology profession.

*The Local Authority:* The researcher aimed to provide LAs offering EPS placements for TEPs with an overview and insight into TEPs' experiences of learning and using DA while on placements. This will include the support provided by the EPS and the opportunities for TEPs to use DA in their practice. The study aimed to contribute to EPS placement providers' understanding of developing DA practice among TEPs to support its use in the profession.

*Nationally:* at a national level, the study will contribute to the literature on DA practice in the UK by focusing on what is happening at the start of the Educational Psychologist career journey.

### **3.4. Research purpose**

Three primary research purposes are used in research: to describe, explore, and explain (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The research purpose of the current research is descriptive and exploratory; therefore, these are spoken about in this section. The present research uses Shields and Rangarajan's (2013) definition; descriptive research describes a situation or phenomenon. Whereas exploratory research is often carried out for two reasons, 1) on a topic that has not been researched before or 2) on an existing topic to create new ideas and hypotheses. The latter is relevant to the current research.

As highlighted in the literature, there is a rationale for taking a descriptive and exploratory stance to provide insight into understanding DA practice in the UK. A previous study by Deutsch and Reynolds in 2000 created and disseminated a survey to EPs to provide an overview of DA practice. This was useful in assessing EP's knowledge, practice, and views of DA in the UK. The study is over two decades old, and with changes to the EP context, such as the Special Educational Needs (SEND) Code of Practice (CoP) (2015), the findings from this survey may no longer be valid to EPs context today. Additionally, Deutsch and Reynolds explored EPs rather than TEPs; the current researcher is interested in DA practice while in training to be an EP. Thus there is a need for research which describes TEP DA practice. In addition, the literature search emphasised a lack of exploration into how EPs develop their understanding and use DA at the start of their career. Therefore there is a need for exploratory research so that universities and placement providers can reflect on the training, support and opportunities offered to TEPs to use DA.

### 3.5. Researcher positioning

#### 3.5.1. *Ontology and epistemology*

Researchers must reflect on their assumptions and beliefs about what constitutes reality and how reality can be understood when undertaking research. Researchers should offer their philosophical positions, known as ontology and epistemology. The ontological and epistemological positions adopted by a researcher influence the research methodology, including the research questions and how the data is analysed.

##### 3.5.1.1. *Ontology*

Ontology refers to the study of being (Crotty, 1998) or the nature of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It is concerned with understanding what is real and what can be known about reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). There are various ontological positions and thus different views about what reality is. The current study takes a critical realist ontological perspective. Critical realism can be understood by outlining two principal ontologies, relativism and realism (Gray, 2009). Relativism and realism are often viewed as opposites, with critical realism sitting between these positions and adopting views from both realism and relativism (see Figure 3.1). Braun and Clarke (2022) provided a question to address ontology, '*is there a reality that exists separately from our research practices?*' (p. 167), which will be used in this section to understand the different ontological positions and the critical positions realist stance of this study.

A realist position views reality as objective and separate from human consciousness (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). A realist believes a singular true and impartial truth or reality can be discovered and understood (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Meaning is viewed to dwell in objects rather than the researcher's consciousness and can be discovered separately to human beings. The researcher and researched are independent of one another (Scotland, 2012). To answer Braun and Clarke's (2022) ontological question, a realist perspective assumes 'yes' there is a

reality that is separate from our research practice. In research, the researcher discovers a reality independent of their and the participant's thoughts and actions and the methods used for analysis.

On the other hand, a relativist position views reality as subjective (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Reality or truth is not discovered but is constructed by individuals (Scotland, 2012). Adopting a relativist perspective assumes that reality differs for each individual; therefore, multiple realities exist, rejecting the realist view that one ultimate reality exists. From a relativist perspective, the answer to Braun and Clarke's (2022) ontological question would be 'no' as a reality does not exist separately from the research practice. The researcher and research interact to elicit constructs and form reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher develops reality from the analysis with the support of evidence provided by participants. According to this view, the research offers one interpretation of reality rather than a singular truth.

A critical realist position has elements of realism and relativism. It is realist in its assumption that a singular reality is discoverable independent of human structures (Madill et al, 2000). Critical realists assume that reality operates independently of human awareness but that we can only partially know reality (Braun & Clarke, 2013). As in relativism, reality is seen as a representation moulded and embedded in cultural context, language, human perspective and so on (Bhaskar, 1989; Sayer, 2004; Willig, 2013). Therefore, there is one singular reality or truth, but there are different perspectives, interpretations, and possibilities for this one reality or truth. Braun and Clarke (2022) coined the term '*situated realities*' to refer to the view of a single reality that is different for different people in their different contexts. Regarding Braun and Clarke's (2022) ontological question, a critical realist perspective would believe 'yes and no' as a separate reality exists, but this is mediated through participant and researchers' experiences. In research, the researcher is accessing the participant's perceptions and interpretations of reality, which they then interpret in their analysis.

The current study takes a critical realist ontological perspective. Adopting a critical realist position allowed me to understand and explore the lived experiences of TEP's training and use of DA while emphasising the contextual influences of participants' *'situated reality'* (Braun & Clarke, 2022). As highlighted in the research purpose and questions, I am interested in describing and exploring TEP's training experiences and use of DA from *their* perspective. I assume that there is a reality around DA training and use in practice to be discovered by centring participants in the research and holding in mind that this data is embedded in TEP's different experiences. A critical realist position also fits with the topic of this research; DA practice. DA aims to provide an understanding of the child/young person by considering the child within their context and recognises that using DA will be different for different assessors (e.g., TEP or EP) and the different children or young people.

#### *3.5.1.2. Epistemology*

In addition to ontology, the epistemological position must be considered when conducting research. Epistemology is concerned with where knowledge comes from and what is accepted as knowledge (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). According to Crotty (1998), epistemology is a way of understanding and explaining how *'I know what I know'*; meaning epistemology is centred on explaining how knowledge about the 'real' world is formulated. Creswell and Creswell (2018) outlined the need for researchers to consider the relationship between themselves and that being researched. Three common epistemological positions are post-positivism, constructionism and contextualism (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The current study adopts a contextualist epistemological position. This epistemology is somewhat akin to a critical realist ontology. Like critical realism, contextualism sits between post-positivism and constructionism (Henwood & Pidegon, 1994); therefore, these two epistemologies are discussed here to understand contextualism.

Post-positivism has evolved from positivism. Positivism assumes reality exists independently of human endeavours to understand reality (Burr, 1998). According to positivists, reality is objective and separate from individual consciousness (Gray, 2009). The researcher and the researched are assumed to be independent of one another, and consequently, the researcher can examine the world without influencing it. A post-positivist perspective aims for objectivity while recognising that understanding reality can only be known imperfectly and from a situated position due to the hidden variables in reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2022). Observations are not pure but are influenced by the researcher. A post-positivist epistemology fits well with a realist ontology.

In contrast to post-positivism, constructionism views knowledge about reality as being created by human involvement (Willig, 1999). According to constructionism, what is known about something does not reflect the truth; instead, it is a product of human practices and embedded in particular cultural and historical contexts (Braun and Clarke, 2022). Knowledge about reality is considered a social construct that cannot exist outside human practices; therefore, reality is meaningless until we name it. Additionally, language is seen to create realities rather than reflect reality (Braun and Clarke, 2022). The researcher is seen as active in data collection within research, meaning it is co-constructed by the researcher and participant (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

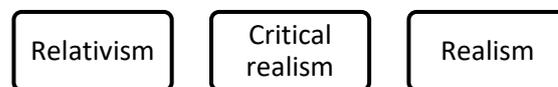
In contextualist epistemology, there are views from post-positive and constructionist positions. The sense of reality is held, as in post-positivism. As in constructionism, there is an emphasis on the contextual nature of language and meaning. Humans cannot be researched in isolation from their contexts, as the context is seen to give meaning to experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Therefore, knowledge can not be separated from the participant in research, and the researcher's values and actions will influence the knowledge produced. Braun and Clarke (2022) described the '*researcher and participant to be 'in relationship', co-producing meaning.*'

(p.179). A contextualist position sees knowledge as constructed from the context and researcher's position (Madill et al, 2000; Tebbes, 2005).

The current research will hold a contextualist epistemology. Within the study, I believe there is a reality in which TEPs have experienced developing their understanding of DA and using DA in practice while acknowledging that reality is imperfectly understood. I cannot fully know the reality of DA practice. The reality of the TEPs' experiences is contextual. Additionally, I am also aware of my influence as the researcher in creating the research (e.g.. the research questions, the questionnaire, and the interview topics) and my interpretation of the data. I have acknowledged that I have interpreted TEPs' interpretations of their experiences, so I feel I can never truly 'know' the full context of DA practice for TEPs.

### Figure 3. 1

*The ontological continuum, adapted from Braun and Clarke (2013)*



### 3.5.2. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is essential for good qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2019, 2020, 2022). Reflexivity is a critical reflection on the research process and one's position as the researcher (Finlay, 2002). Berger (2015) offers a description of the meaning of reflexivity to be '*turning of the researcher lens back onto oneself to recognise and take responsibility for one's own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation*' (p. 220). Reflexivity involves the researcher considering their ethical and personal issues in the research process (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2013). The researcher needs to recognise their

values, interests, and opinions that will shape the research. Reflexivity is ongoing throughout the research process and must be considered at all stages.

As the researcher, I considered my role in all elements of the research process. I frequently reflected on my ideas, expectations, decisions and actions (Finlay & Gough, 2003). Reflexivity is particularly important for my research due to the ontological and epistemological positions. A critical realist ontology and contextualist epistemology stressed the need for me to recognise the impact my involvement has on shaping the research. I considered my position as the researcher (e.g. values, actions, beliefs) as I cannot be separated from the research; consequently, I will inevitably influence the study. I will now take some time to reflect on my position in the research.

I wish to acknowledge my interest in cognitive assessments, specifically DA, and my beliefs and values about assessing children and young people. In Chapter 1, I briefly outlined my experience as an adult undergoing standardised and psychometric assessments to assess my learning differences. I mentioned that this experience had left me with somewhat negative feelings. I am aware that this experience has led me to be biased toward a dynamic assessment way of assessing as I view this as a more positive and child-friendly way of working.

I have had extensive training on the doctorate course and have been well supported in using DA. Although I frequently use DA in my practice, I do wish to note that I use standardised, psychometric and dynamic assessment in my practice but that I do not ever use standardised on its own, whereas I do DA. As a researcher from a White background, I have taken the time to deliberate how I can practice ethically and work in a culturally competent way. I feel in many ways that DA achieves an ethical and culturally competent way of assessing children and young people. I recognise that I view psychometric assessments as problematic due to their history in IQ testing, categorisation of individuals and lack of cultural sensitivity. My thoughts, beliefs, experiences, and positions were reflected throughout the research.

### *3.5.2.1. Reflexive journal*

One way to incorporate reflexivity in research is to keep a reflexive journal on personal experiences, thoughts, feelings and reflections (Gerstl-Peplin & Patrizio, 2009; Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2022; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A reflexive journal allows the researcher to document and store thoughts to reflect on at a later date. Throughout my research, I kept notes about my observations and feelings, particularly during data collection and data analysis; this helped me reflect on the process and shape the development of codes and themes. Additionally, I used supervision to continuously reflect and take up a position of self-awareness throughout the research.

### *3.5.2.2. Insider researcher vs outsider researcher*

Reflecting on one's position as the researcher includes considering insider and outsider positions (Gallais, 2008). Insider status is defined as the researcher sharing some group identity (e.g. race, sex, ethnicity, religion) with the participants. In comparison, outsider status is when the researcher does not share group identity with the participants. A researcher will likely hold both insider and outsider positions in any research.

I have reflected on my insider and outsider positions in relation to the research participants. I have noted that I am a TEP researcher looking at fellow TEP's perspectives. Therefore, I hold an insider position and found that I related to some of the experiences and comments made by the participants. In addition, there were times when I also attended the same university as a participant I was interviewing. Being aware of this and using a reflexive journal allowed me to consider my position and how this may impact my data collection and analysis. At times I shared the same or a different identity with participants (e.g. gender, race), and I recognised how this might influence my interactions with them. The research does not aim to consider DA practice concerning any identity of the participant (e.g. how TEPs from a Black Caribbean

background view DA). Therefore, I do not feel that my insider or outsider positions need to be considered in more detail except for the above.

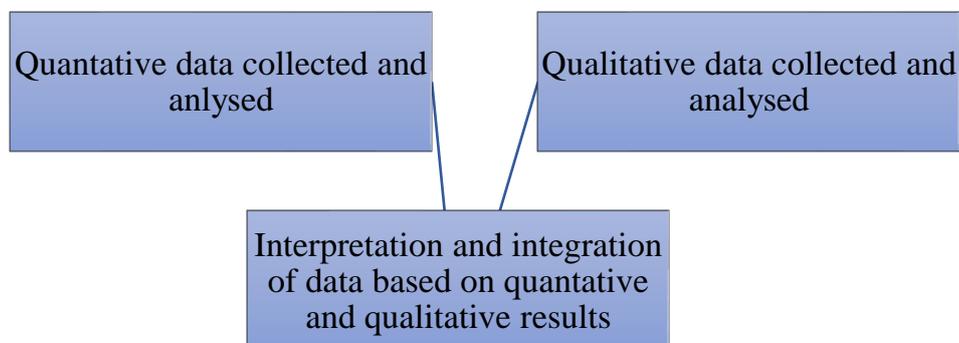
### 3.6. Research design

#### 3.6.1. Mixed methods

The current research used a triangulation mixed methods design (see Figure 3.2.). Morse (1991) described the purpose of a triangulation design as a way ‘*to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic*’ (p. 122). This choice of mixed methods design was chosen as a solely quantitative or qualitative would not sufficiently answer the research questions. The quantitative data was collected first in questionnaires (phase 1) and followed sequentially by the qualitative data collected through interviews (phase 2). The quantitative data did not inform the interviews but did support sampling. Those who participated in the questionnaire were offered to take part in the interviews; at the end of the questionnaire, the researcher’s contact details, and a brief outline of the interviews were provided. The data are presented separately in the findings chapter and are integrated in the discussion chapter.

**Figure 3. 2**

*Visual diagram illustrating the triangulation design for data collection and analysis*



### *3.6.1.1. Rationale for selecting a mixed methods*

The current study follows Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner's (2007) definition of mixed methods. A mixed method study is valuable in descriptive and exploratory research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the current study, a mixed methods approach fits well with the research question, purpose and aims of this study to provide breadth and depth of understanding about TEPs' experiences of learning about DA and using this assessment in their practice. The use of questionnaires allowed a wide range of TEPs from different courses across the UK and in different year groups to participate in the research. Additionally, the interviews helped elaborate upon the questionnaire findings and further explore trainees' experiences of DA in more detail.

Critics of a mixed methods approach claim that a mixed methods approach is incompatible from an epistemological position due to the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (Howe, 1988). However, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) recognised the similarities between qualitative and quantitative methods, such as using a framework to reduce biases and gather data to address research questions. Thus the current researcher views mixing qualitative and quantitative data as valuable. A mixed methods approach was deemed to align with the study's critical realist ontology and contextualist epistemology. As with contextualism, there is an acknowledgement that the participant exists within their context; therefore, it is essential to understand the current context. The researcher felt that quantitative and qualitative data would provide contextual information. Using mixed methods recognises how individuals make meaning of their experiences and how the wider social context impacts those meaning while focusing on the data. Furthermore, McEvoy and Richards (2006) identified the goal for a critical realist is to develop a more profound explanation and understanding. The current researcher feels this fits well with gathering quantitative and qualitative data. Additionally,

Campbell and Fiske (1959) identified a benefit of using more than one method: it enhances the validity of the results by explaining the underlying phenomenon.

There are associated challenges with using a mixed methods approach. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) recognised the following challenges: time and resources, researcher's skills, and others' value on a mixed methods approach. As the researcher, I considered these limitations and felt I could give enough time to collect and analyse the data effectively by careful planning. Furthermore, I have had prior experience working with quantitative and qualitative methods and data analysis which enabled me to apply rigour and quality to the research by being aware of the strengths and limitations of each data set.

#### *3.6.1.2. 'Big qual, small quant'*

When conducting a mixed methods study, the researcher should consider the 'weight' or priority given to the quantitative or qualitative parts of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In some studies, they might be of equal weighting, whereas in others, there might be an emphasis on one or the other. Creswell and Creswell (2018) highlighted that the priority would be decided depending on the researcher's interests, the intended audience and the researcher's aim of the study. The current research will be weighted as big qualitative and small quantitative. The reason for this is because the researcher is interested in an in-depth exploration into what trainee EPs say about their experiences of learning and using DA while also gaining a broader national insight into TEPs current practice around DA in the UK.

### **3.7. Data collection**

#### *3.7.1. Phase 1 (Quantitative data)*

The study used a self-administered questionnaire to gather a factual and numerical overview (i.e. frequencies). The target population for the quantitative data collection was the entire population of TEPs in the UK. The questionnaire was created using an online platform,

'Qualtrics', which allowed for a high amount of participation as it reduced demands on researcher and participants (e.g. time, travel). The questionnaire was sent to course directors at universities to share with TEPs three times. An information sheet and statement outlining the preceding questions were used as a way for participants to give their informed consent to participate in the questionnaire (see Appendix A for the questionnaire information sheet and consent information). The questionnaire was open from July 2021 to January 2022.

#### *3.7.1.1. Justification for using questionnaires*

A questionnaire was regarded as an appropriate tool for collecting descriptive data as it enabled the researcher to gather a large amount of data over a short period to provide an overview of TEPs DA experiences (Lambert, 2019). A limitation to using questionnaires is the issue with the design, for example, the questions asked, the choice of answer (e.g. open-ended, closed, multi-choice) and the phrasing of questions (Lambert, 2019). To overcome this the questionnaire (see Appendix B for the full questionnaire) was created based on Deutsch and Reynolds's (2000) survey. Deutsch and Reynold's research considered Educational Psychologists' practice of DA; therefore, the questionnaire was adapted to be suitable for TEPs. The researcher used fellow TEPs and supervision to reflect on the questions and made adaptations to the questions based on their suggestions. Deutsch and Reynold conducted this questionnaire in 2000; therefore, it was felt that a more up-to-date look at DA practice was needed to inform the research. As the questionnaire was adapted from a previously used questionnaire, it was thought that a pilot was not required.

Similarly, to Deutsch and Reynold (2000), the questionnaire used closed questions to collect quantitative data. The closed questions included category grouping (the respondent chose the appropriate group their answer fell into) and lists (the respondent could choose from a list of options). Furthermore, when applicable, respondents could select multiple answers. For questions in which it was felt the questionnaire might not capture the participant's experience,

an 'other' option was provided so that respondents could choose this option when they thought that the choices available did not apply to them. The researcher did not use the questions in Deutsch and Reynolds's research which gathered qualitative data, as they felt that the interviews would provide more exploration for qualitative data to be collected.

### **3.7.2. Phase 2 (Qualitative data)**

#### *3.7.2.1. Justification for interviews*

Interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Seidman (2012) defined interviews to be a 'basic mode of inquiry' that has 'an interest in other individuals' stories because they are of worth' (p. 8-9). In qualitative research, interviews are the most commonly used tool for collecting information (Cassellm, 2005; Nunkoosing, 2005). Interviews provide in-depth information, allowing participants to talk about their experiences and perspectives, and capture their language and ideas concerning the researcher's topic of interest (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In the current research, interviews were deemed suitable due to their benefit in exploring participant experiences, beliefs, or identities (Mann, 2011). Interviews aligned with the current research aims and purpose; they provided rich and insightful information about TEP's DA understanding and perceptions.

Braun and Clarke (2013) summarised a list of strengths and limitations of interviews that were taken into account when designing the methodology for the current research. One benefit of using interviews for this study is that they provide rich and detailed information about individuals' experiences and views. Furthermore, using interviews gave the researcher control over the data collection and increased the likelihood of generating valuable conclusions. A limitation that was considered was the time-consuming nature of organising, conducting and transcribing interviews. Due to this, a limited number of participants were chosen. Braun and Clarke (2013) provided guidelines for participant sizes when collecting qualitative data based

on the project size. For small projects, they recommended 6 to 10 participants. Therefore the current study aimed to recruit between this amount for the interviews.

### *3.7.2.2. Justification for using online interviews*

Technology in research has long been discussed and evaluated (Sellen, 1995). Due to Covid-19, there has been an increase in the use of remote interviews to adapt to the restrictions of social distancing (Nind, Coverdale and Meckin, 2021). The interviews were conducted online using the platform Zoom. The video function was used in the interviews to provide an experience similar to being in person and increase the effectiveness of the data collection. Online interviews using videos have been found to produce rich data Nind et al. (2021) and, in many cases, are as effective as face-to-face interviews (Thunberg & Arnell, 2021). A significant advantage of using online interviews for the current study is that it allowed TEPs who lived in various UK locations and attended a range of universities to be interviewed (Thunberg & Arnell, 2021).

The criticisms of using online interviews were considered before conducting the online interviews, and the researcher took measures to limit the disadvantages. Thunberg and Arnell (2021) highlighted the need to consider adequate internet and participants' understanding of the online programme. Prior to the interview, this was checked with participants using email correspondence. As the participants were TEPs who were working and studying remotely, they were not restricted by the use of online interviews. Furthermore, following Thunberg and Arnell's (2021) advice, the researcher checked whether participants had a confidential and private space so that they would not be disturbed. Additionally, due to the noted difficulties of seeing non-verbal cues over a video (Sipes et al., 2019), the researcher checked in with participants at the end of the interview about how they felt and was reminded to speak to university tutors if they felt distressed.

### 3.7.2.3. *Justification and use of semi-structured interviews*

There are different types of interviews; structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In structured interviews the researcher will have a list of predetermined questions to ask participants and follow a fixed order. In comparison, unstructured interviews are flexible; the researcher has a list of topics or themes and is led by the participant to discuss what is important to them. A third common interview type is semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews sit between structured and unstructured, there are some pre-planned questions/topics but the participant is given chances to elaborate on their answers.

The current study has chosen to use semi-structured interviewing. This type of interview uses a guide of questions or topics to cover while allowing the participants to bring ideas previously not considered by the researcher (Willig & Rogers, 2017). In the interviews, the participants were asked the following two questions to elicit their views on developing their learning of DA and using it in practice. 1) *‘What have been your experiences of DA training?’*. 2) *‘What have been your experiences of using DA in your practice?’*. The researcher followed up the questions with prompts such as *‘How have you been supported to use DA?’* and *‘How else have you learnt about DA?’*. To open up conversations the researcher also used questioning, for example *‘Can you tell me more about that?’* and *‘Can you give me an example of that?’*. Semi-structured interviews fitted with a contextualist epistemological position and critical realist ontological position as well as the exploratory purpose of the study. This type of interviewing allowed flexibility in the interviews and ensured there was in depth exploration and clarification of comments made by participants (Rose, 1994). Robson (2016) recommends that the interview follows five steps; these were adhered to in the current study:

1. Introduction: the interviewer introduces themselves and describes the purpose of the interview.

2. Warm-up: the interviewer starts with easy questions to ease the participant at the beginning.
3. Main body: the interviewer focuses on the main topic of the research.
4. Cool-off: the interview asks easy questions to conclude the interview.
5. Closure: the interviewer thanks the participant for their valuable contribution.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed on the online platform Zoom. After the interviews, the recordings were listened to, and transcriptions were checked and corrected to ensure that an accurate record of the interview was used for the data analysis.

#### *3.7.2.4. Interviewer skills*

When conducting an interview, it is vital to think about the skills required to do this while also recognising that the researcher should develop their own interviewing style (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). When conducting an interview, the researcher needs to be able to multitask. A successful interview entails showing interest in what the participant is saying through body language, gaze, and non-judgemental vocalisations. In the interviews, the researcher attended to what an interviewee said, was aware of the interviewee's tone of voice and body language, picked up on relevant information in the participant's replies and asked unplanned follow-up questions (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Empathy was used when necessary to show the participant that the researcher is aware of their feelings (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The interviewer needs to know how to get participants to converse with them. Braun and Clarke (2013) summarised ways to support interviewees in sharing their experiences and perspectives. This included using silence and asking for examples, clarification, specific details and/or more information. The current researcher used these in interviews. One way the researcher reflected upon their interview skills was by transcribing interviews as soon as possible and finding ways to improve their skills for following interviews, as Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested.

I was aware of the possible power dynamics in the interview. There can be a hierarchy within an interview with the researcher and participant. Participants may perceive the researcher as an expert; for some, the researcher's status will override other aspects of their identity and experiences. I attempted to minimise this by letting the participants know that they were the experts in their experiences.

### **3.8. Recruitment**

A purposive sampling technique was used to identify and select participants for phases 1 and 2. Patton (2015) recognised that purposive sampling is typically used in qualitative research to identify and select participants who can provide a rich and insightful understanding of a topic of interest. When using this sampling technique, the researcher decides what needs to be known by individuals to inform the research and sets out to find people willing to offer information about their experiences (Bernard, 2002). The participants selected are assumed to be able to provide information-rich data to be analysed. Purposive sampling ensured that individuals who participated in the interviews and questionnaires were relevant to the research aims and questions. Braun and Clarke (2013) suggested ways to recruit participants, such as identifying key people who could help with recruitment. The current researcher identified course directors of the doctorate program in educational psychology as key people to help recruitment and contacted them about the research.

When recruiting participants, I was aware that I might be interviewing people I know and people who were strangers to me. Braun and Clarke (2013) made suggestions about how to approach interviewing people you know and people who were strangers. Braun and Clarke recognised when the researcher knows interviewees they enter into a dual relationship with that person. Braun and Clarke (2013) refer to rigid 'dos and don'ts' that I followed when

interviewing participants that were known to me. For example, I kept the confidentiality of the information provided by these participants as I did with those participants I did not know. Interviewing people who were strangers is considered to be somewhat more manageable as the researcher does not have to manage the dual relationship (Braun and Clarke, 2013). However, it can be more challenging to develop rapport with the interviewee quickly to feel comfortable enough to have an in-depth conversation with someone they do not know. I factored in time to build rapport with the participants and followed the first two steps of interviewing identified by Robson (2016) to help the participant feel at ease.

### **3.9. Research participants**

Participants invited to take part in the questionnaire were TEPs currently enrolled on a UK educational psychology doctorate course. To get a broad picture of TEPs' experiences whilst completing the three-year doctorate programme TEPs from all three years of training were invited to complete the questionnaire. TEPs had to be on the doctorate course for at least two months to factor in that there needed to be some time of starting the course to have received some learning in DA. In the current research, the researcher identified inclusion and exclusion criteria that would allow for identifying TEP who could participate in the questionnaire and interviews (see Table 3.1).

Course directors of universities were contacted to distribute a 'Qualtrics' questionnaire to the trainees on the course (see Appendix C for the email sent to course directors) and inform participants about the research. TEPs were invited to volunteer to participate in the questionnaire and semi-structured interview to further discuss and explore their experiences of DA. TEPs interested in taking part in the interview were asked to express their interest to the researcher via email. A participant information sheet (see Appendix D for the participant information sheet for interviews) and a consent form (see Appendix E for consent form for

interviews) were sent to TEP's interested in participating in the interviews. After reading the information sheet, the TEP was required to return a signed consent form. The researcher corresponded with participants via email to arrange a day and time for the interview. Once informed consent had been given, a Zoom link was sent to the TEP. Participants needed to have a space where they felt comfortable to be interviewed and which was confidential.

As mentioned above, according to Braun and Clarke (2013), 6 to 10 participants are required for small scale research. As the sample size was relatively small, the researcher wanted to ensure that there were TEPs from various universities. Therefore the first two TEPs from the same university were allowed to participate. If a third TEP volunteered to participate, they were thanked for their request and informed why they would not be able to participate in the study due to a disproportionate number of participants from one university.

A limited amount of information was obtained regarding participants' demographics. The reason for limiting the amount of information gathered about participants was to keep participants anonymous. Furthermore, it was felt that this information would not add anything to the study's aims.

**Table 3. 1**

*Inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants*

<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>For interviews and questionnaire</b>		
Currently enrolled on a UK doctorate training course to be an Educational Psychologist for a minimum of 2 months.	Individuals not currently enrolled on a training course for educational psychology and been on the course for under 2 months.	The current research is interested in the experiences of individuals whilst on the training course to become an Educational Psychologist.

		The current research is to describe and explore the experiences trainees have of using and training on DA.
Currently enrolled on an educational psychology doctoral programme in the UK.	Individuals not enrolled on an educational psychology doctoral programme or enrolled in a course outside the UK.	The current research aimed to provide an overview and exploration of DA practice in the UK.

#### **For interviews**

TEPs who have had at least one experience of using DA in practice.	TEPs who have received training but have not yet had a chance to use this assessment method in practice.	The current research is interested in TEPs experiences of using DA. Therefore participants needed to have had the opportunity to use DA since starting the training.
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### **3.10. Data Analysis**

#### ***3.10.1. Phase 1 (Quantitative data analysis)***

The questionnaire received 190 responses from TEPs across the UK, with 170 completed and meeting the inclusion criteria and used in the analysis. The responses produced nominal data

that was organised and synthesised using descriptive statistics to understand and inform the research questions. The findings were described using frequency (e.g. percentages and total numbers), and visual charts (e.g. pie charts and tables) were produced using 'Excel' for each question.

### **3.10.2. Phase 2 (Qualitative data analysis)**

After conducting the interviews, the researcher listened to and transcribed each participant's interview. The analysis was supported by the software MAXQDA-22. This computer-assisted qualitative data program allowed a systematic approach to data analysis as is required by the type of analysis used by the researcher, Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The programme allowed the researcher to develop codes, memos, and thematic maps to ensure that the data was organised and analysed effectively.

#### **3.10.2.1. Reflexive Thematic Analysis**

The researcher used a Reflexive Thematic Analysis to explore patterns across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012, 2019 & 2022). The six stages of Reflexive Thematic Analysis outlined in Braun and Clarke (2022) were followed (see Figure 3.2 for an overview of the stages of Reflective Thematic Analysis). The researcher will offer how they engaged with each stage.

1. *Familiarising yourself with the dataset:* The researcher familiarised themselves with the data by becoming intimately familiar with the dataset through a process of immersion. This was completed by the researcher creating mind maps for each participant and then a mind map about what was felt was coming up overall for participants (see Appendix F for an example of a mind map for participant 1).
2. *Coding:* The data was then looked at systematically, and data segments that appeared relevant or meaningful to the research question were coded. The researcher used an inductive orientation to data coding, meaning that codes were centred on the

participants' experiences, perspectives, and meanings. Additionally, the researcher was interested in developing semantic and latent coding to make sense of the data. Semantic coding captures explicitly expressed meaning, whereas latent codes focus on the implicit meaning, which allows for more depth to the research (Braun & Clarke, 2013; 2022). See Appendix G for examples of codes and examples of latent and semantic codes.

3. *Generating initial themes*: The researcher then looked at the codes and identified shared patterned meaning across the datasets and formed candidate themes.
4. *Developing and reviewing themes*: The themes were reviewed in the next stage to ensure that the potential candidate themes fitted with the coded extracts and the full dataset. The researcher actively created themes rather than found themes within the dataset which is inline with Braun & Clarke (2019; 2022). As the researcher taking critical realist and contextualist positions, I was aware that I could not be removed from the data analysis and, therefore, inevitably impacted the development of themes.
5. *Refining, defining and naming themes*: Subsequent to this, the themes were fine-tuned through clearly defining each theme's core concept and giving an informative name.
6. *Writing up*: Finally, the analysis was written up.

Braun and Clarke (2022) stated these stages do not have to be rigidly adhered to and completed sequentially; instead, the researcher will likely move between the stages as the analysis develops. Therefore, in the current research, the researcher used these stages to guide the analysis to ensure an in-depth, rich and robust engagement with the data and enable a detailed understanding to address the research interests. The researcher offered her own reflections on completing the Reflexive Thematic Analysis for the thesis in section 4.7.

**Figure 3. 3***Stages of Reflexive Thematic Analysis*

Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the dataset

Phase 2: Coding

Phase 3: Generating initial themes

Phase 4: Developing and reviewing themes

Phase 5: Refining, defining and naming themes

Phase 6: Writing up

*3.10.2.2. Rationale for Reflexive Thematic Analysis*

A Reflexive Thematic Analysis was deemed a suitable data analysis for the current study. Reflexive Thematic Analysis offered flexibility for an inductive analysis that captured semantic and latent meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2013; 2022). Using this analysis allowed the researcher to describe and explore participants' experiences of learning and practising DA. The analysis aligns with the research questions, which are interested in the experiences of TEPs use and their development of understanding of DA.

This research's ontological and epistemological stances were critical realism and contextualism. Regarding these two stances and the researcher's aims for the study, a Reflexive Thematic Analysis provided a reasoned and convincing interpretation of the data which was grounded in participants' accounts and captured participants' 'situated realities' (Braun & Clarke, 2022) while acknowledging the limits of the world participants exist within. Moreover, a Reflexive Thematic Analysis allowed the researcher to reflect on their subjectivity. This allowed the researcher to consider their impact on data collection and the interpretation of the data. This fitted with the ontology and epistemology of this research.

### **3.11. Validity and trustworthiness**

#### **3.11.1. Validity**

Validity can be broadly defined as the extent to which the research accurately measures what it aims to measure (Goodman, 2008) and will be considered for the quantitative part of the research. There are three common types of validity: 1) *content validity* refers to whether the tool (e.g. the questionnaire) adequately covers the content it should concerning the topic it aims to measure; 2) *construct validity* refers to whether you can draw inferences from the about tool (e.g. the questionnaire) about the intended concept being researched; 3) *criterion validity* refers to the relatedness of the tool (e.g. the questionnaire) to others tools (e.g. other questionnaires) which measure the same concept (Heale & Twycross, 2015).

The questionnaire was based on Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) and edited to reflect TEPs' experiences and current context. Deutsch and Reynold had piloted their questionnaire and received responses from 88 EPs in the UK. It was deemed that Deutsch and Reynold's questionnaire, designed to assess DA's knowledge, practice, and views, was fitting for the current study. The researcher's supervisor also reviewed and provided feedback on the questionnaire. These steps supported the questionnaire's content, construct, and criterion validity.

#### **3.11.2. Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) offered the term trustworthiness to refer to the accuracy in measuring rigour in qualitative research. Trustworthiness considers the systematic rigour of the research design, the credibility of the researcher and findings and the applicability of the research methods (Johnson & Parry, 2015). It is the overall sense of quality to the research. Four key components aid the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### *3.11.2.1. Credibility*

Credibility is concerned with the believability of the findings and can be achieved through prolonged engagement and persistent observation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement refers to the researchers learning about the context to ensure they fully understand the topic. The researcher continually developed their DA practice throughout the research by reading and attending seminars on DA. Persistent observation refers to the researcher's ability to assess the most relevant factors to the research topic. By using semi-structured interviews, the researcher allowed the participants to discuss points most important to them while ensuring that the researcher could gather data about the topic of interest.

### *3.11.2.2. Dependability*

Dependability is concerned with the consistency and replicability of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). All participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interviewing technique. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis, which provided a systematic approach.

### *3.11.2.3. Confirmability*

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmability refers to how well the research has maintained impartiality. As mentioned previously, reflexivity was an essential tool to support the researcher in recognising their assumptions and values, which may influence the research. Additionally, the researcher used supervision to consider their position (e.g. views of psychometric assessments and DA) and minimise the researcher bias.

### *3.11.2.4. Transferability*

Transferability refers to the applicability of the findings to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One way research is considered to be transferable is when the audience feels the research overlaps with their situation and/or they can transfer the findings to their experiences. The present research might be considered to provide transferability as readers may see similarities

between their own experiences of learning about DA on the training course and their experiences of using DA.

### **3.12. Generalisability**

Smith (2018) highlighted that qualitative research can be generalisable, just not in the same way as quantitative research. He emphasised that generalisability should be thought about in qualitative research, but it should not be considered in the same way quantitative research does. Smith summarised different types of generalisability which may be relevant to qualitative research. The ones relevant to the current research are spoken about in this section. Furthermore, Smith offered a way to talk about the potential the research has to be generalised in a certain way; he referred to this as a 'hedging strategy'. Based on this, the researcher will use the 'hedging strategy' to suggest what the research might offer in terms of generalisability.

Naturalistic generalisability (Stake, 1978) refers to research that resonates with the readers' experiences. A researcher may achieve naturalistic generalisability by providing readers with details about participants' lives through adequate 'evidence' (e.g. quotations from interviews), contextual information, and detailed theoretical representations of the reality, which aids the audience to reflect upon these and make connections to their own lives. The current study may provide naturalistic generalisability by offering readers (e.g.. current TEPs, qualified Educational Psychologists) the chance to reflect upon their training experiences and use DA and make connections from the findings to their own lives.

### **3.13. Ethical considerations**

In research, ethics is about '*the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process*' (Edwards and Mauthner, 2002, p.16). The

researcher of the current study has taken the appropriate steps to ensure that the research was informed by ethical principles outlined by BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) and BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2021).

### ***3.13.1. Ethical Approval***

Ethical approval was granted by the Tavistock and Portman Research Ethics Committee (TREC) in May 2021 (see Appendix H for the ethical submission form and see Appendix I for the ethics permission letter).

### ***3.13.2. Valid consent***

Researchers must ensure that every person involved in the research gives their consent freely and voluntarily by providing sufficient information to individuals to make an informed choice (BPS, 2021). As previously mentioned, participants were provided with information prior to taking part in the questionnaire (see Appendix A) and prior to interviews (see Appendix D). The researcher followed the recommendations made by the BPS (2021) regarding ways to inform potential participants about the research. Therefore the information included details of the study (e.g. aims, data collection), the participation required and information about confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher also incorporated contact details for herself and the Academic Quality team at the Tavistock and Portman so that prospective participants could find out further details about the research. Informed consent was obtained in the surveys by participants reading the information and continuing with the survey. Informed consent was obtained in the interviews by participants filling in a consent form and sending this back to the researcher. By obtaining consent, the research was in keeping with '*respect for the dignity of persons and people*' as outlined by the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018, p.5).

### ***3.13.3. Right to withdraw***

Keeping with the BPS (2021) Code of Human Research Ethics, participants were free to withdraw participation and/or their data (either parts or all of the data) before data analysis with no consequences. This was communicated to participants throughout the data collection process (e.g. in the information sheet, signing the consent form, during the interview, and at the end of the interview). No participant chose to withdraw participation or data from the study.

### ***3.13.4. Rights to confidentiality and anonymity***

The researcher respected confidentiality by ensuring that information gathered about participants was appropriately de-identified so that it could not be traced back to them (BPS, 2021). The online questionnaire supported the anonymity of participants as they were not required to disclose any personal information (e.g. name or contact details). If participants were interested in participating in the interviews, they were asked to contact the researcher; these contact details were only used to contact the participant regarding the interview. All the data was anonymised by giving participants numbers and deleting identifiable information (e.g. Local Authority, university, tutor names). The information sheet ensured participants were aware that their information was anonymous and confidential. An explanation was provided to ensure participants were aware of the limits of confidentiality and anonymity. For example, in the event of a disclosure which suggested harm to themselves and/or others. Furthermore, the small sample size in the interviews meant that participants might be able to recognise themselves within the data. Following the Data Protection Act (2018) all information collected from participants was stored safely in an electronic location that was password protected and was destroyed on completion of the research.

### ***3.13.5. Risk and protection from harm***

A core feature of the BPS (2021) Code of Human Research Ethics and BPS (2018) Code of Ethics is ensuring that researchers take the necessary steps to protect participants from physical or psychological harm. The researcher considered the BPS (2021) guidelines on the potential risk and did not identify risks in line with this. The research topic was not considered particularly sensitive or difficult; therefore, it was not anticipated that the participants would experience distress or discomfort. In the event of a participant experiencing adverse reactions due to the research, the researcher was skilled in providing support and prepared to signpost participants to their university supervisors. During the survey and interview, there was an unlimited amount of time, which allowed participants to take a break if they felt distressed.

### **3.14. Chapter summary**

This chapter has focused on the methodology of the research. An overview of the research methodology has been provided in Table 3.2. It has included information about the research purpose and aims. The researcher's positioning, including ontological and epistemological stance, has been considered in relation to how the research has been designed. The researcher has provided information about the approach to using a mixed methods design and collecting and analysing the data. Furthermore, the researcher has offered ways to ensure the research is valid and trustworthy. Lastly, ethical considerations were made so that the research aligns with ethical principles. The next chapter will discuss the findings from the analysis.

**Table 3. 2***Overview of the current research methodology*

Research questions *What are TEP experiences of developing their understanding and practice in DA?*

**Phase 1 (Quantitative):** *What training have they received and what opportunities to practice have they undertaken?*

**Phase 2 (Qualitative):** *What do they say about their training and practice experiences?*

Research purpose	Descriptive and exploratory
Ontology	Critical Realist
Epistemology	Contextualism
Participants	TEPs
Recruitment	Purposive sampling
Data Design	Mixed methods, big qualitative and small quantitative
Data Collection	Questionnaires and Semi-structured Interviews
Data Analysis	Descriptive statistics and Braun and Clarkes (2006; 2012; 2019 & 2022) Reflexive Thematic Analysis

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

### **4.1. Chapter overview**

This chapter will present the findings from the questionnaires, which provided quantitative data and the findings from the interviews, which provided qualitative data. The researcher will also offer reflections from completing the Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

### **4.2. Phase 1 (Quantitative data)**

The questionnaire aimed to provide an overview of TEPs' experiences of developing their understanding of DA and using DA in practice by producing quantitative data at a national level. The data collection was outlined in more detail in Chapter 3. The questionnaire received 190 responses in total. Two participants' data were excluded per the exclusion criteria that stated any surveys completed within the first two months of starting the course would be excluded. An additional six questionnaires were excluded due to providing no information whatsoever. A further seven were excluded due to insufficient information being provided for analysis (only the university name and Year group were completed). Therefore 175 questionnaires were analysed, with five participants not completing all questions. Where relevant participants were given an 'other' option to choose if they felt none of the pre-set answers fitted their experiences, the data provided by the participants have been categorised into tables of frequency based on the researcher's decision on 'best fit' categories. The first three questions, described below, gathered demographic information about participants to check the representativeness of respondents. The findings will be presented in the order that they appeared in the questionnaire.

1. What university do you attend?

175 participants answered this question. Participants were asked to indicate what university in the UK they were attending by choosing one of the 15 universities in the UK from a list of courses that complete the doctorate in educational psychology. As presented in Table 4.1, the results show that the questionnaire received responses from all universities in the UK that provide this training; however, the number of participants from each university varied.

**Table 4. 1**

*University courses attended by the participants*

<b>University</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>
Exeter University	1(1%)
Bristol University	3(2%)
Cardiff University	4(2%)
University of Birmingham	5(3%)
University of East London	5(3%)
University of East Anglia	8(5%)
Queens University Belfast	10(6%)
University of Nottingham	10(6%)
University College London	13(7%)
Newcastle University	15(9%)
Institute of Education	18(10%)
Sheffield University	18(10%)
University of Southampton	21(12%)
University of Manchester	21(12%)
Tavistock and Portman	23(13%)

2. What year of training are you in?

175 participants answered this question. The participants were given three options to represent the three years of study on the doctorate course. The results indicated most participants were in Year 2 (number of participants (n)=72), closely followed by Year 1 (n=61), and lastly, a smaller number of participants were in Year 3 (n=37) (see Table 4.2).

**Table 4. 2**

*Participants year of training on the doctorate course*

<b>Training Year</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>
1st year	64(37%)
2nd year	72(41%)
3rd year	39(22%)

3. What year did you start training?

175 participants answered this question. The final item of demographic information asked participants to identify the year they started training. Table 4.3 shows that 76 of the participants started the course in 2020, 52 started in 2019, 29 started in 2021, and 13 started in 2018.

**Table 4. 3**

*Participants year of starting the doctorate course*

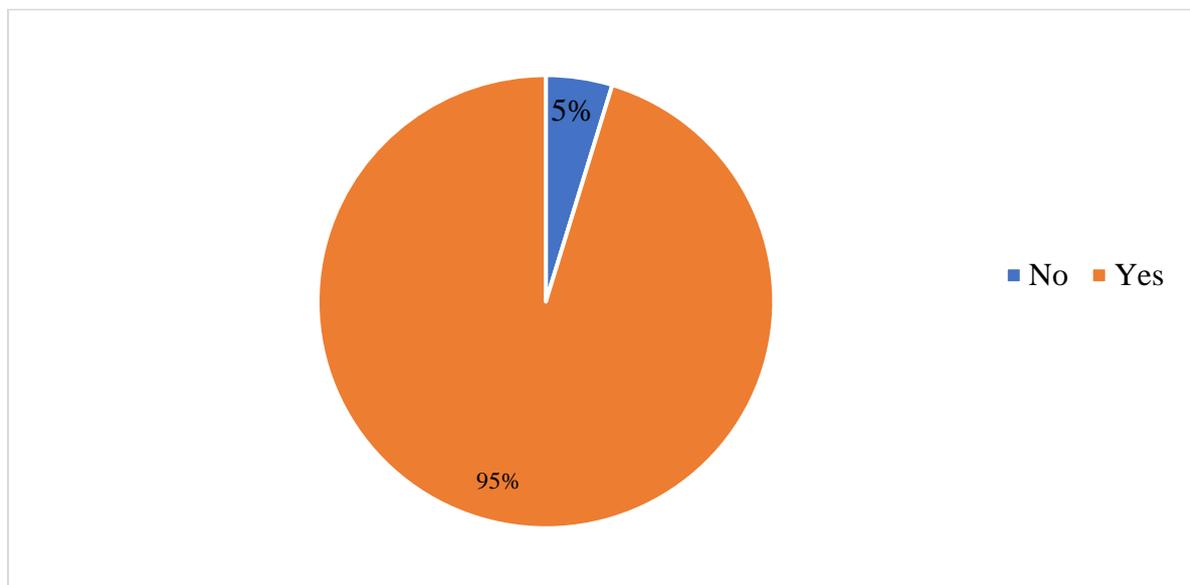
<b>Start Year</b>	<b>Number (percentage)</b>
2018	14(8%)
2019	53(30%)
2020	77(44%)
2021	31(18%)

4. Have you received training on dynamic assessment from your university?

175 participants answered this question. Question four asked participants to indicate whether they had received training from the university on dynamic assessment. Participants were asked to select 'yes' or 'no'. The majority of participants (n=167) had received training, with a small number (n=8) having not received any training from the university (see Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4. 1**

*Participants experience in receiving training on dynamic assessment*



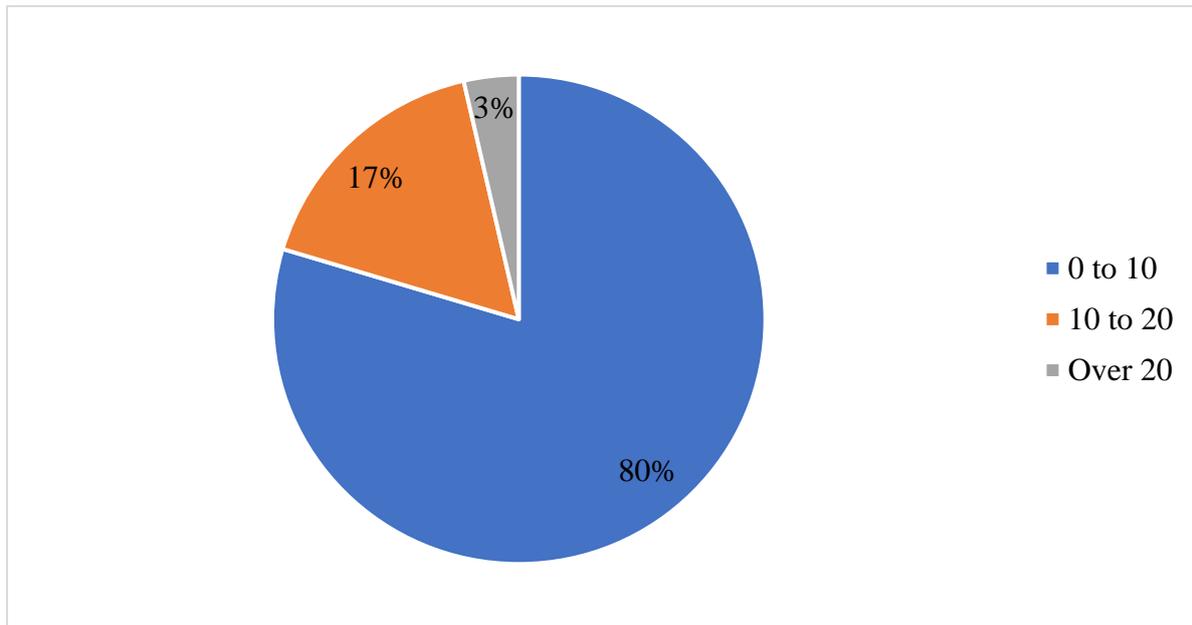
5. Approximately how many hours did you receive training on dynamic assessment from your university?

The 167 participants who had received dynamic assessment training from their university answered this question. To determine the amount of training experience participants had received from the university, participants were asked to choose from a drop-down list of numbers ( e.g. 1 to 20 and 20 plus). For ease of analysis, the hours of training were grouped into ranges (e.g. between 0 to 10 hours). Most participants had received up to 10 hours of

training (80%, n=133). 17% (n=28) of participants indicated they received between 10 and 20 hours. 3% (n=6) of participants reported receiving over 20 hours of training. See Figure 4.2 for an overview.

**Figure 4. 2**

*Summary of dynamic assessment training hours participants indicated receiving from the university*



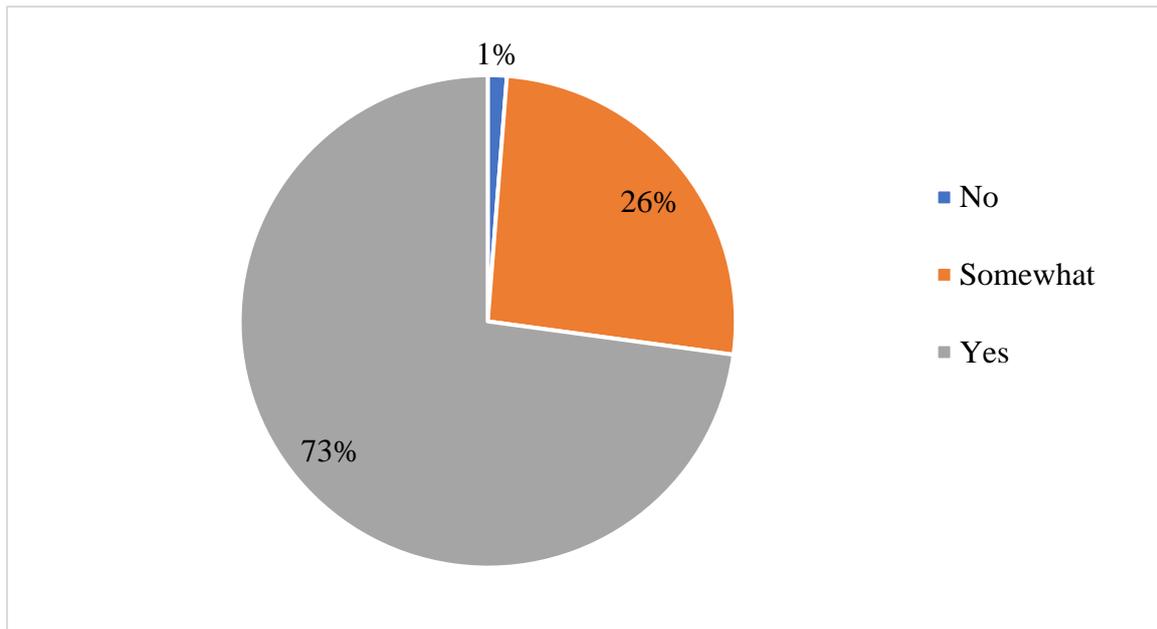
6. Do you feel this training was good enough in developing your understanding and use of dynamic assessment?

This question was answered by the 167 participants who had received dynamic assessment training from their university. Participants were asked to indicate their perception of the usefulness of the training provided by the university. Participants were given three options to choose from ‘yes’, ‘no’ and ‘somewhat’ to indicate how they felt (see Figure 4.3 for an overview of the results). Most participants, 73% (n=122), selected that they perceived the training to be helpful. Some participants, 26% (n=43), selected that they felt the training had

been somewhat helpful. A small number of participants, 1% (n=2), selected that they did not find the training helpful.

**Figure 4.3**

*Participants perception of the helpfulness of the training provided by the university*



7. Have you developed your understanding of dynamic assessment in any of the following ways?

Participants were provided with a multiple-choice list. This question was answered by all participants (n=175). There was an option to further expand on what specific training they had received if they had received this. Furthermore, an 'other' option was provided to capture answers which may not have been provided within the multiple-choice list. As shown in Figure 4.4, participants were learning and developing their understanding of dynamic assessment in various ways. A small percentage (7%) of people indicated that they felt that the university training had been the only way they had developed their understanding of dynamic assessment. A high number of participants, 37%, stated that they were having conversations with colleagues

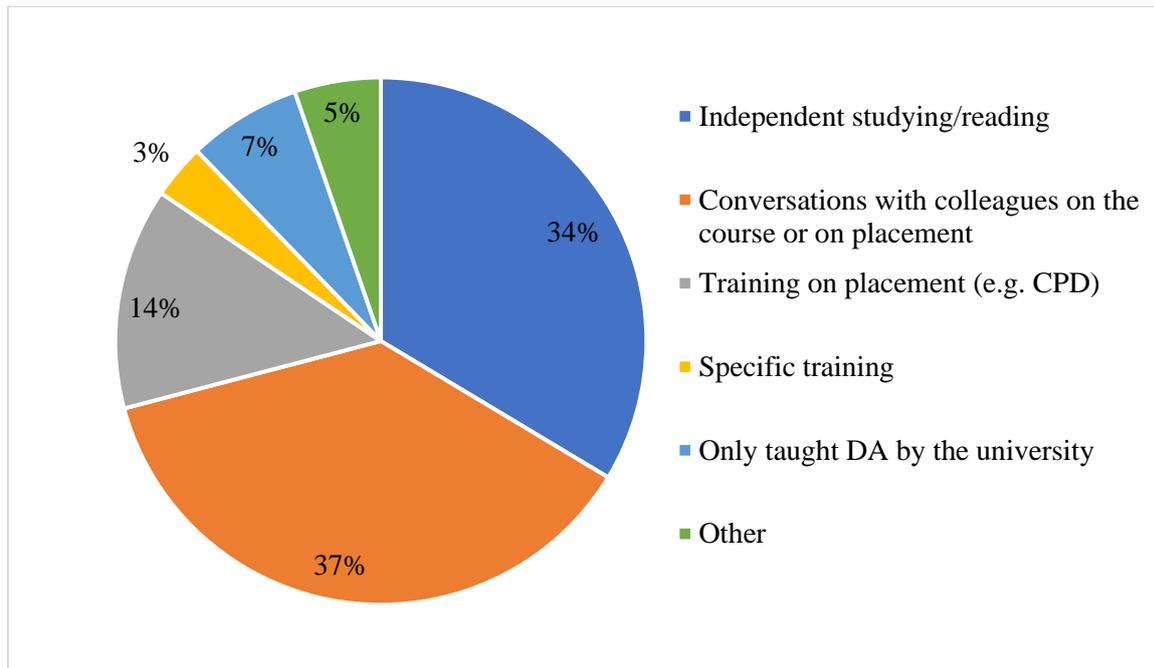
on the course or placement and 34% of participants were learning through independent study/reading. A smaller number of participants, 14%, had received Continual Professional Development (CPD) training from their placement provider. Lastly, 3% of participants indicated that they had training on dynamic assessment, which did not include university training. As shown in Table 4.4, 10 people had received training from Fraser Lauchlan, and four said they had attended an online course/webinar; however, they did not say anything more about this training. 5% of participants chose ‘other’<sup>3</sup> and described additional ways that they had expanded upon their understanding of dynamic assessment, with some people mentioning numerous ways. Table 4.5 displays categories formed by the researcher based on what participants said they were using to learn about dynamic assessment. A high amount of participants were learning about dynamic assessment through others, for example, by shadowing fellow Educational Psychologists (n=6), through a DA interest group (n=6) and discussions with their supervisor (n=3). Participants mentioned the importance of practising dynamic assessment (n=5). Two participants identified their previous job as a way of finding out about dynamic assessment. Three participants mentioned having completed small scale research on dynamic assessment. A small number of participants mentioned the use of social media platforms (n=1), podcasts (n=1), and videos (n=1).

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<sup>3</sup> The researcher noted people had put similar answers in ‘other’ and ‘specific training’. I.e. ‘interest group’ and ‘webinar’ were put into both categories, the researcher decided these best fitted into the ‘other’ group. Anything that was determined to fit into the drop-down list provided was moved into this.

**Figure 4. 4**

*Summary of how participants have developed their understanding of dynamic assessment*

**Table 4. 4**

*Specific training participants had been to learn more about dynamic assessment*

Specific training described	Number (%)
Training by Fraser Lauchlan	10(71%)
Online course/webinar (unspecified)	4(29%)

**Table 4. 5**

*Breakdown of answers for respondents who specified 'other' for how they have developed their understanding of dynamic assessment*

'Other'	Number (%)
Online social media platform	1(4%)
Podcasts	1(4%)
Watching videos	1(4%)

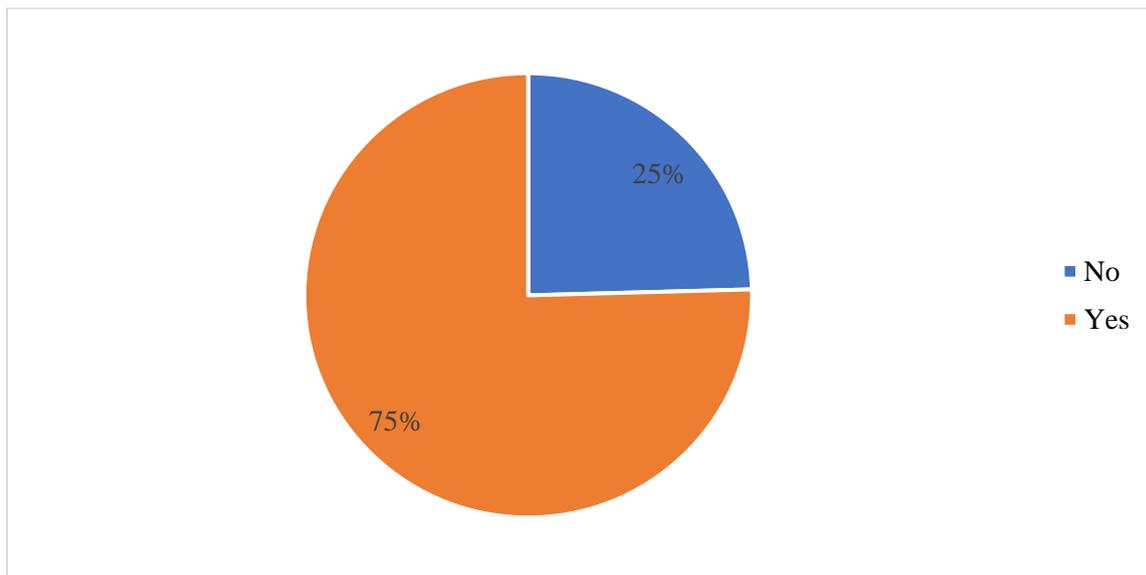
Learning from a previous job	2(7%)
Conducting a small scale research	3(11%)
Discussions with supervisor	3(11%)
Practising dynamic assessment	5(18%)
Shadowing Educational Psychologists	6(21%)
DA interest group	6(21%)

8. Are you presently using dynamic assessment in your practice as a TEP?

175 participants answered this question. Participants were asked to indicate whether they were currently using dynamic assessment in their practice. 75% (n=132) of participants stated that they were presently using dynamic assessment and 25% (n=43) said they were not. See Figure 4.5.

**Figure 4. 5**

*Participants who are currently using dynamic assessment*

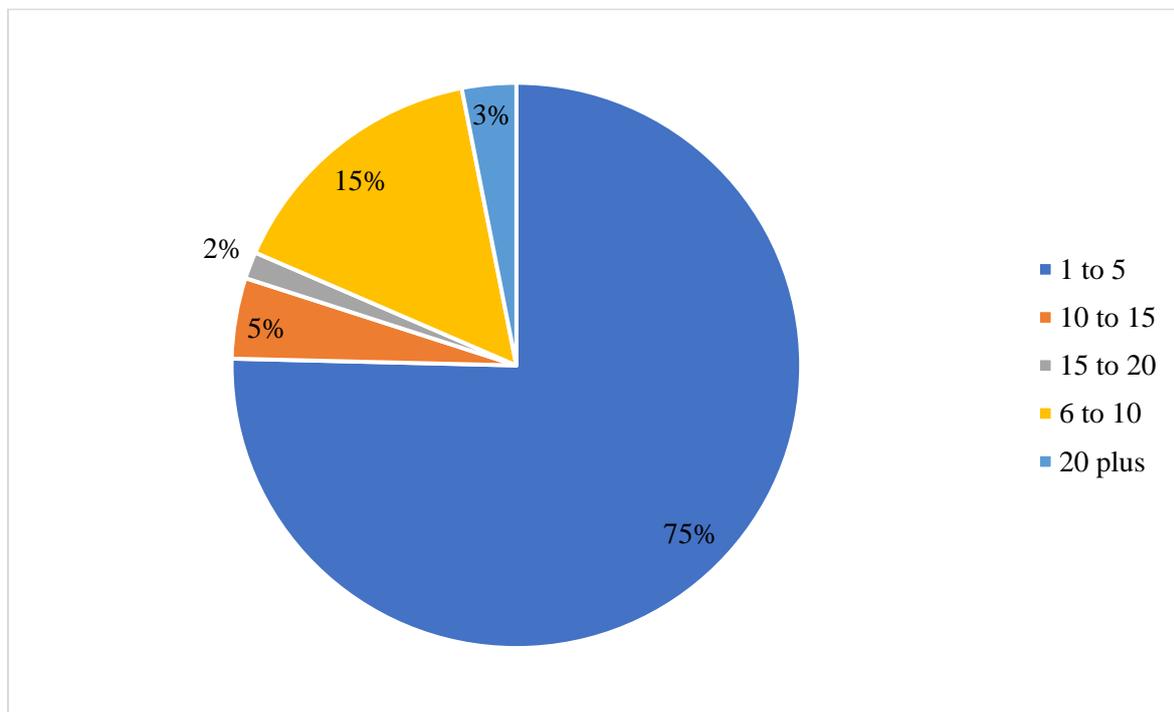


9. How many children and/or young people have you used dynamic assessment with?

The 132 participants who were currently using dynamic assessment were asked to indicate the number of children they had used dynamic assessment with. Two people did not complete this question; therefore, 130 responses are included. Participants were asked to select their answer from a drop-down list providing a number range (e.g. 1 to 5). Figure 4.6 shows that a high percentage of participants had experience using dynamic assessment with between 1 to 5 children or young people (75%, n=98). Fewer participants were using DA with more children, 15% (n=20) had used DA with between 6 to 10 children, 5% (n=6) had used it with between 10 to 15 children, and 2% (n=2) had used it with 15 to 20 children. A slightly higher number of participants had used DA with more than 20 children (3%, n=4).

**Figure 4. 6**

*Summary of amount of children/young people participants with whom participants had used dynamic assessment*



#### 10. What dynamic assessment material do you use?

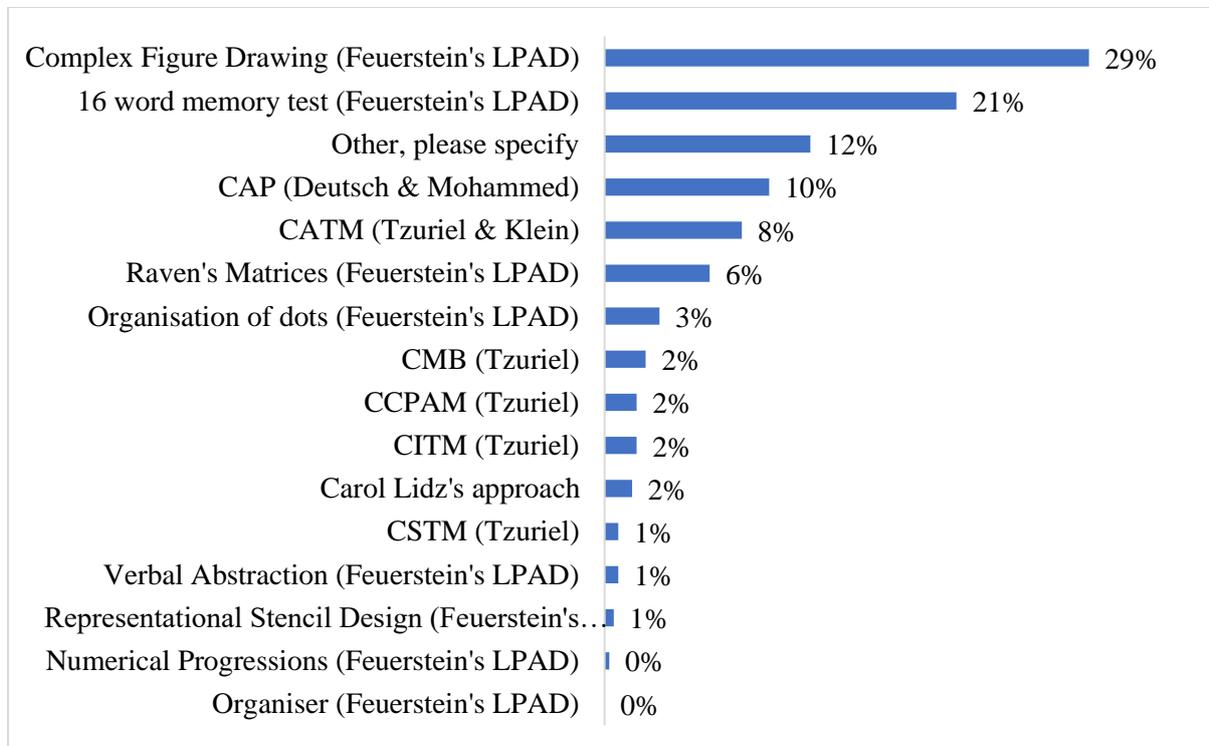
The 132 participants currently using dynamic assessment were asked about the dynamic assessment material used in their practice. Two people did not complete this question; therefore, 130 responses are included. The results show a range of materials are being used as dynamic assessment tools (see Figure 4.7). The most frequently used dynamic assessment tools were by Feuerstein, including the Complex Figure Drawing (29%) and 16 word memory test (21%) as well as Raven's Matrices (6%) and Organisation of Dots (3%). Tzuriel's tools were also used with the CATM being used the most (8%). Furthermore, an 'other' option was provided to capture answers which may not have been provided within the multiple-choice list<sup>4</sup>. See Table 4.6 for a full list of tools participants put for dynamic assessment. A high proportion of participants spoke about using games (57%); see Appendix J for the full list of games. A number of participants mentioned using resources from the 'Fraser Lauchlan and Donna Carrigan' book (7%).

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<sup>4</sup> Three people commented on DA materials that were in the drop-down box (this included CFD and ACFS) these were moved into the drop-down results. One person commented that they use the 'ideal self', this is considered by the researcher to be a person-centred planning tool and not a dynamic assessment therefore it was removed from the analysis.

**Figure 4. 7**

*Summary of dynamic assessment material used by participants*

**Table 4. 6**

*Breakdown of answers for respondents who specified 'other' regarding the dynamic assessment material they use*

'Other' categories	Number(%)
Beach day activity	1(2%)
Dog on a train (MAML model)	1(2%)
Keyword assessment (Knowles and Masidlover)	1(2%)
Literacy probes	1(2%)
Online DA based on CATM	1(2%)
Play based	1(2%)
Using cognitive assessments dynamically	1(2%)

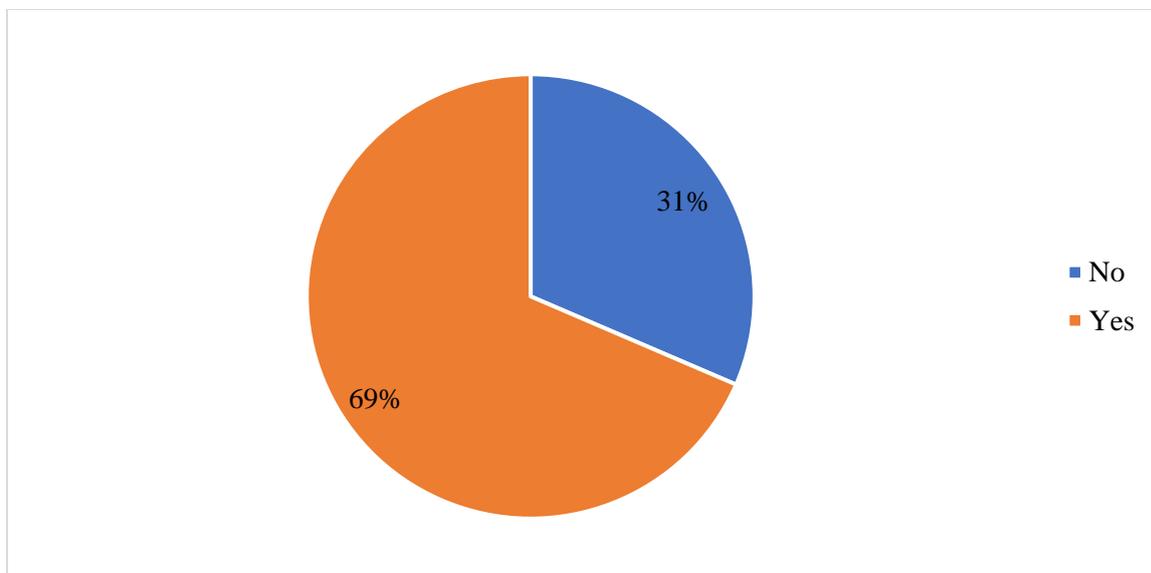
Verbal Planning Task (Adapted from Haywood)	1(2%)
You Choose' Activity Book	1(2%)
Classwork	2(3%)
Created own resources	4(6%)
Let's play	5(8%)
Resources from Lauchlan and Carrigan book	7(11%)
Games	37(57%)

11. Do you receive ongoing support/supervision to use dynamic assessment?

The 132 participants currently using dynamic assessment were asked to indicate their perception of whether they use support and/or supervision to use DA. Two people did not complete this question; therefore, 130 responses are included. As shown in Figure 4.8, 69% (n=90) people said they received support to practice dynamic assessment, and 31% (n=40) said they did not receive support.

**Figure 4. 8**

*Participants perception of whether they feel they use support or supervision to practice using dynamic assessment*

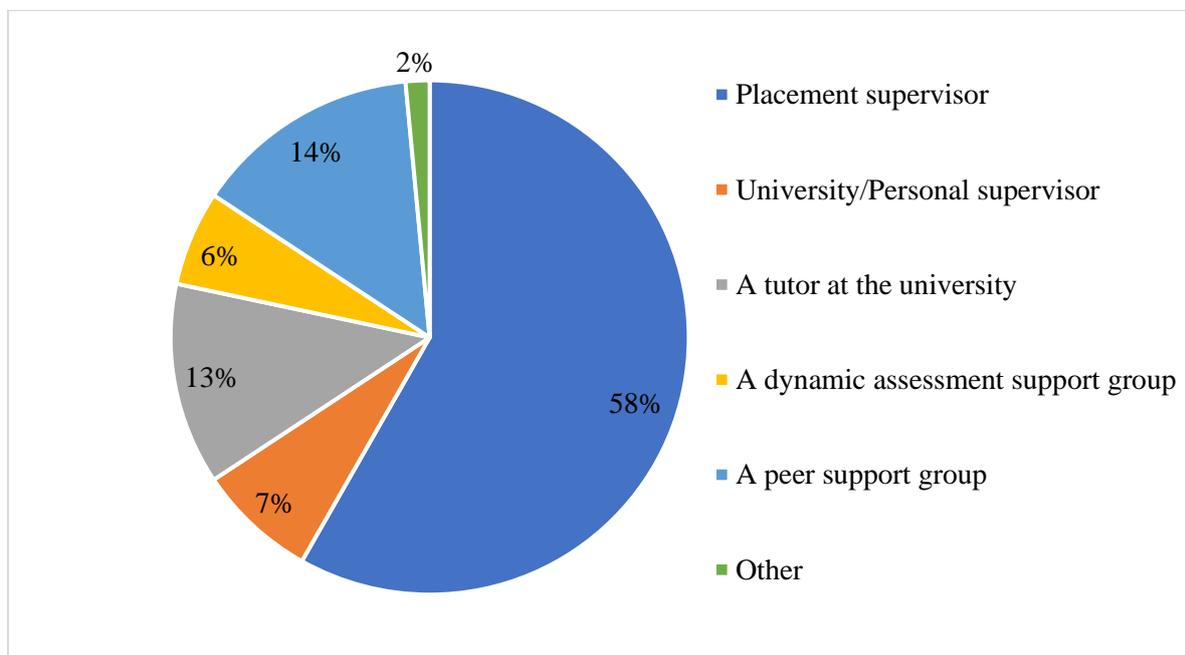


## 12. Who is the support provided by?

The 132 participants who were currently using dynamic assessment were asked to indicate who provides support for them. Five people did not complete this question; therefore, 127 responses are included. Participants were asked to indicate from a multi-choice list who provided them support. Figure 4.9 shows that 58% (n=78) had support from their placement supervisor, 14% (n=19) had support from a peer support group, 13% (n=17) were supported by a tutor at university, 7% (n=10) had support from their university or placement supervisor and 6% (n=8) indicated that they used a dynamic assessment support group. Additionally, 1% (n=2) of participants selected 'other'; when the researcher looked at the written responses, both of these expressed that they had discussions with colleagues from the course/placement.

**Figure 4. 9**

*Summary of support participants identified as helping them use dynamic assessment.*

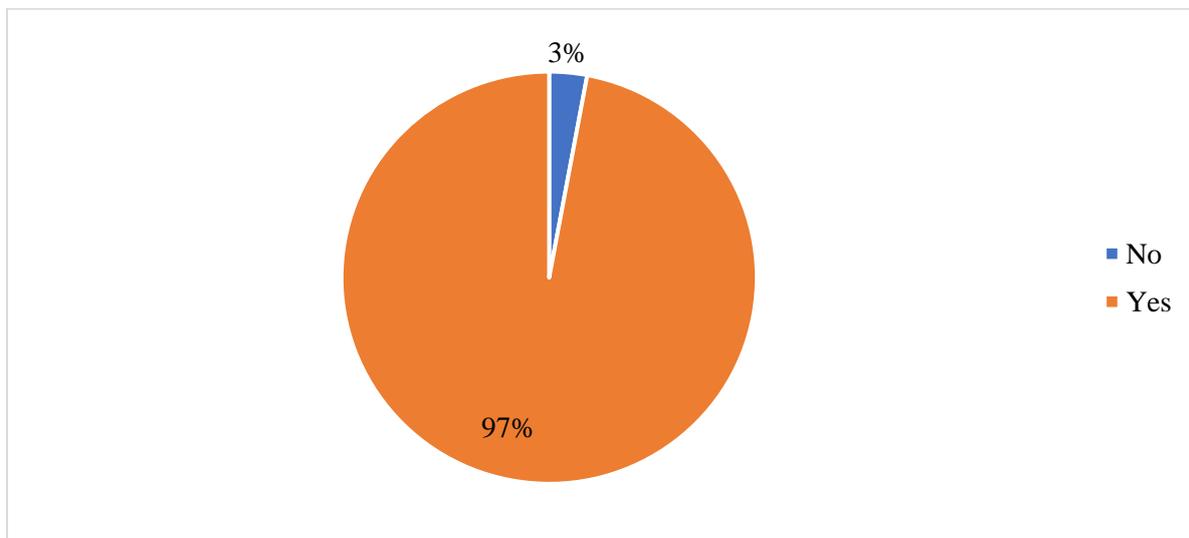


13. Do you think support/supervision is needed to maintain practice in dynamic assessment?

All participants could answer this question. Five people did not respond; therefore, 170 participants' responses were included in this question. Figure 4.10 demonstrates that almost all participants agreed that support or supervision is needed to maintain dynamic assessment practice (97%, n=165). A small number expressed that they did not feel support was needed to maintain dynamic assessment practice (3%, n=5).

**Figure 4. 10**

*Participants perception on whether support or supervision is needed to practice dynamic assessment*



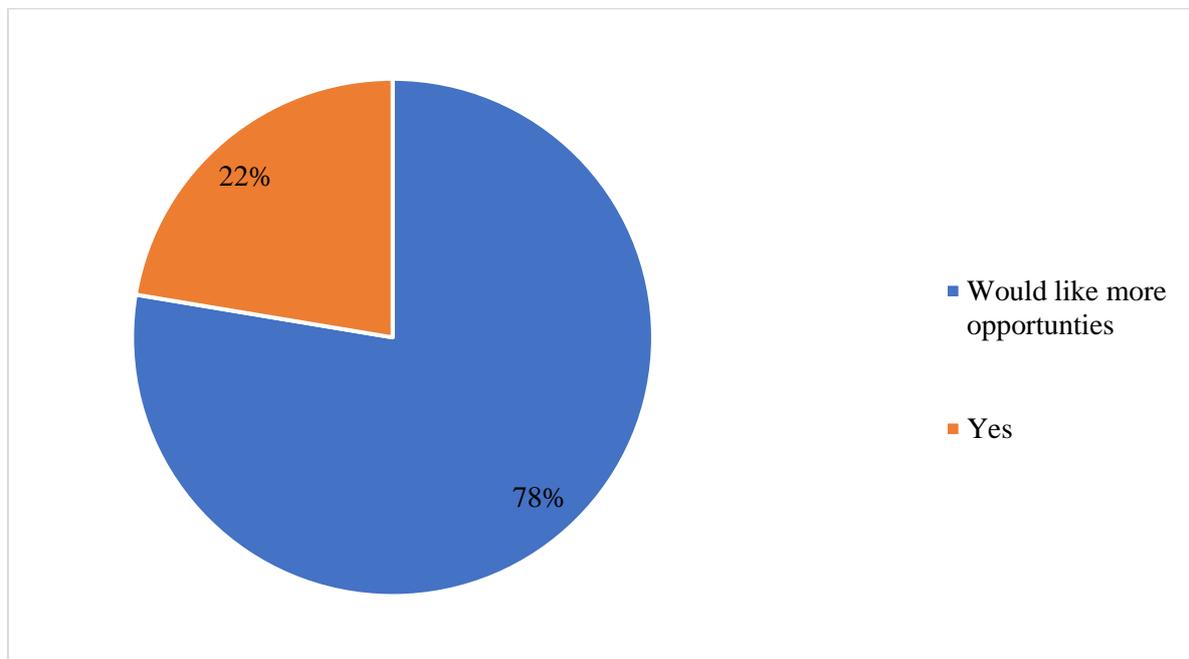
14. Are you satisfied with your present use of dynamic assessment?

The final question asked participants whether they were satisfied with their current use of dynamic assessment. This question could be answered by all participants. Five people did not respond; therefore, 170 participants' responses have been analysed for this question

Participants were asked to choose from ‘yes’ or ‘no, I would like more opportunities to practice’. As shown in Figure 4.11, 78% (n=132) of participants from the different Year groups would like more opportunities to use dynamic assessment, and 22% (n=38) felt satisfied with their use of DA.

**Figure 4. 11**

*Participant’s satisfaction with dynamic assessment practice*



#### **4.3. Summary of phase 1 (quantitative data)**

In summary, the quantitative indicates a high percentage of participants had received training from their university on dynamic assessment. Many participants received between 1 to 10 hours of training and perceived the training to be useful. A high percentage of participants had found additional ways to develop their understanding of dynamic assessment, including having conversations with colleagues on placement or the course, independent study/reading and CPD training from their placement. Three-quarters of the participants were using dynamic

assessment in their practice, with most participants having worked with 1 to 5 children. To summarise, participants used a range of dynamic assessments and, in many cases, have experience using more than one DA tool. A high proportion of participants felt that they receive support or supervision to use dynamic assessment, with most being supported by supervisors and peers. Almost all participants felt that support/supervision is needed to practice dynamic assessment. Although many participants were using dynamic assessment, a high number of participants recognised that they would like more opportunities to use it in their practice.

#### **4.4. Phase 2 (Qualitative data)**

The interviews aimed to provide a more in-depth look at TEPs' experiences developing their understanding of DA and their practice of using DA. Interviews were conducted with nine TEPs who had received training on dynamic assessment and had used it in their practice at least once. Interviews were completed from July to September 2021. The interviews were an average of 47 minutes in length and ranged from 41 minutes to 52 minutes. To analyse the data, Braun and Clarke's Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012, 2019 & 2022) was applied to make sense of the data. For transparency, an example of an early coded transcript can be found in Appendix K, and a later coded transcript can be found in Appendix L. To protect the participant's identity, the full transcript has not been appended. These transcripts highlight how the process of coding and how the researcher's code generation changed after reflection and further exploration of the data. Furthermore, coding examples can be seen in Appendix G. Firstly, the data was coded, and codes were then grouped into themes and subthemes (see Appendix M for themes, subthemes and code). On analysing the data, seven themes and seventeen subthemes were developed by the researcher to tell a story about the data (see Table 4.7 for a summary of the themes and characteristics of the themes). Following this, each theme and subtheme is described in detail and supported by extracts from the

interviewees. A guide to the meaning of the notations used within the transcripts and extracts is provided in Table 4.8.

**Table 4. 7**

*Summary of themes and theme characteristics*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Characteristics of theme</b>
<b>It has got to be DA</b>	Motivation to use and learn about DA
<b>There are a few hurdles when using DA</b>	DA can be a tricky assessment to use, practically and emotionally
<b>Don't go it alone</b>	The use of DA is reliant on support, including support from peers, colleagues and supervisors
<b>Wider systems have a strong influence</b>	Two major systems are impacting TEP's development of DA practice are the university and their LA placement
<b>The ingredients for a training session to upskill TEPs in DA</b>	The factors perceived to make learning about DA successful
<b>DA is applicable to EP work in schools</b>	DA is a good tool for EPs to use in their work
<b>Give it some welly</b>	There is a need to put effort into developing the skills and confidence to use DA

**Table 4. 8***Guide to the notation used in extracts*

<b>Notation</b>	<b>Explanation of use</b>
(.)	Pause
... (ellipses)	Indicates missing speech
[ ]	Text with identifiable information was removed and replaced with general information (e.g. [university name] to replace the university's name).
((xxx))	Vocalisation such as laughter
{ }	Insert information to provide context to what is being said

## 4.5. Themes

### 4.5.1. *It has got to be DA*

This theme captures TEPs motivation in choosing DA as their assessment method. TEPs made suggestions about their reason for choosing to use and invest in learning about DA. There were descriptions which compared DA with standardised and psychometric assessments to explain why DA was the assessment to use. To understand this theme, the researcher has generated two subthemes.

#### 4.5.1.1. *DA fan club*

The subtheme represents the TEP's positivity towards DA as an assessment tool. Many of the TEPs expressed that they '*like*' DA. A couple of the TEPs, such as Patrick, referred to themselves as '*fans*' of DA. This suggests that the TEPs had an emotive feeling when using DA.

*'I'm a big I you've probably picked up that I'm a quite a fan of it'* (Patrick)

In addition, many TEPs referred to DA as the assessment that they used the most. This was described by Tracey

*'Most of the time I will do some form of dynamic assessment'* (Tracey)

TEPs offered their perceptions of the pros of DA as the reason for their using DA. TEPs felt that DA was an enjoyable assessment to use for themselves as the assessor and children and young people.

*'I think it's a really really nice way to assess really enjoy it's nice for both the practitioner and the young person'* (Claire)

The following quote illustrates a hopefulness that is provided by DA for the child as it focuses on what the child or young person can do. Furthermore, it suggests that DA offers positive information about the child.

*'you can really like pick out what they're doing well and what their need help with kind of with them as well which is quite nice because you can say you can be like 'oh it looks like you find that really good you know you're really good at that or you notice that something a bit more empowering'* (Emily)

DA was perceived to be a more transparent and honest way of assessing children as it does not seem to have any hidden motive. The following quote from Tracey suggests that DA is a genuine assessment that is not tricking the child.

*'dynamic assessment doesn't have a it doesn't feel like it has an ulterior motive it feels like...we are playing a game we genuinely are playing a game'* (Tracey)

TEPs commented on ethical considerations when assessing children. Among the TEPs there was a view of DA often being more ethical for the children with whom TEPs and EPs support. Some TEPs referred to the children as 'vulnerable' due to their past experiences and felt that

DA was more appropriate. Furthermore, TEPs considered culture, race and language in their assessment practice. TEPs viewed DA as an ethical assessment to use for children from different cultures, races and whose first language was not English. Considerations of ethics have been provided in example extracts from interviews with Poppy and Jan

*'I think it's just the more well we've kind of discussed in lectures that is a more ethical way of assessing children especially they are coming from different cultures they don't have English as their first language'* (Poppy)

*'I'm doing a dynamic assessment because I feel that this is more appropriate for this child and actually probably more ethical to do in this situation'* (Jan)

#### 4.5.1.2. Rejection of standardised and psychometric assessments

Psychometric and standardised assessments were often referred to by TEPs to make sense of their feelings towards DA and acted as a comparison to DA. TEPs brought up these assessments and shared their views and feelings towards using standardised and psychometric methods of assessment as opposed to DA. Often, the feelings expressed toward standardised and psychometric assessment were negative and suggested a dislike and rejection of this assessment method. There seemed to be a feeling of uncomfortableness around using psychometric assessment. For example, Mya expressed feeling different when using a psychometric assessment in comparison to DA; Mya suggested that they had felt stressed.

*'I had done a BAS as well and that felt so different ((laughter)) and it felt it felt stressful I felt stressed you know'* (Mya)

TEPs expressed their dislike of standardised and psychometric assessments with them being thought of as a 'cold' assessment that did not develop a relationship with the child. One of the reasons for this was due to feeling helpless to support the child during the assessment and having to allow the child to fail multiple times. This was illustrated by Jan and Patrick

*'very often I think they know they know that they're struggling or they know that they're failing the task and then I can kind of see that affect the children quite a bit'* (Jan)

*'I couldn't or is because it's very standardised I mean currently I mean you can do little things but you can't obviously give them a prompt or anything like that'* (Patrick)

The requirement for the child to fail in a standardised or psychometric assessment was linked to the idea that this assessment is challenging for the child and causes a feeling of helplessness in the assessor.

*'When you have to do a standardised assessment...you need them to fail X number of times before you can stop the assessment and they know that they're failing or finding something really really difficult and there's nothing you can do to help'* (Jan)

TEP's felt that psychometric assessment was a within-child way of working and more centred around problems rather than strength. This suggests that these assessments may not fit well with the idea that the EP role is to provide a holistic view of the child.

*'I'm not sure about psychometric I'm not sure about psychometric...they're a bit (.) within child'* (Patrick)

In addition, TEPs expressed that they were not always sure how standardised and psychometric assessments were applicable to classroom practice. TEPs commented about their uncertainty about how seeing a child fail and getting a standardised score on their ability translates into how to support the child.

*'I guess the bigger debate is like what how much do you get from the seeing if a child can't do things you know like scored this on this....what does it mean also so what about it so'* (Emily)

The following quote illustrates the feeling that DA helps to identify teaching strategies whereas standardised and psychometric approaches do not.

*'Dynamic assessment would kind of help you be able to identify {teaching strategies} whereas if you did a cognitive assessment for example then that really doesn't lend itself to what now then it just you know it just kind of says well these are the issues'* (Sophie)

#### **4.5.2. There are a few hurdles when using DA**

Although TEPs did prefer to use DA and expressed this was their preferred method of assessment, as highlighted in the previous theme, TEPs acknowledged that practising DA did not come without its challenges. This theme is separated into four subthemes which go into detail about the challenges TEPs felt they faced when using DA.

##### *4.5.2.1. DA can stir up feelings of anxiety*

TEPs referred to the anxiety they felt when using DA. This was interpreted by the researcher to sometimes be implicit in what TEPs were saying, and at other times it was more explicit. The TEPs expressed many reasons why they felt they experienced some anxiety or worry when using DA. Across the TEPs, a feeling of worry about being judged by others for using DA was conveyed. TEPs referred to a range of other people they may feel judged by; this included EP colleagues, other professionals, schools and parents. Tracey mentioned the feeling of judgement from people within the EP service and linked this to feelings of confidence.

*'If you're surrounded by people that go 'well what's that nonsense like no no no go back and get a WISC you know that's what I always do' you're not gonna feel confident'*  
(Tracey)

Furthermore, Mya shared feeling apologetic to teachers for suggesting DA and felt that this was not the type of assessment that they from the EP service.

*'I sort of felt apologetic about suggesting dynamic...somehow it wasn't maybe something that teachers always wanted'* (Mya)

A range of interviewees expressed that they often felt anxious when completing DA due to their worry about not getting it right. This seemed to suggest that DA can be a somewhat complex assessment to use. This was expressed by Tracey and Poppy

*'The CATM and I I don't actually know if I'm doing it properly'* (Tracey)

*'I think because there was just so much limited experience that I had I am not sure that I did it properly if that makes sense'* (Poppy)

Additionally, Sophie shared their worry about missing something during the DA

*'I think that's my big sort of worry sometimes is that when you so in the moment and it's not coming so naturally to you and you're still a bit of a novice and your head is in 'oh what are they doing what should I be doing what do I do next' you know that you kind of miss something of importance'* (Sophie)

There was a sense of DA being vast and a reference to the idea that *'anything can be DA'* (mentioned by Tracey). Although some viewed this as good, when it was too vast, there was a sense of ambiguity, which meant using this assessment tool could be anxiety-provoking.

*'I think it if if you make the scope too big and you go and say 'oh you can go and do anything' it can feel a little bit unnerving'* (Sophie)

The TEPs seemed to be of the view that despite having had DA training, they still did not feel confident or adequately competent to use it. This suggested a view that it may not be possible to ever feel entirely competent and anxiety-free from using DA, which links to the ideas above about DA being vast, a judgement surrounding the use of DA and the complexity of using DA. To illustrate this, a quote from Becky has been used.

*'To be honest I feel like the training I have had has got me thus far I don't necessarily feel it's sufficient because I still have lots of unknowns'* (Becky)

#### 4.5.2.2. DA is shrouded in some mystery

There was a feeling among TEPs that DA could be difficult to administer and interpret. TEPs commented about being uncertain about elements of DA, with Mya using the phrase *'in the dark'* to express how they felt. If TEPs had not received training on a DA tool, they felt unsure about how to administer it. This was expressed by Jan.

*'I know that that the CATM is one that we have in in my local authority erm and I and I've kind of looked at it I just wouldn't know where to start with it'* (Jan)

At times, DA was viewed as subjective and abstract. Some TEPs felt that there is a level of uncertainty when using and interpreting DA, which makes it challenging, as mentioned by Sophie.

*'There's not a rulebook with it in the same way it's very much based on your interpretation and what I see and what the next if a different person did it they might see something different so then you think 'well can I legitimately say this then and it'd be kind of taken for truth?'* (Sophie)

Interpreting the results and writing up the reports appeared to be a significant area TEPs were unsure about. Many of the TEPs questioned *'so what?'* after conducting DA. TEPs felt unsure about how what they had done in the assessment linked to the child's abilities and support for the child. This was expressed in length by Sophie.

*'I felt a little bit like 'great I've kind of found you know for example that that child can sit for a lot longer than I thought he could and he could concentrate for longer than the school thought he could but how do I make sense of what happened? You know how do I know what I saw when he did that so what does that tell me about his ability'* (Sophie)

#### 4.5.2.3. Finding the place for DA amongst the traditional psychometric assessment

As in the previous theme of 'It has to be DA', this subtheme also captures TEPs comparison between DA and psychometric. In this subtheme, the reasons why psychometric might be more favourable to use are captured. It suggested that TEPs were weighing up and considering the pros and cons of both assessments and finding the place for DA within the more well-known psychometric method of assessing children. TEPs considered the view of assessments and shared their experiences psychometric could be viewed by others (e.g. EPs, schools, parents and other professionals) as the 'gold standard' and the expected assessment for EPs to use. This meant that TEPs could feel a certain level of pressure to use a psychometric assessment although they preferred DA. Tracey considered this during their interview.

*'Maybe externally when you have those pressures of tribunals especially in placement services I'm at it's a lot of tribunals and you have attitudes from SEN er and perhaps parents and schools that you know you've got a sort of hierarchy of what's considered a good assessment and often they will assume a psychometric is like an EP assessment'*  
(Tracey)

TEPs shared that they did like that psychometric assessments can provide a feeling of containment and safety because there is a guide or script to follow, which you might not get from DA. This view was shared by Poppy and Becky.

*A person who let's say uses standardised assessment you can kind of follow a script and that can feel safe and you know 'oh yeah I'm doing this the right way'* (Poppy)

*'I had I relied on the structure in the scripts that you get with doing stuff like the WICS or the BAS'* (Becky)

#### 4.5.2.4. Covid-19 limited DA learning and use

The context of Covid-19 is important to consider within this research. The TEPs who took part in the interviews were training during the Covid-19 pandemic. As the interviewed TEPs were from different year groups, Covid-19 seemed to impact them differently, with some TEPs feeling it more than others. TEPs who did feel Covid-19 had impacted them shared that it had been detrimental to their development of learning and using DA. The TEPs perceived Covid-19 to have limited their opportunities to practice using DA, as shown in the quote from Sophie.

*'Then obviously everything went online there was lockdown erm and so I wasn't able to use it' (Sophie)*

Other TEPs, such as Poppy, saw Covid-19 as limiting shadowing opportunities which in turn was a detriment to their learning about DA.

*'I think for me the barriers have been the fact that I haven't been able to observe someone in my local authority last year even though there were like there were lots of Educational Psychologists who would use it because of the context erm the pandemic we weren't able to go in schools as much so erm that was that wasn't possible' (Poppy)*

#### 4.5.3. Don't go it alone

This theme is related to the TEP's perceptions of the importance of being supported by others to learn and use DA. Relating to the challenges of DA, it seemed that to get over these hurdles and develop their DA practice, TEPs had to connect with other TEPs and EPs. The researcher has produced three subthemes to explore this further.

#### 4.5.3.1. A little help from my friends

TEPs perceived other people's support as helpful to learning and using dynamic assessment. The people who TEPs identified as sources of support were other TEPs, EPs on their placement or the DA trainer. This included having opportunities to reflect on DA practice and having conversations with colleagues and peers to develop the use of DA. Sophie and Patrick expressed these points.

*'A couple of EPs in particular that are quite good with dynamic assessment they use it a lot so I've been able to kind of have some reflection time with them a little kind of supervision and just go through you know what happened what their interpretations might be what they think I could write up'* (Sophie)

*'I think it's valuable speaking to people about it getting feedback and getting and having that interaction and getting people's experiences people's thoughts on it'* (Patrick)

TEPs also found that sharing more concrete things around DA, such as resources and reports, to be beneficial to their DA practice.

*'One of the other trainees had experience of using another so so the 16 Word Memory Test and she created like a visual resource and and share shared it with me'* (Poppy)

*'We were given example reports to look at which was useful'* (Becky)

#### 4.5.3.2. A supervisor's helping hand

A second subtheme around support encapsulated the support the TEPs received from their supervisor, which they felt helped them learn about DA and use this assessment. Patrick shared that his supervisor had been able to provide him with a bag of DA tools. This may suggest the importance of supervisors knowing about DA and using it in their practice to efficiently support TEPs.

*'I've got a supervisor last year that erm had a lot of dynamic assessment tools and sort of gave me a big bag of her tools' (Patrick)*

This subtheme included the view that a supervisor's encouragement of DA was important, as expressed by Becky.

*'My supervisor was really supportive...she's noticed that what I'm drawn to which is dynamic assessment so she encourages me to develop and to try different things in that area' (Becky)*

Part of the role of a supervisor is to support TEPs reflections on their practice. The TEPs interviewed in this study viewed reflecting with their supervisor as valuable to their DA practice. This was felt even when the supervisor did not use DA in their practice, as shared by Sophie.

*'My supervisor has been great but my supervisor doesn't use dynamic assessment...she'll be the kind of person who observes me and then we can have a bit of a reflection' (Sophie)*

Jan expressed that reflecting with their supervisor helped them feel more confident in their interpretation of a DA with a child.

*'I would say probably supervision was most helpful and being able to just talk that through with somebody and get a second opinion and know that you know maybe what I had observed actually yeah it was it was kind of a reasonable thing to to conclude' (Jan)*

#### 4.5.3.3. *Watch and learn*

Shadowing opportunities were seen to be crucial for TEP's DA understanding and use. TEPs linked shadowing opportunities to developing confidence and understanding of DA tools. The following quote demonstrates this.

*'I don't think I was confident because I hadn't had the opportunity to observe this in placement I wasn't very confident in doing so myself erm'* (Poppy)

Another way to shadow or see DA in practice was through videos of an EP using DA with a child or young person. It is possible that the increased use of videos to learn about DA was due to the current context of Covid-19 but could still be a valuable method for TEPs to learn about DA when in person. Emily shared their appreciation for the use of videos in the training session.

*'It's really helpful seeing her show us she sort of showed us some videos on the on the screen and we went through them it was just really really helpful'* (Emily)

#### **4.5.4. *Wider systems have a strong influence on DA learning and use***

A theme of the wider systems around the TEP was generated to capture how the university and EP service impacted TEPs DA learning and practice. The university and EP placement form two different subthemes.

##### 4.5.4.1. *EP service*

TEPs felt that the EP service significantly influenced their learning and practice of DA. One aspect of this was the impact of the EP service's expectations of what assessments TEPs and EPs should use with children. TEPs mentioned that services could expect the use of DA or psychometric assessments, which impacted what was resourced within the service. Some services were keen to allow the TEPs and EPs to have autonomy over their assessment

decisions and therefore supported either decision of DA or psychometric. Tracey shared that psychometric was expected within their service. This impacted their ability to access DA resources.

*'At the service because it's a standard thing like 'oh we've lost all the bloody blocks and we've lost the manual' like we just want just give me a resource you know they said 'we've got the BAS' (Tracey)*

In comparison, Emily belonged to a service that only used DA, and thus DA was integrated into their practice.

*'I am in a placement that only uses dynamic assessment there's a big thing about not using psychometrics (.) so it's quite part of my practice' (Emily)*

In Sophie's service, they were trusted to choose an assessment based on the needs of the child.

*'My service or not they're not they don't like you to do cognitive assessments necessarily they like you to do whatever you want to do they trust us you know as EPs to do what we think is best for the child in the situation' (Sophie)*

Some TEPs viewed their EP service as supporting and developing their understanding of DA. Both Tracey and Sophie had been provided training on DA while on placement. Although Tracey mentioned that they had found it difficult to access DA resources, their placement had put on training on DA; this may suggest a shift in assessment practice. TEPs regarded services providing DA training to staff to suggest that the EP service viewed DA as a valuable assessment.

*'I've done some training at the service I was on placement in my third year erm and they just did it was like a days CPD' (Tracey)*

*'I think we it was like maybe a couple of one no maybe like three one hour sessions in my placement' (Sophie)*

#### 4.5.4.2. University

TEPs viewed the university as being another influence on their DA practice. Some of the TEPs perceived their university to value DA and embedded this throughout the course, making them feel encouraged to use DA, as voiced by Poppy and Jan.

*'I think for me was really like the fact it's not just a standalone session it's something that's continuously discussed through the course and kind of we're encouraged to do it and it's not just the requirement to tick the box off' (Poppy)*

*'I think erm I think the university that I go to is quite a fan of dynamic assessment erm they're pretty big on it' (Jan)*

As mentioned previously, TEPs compared DA to psychometric assessments. A few TEPs felt that the university encouraged DA by being sceptical of traditional psychometric methods of assessment and believed DA to link to the university's values. Sophie offered their view on this.

*'At [university name] as well we it kind of prides itself on being very critical...we've done quite a lot about the history of Educational Psychology and the history of IQ testing and you know intelligence testing...I think erm that's that's probably influenced me' (Sophie)*

At some universities, TEPs completed an essay about assessment practice, and they found this to help deepen their understanding of assessments generally as well as DA.

*'We wrote a erm an essay around dynamic assessment so I guess that sort of erm really confirmed all those ideas got me reading wider around the topic' (Mya)*

#### **4.5.5. The ingredients for a training session to upskill TEPs in DA**

This theme was generated to capture the key aspects of DA training sessions. One part of this theme was around the TEP's views of the characteristics of the person delivering the training session (referred to in this research as the trainer). The trainer was either a member of staff from the university or an external EP from a LA. There were two characteristics of trainers that the interviewees valued. Firstly, the trainer's passion for DA was mentioned. Secondly, the trainer's expertise of DA. This suggests that TEPs appreciated trainers who were fans of DA, knowledgeable and could share their experiences with them. This was captured by Poppy and Becky.

*'It was really erm I think that really impacted how I also perceived it I think that their expertise and also their er passion for it really made me think 'oh yeah this is a good a good method to use' (Poppy)*

*'One of our tutors erm she's very much all about dynamic assessment just the way in which she is able to articulate it explain it and the passion that comes through when she's talking about it has also drawn me to using it' (Becky)*

Another factor of the training mentioned by the TEPs as helpful was the discussions and practice of dynamic assessment tools, as expressed by Claire and Jan.

*'There was a good good amount of that less of that and more taking us through how to actually use different types of dynamic assessments' (Claire)*

*'Our lecturer I think was like picking people and demonstrating a few examples on them I know I think I did the Complex Figure Drawing I can't remember but but yeah so we were shown a few examples of them' (Jan)*

TEPs perceived it helpful when the training session offered practical resources for DA. Practical resources included books, PowerPoint presentations, adapted DA tools and handouts. Emily shared the resources which she found helpful.

*'She at the time gave us like some like handouts of the cognitive skills and examples of the Complex Figure Drawing and like mediation you know sort of worksheets'* (Emily)

Many of the TEPs referred to their training about DA as grounded in theory and psychology. An example of this comes from a quote from Jan.

*'We had at least one day that was a taught day at my university in Year one on dynamic assessment and that was covering like the theory being it most of us had never encountered dynamic assessment or heard of it before so it was going into the theory behind it'* (Jan)

#### **4.5.6. DA is applicable to EP work in schools**

The researcher created a theme around the TEPs perceptions of the application DA has to EPs work with schools. TEPs referred to ways in which DA was fitted to EP practice and supportive of work with schools; this has been separated into three subthemes.

##### *4.5.6.1. Centred around the child*

TEPs deemed DA to be centred around the child. This included their perception of children being happy and comfortable during the assessment, as shared by Mya.

*'you could see him erm and see you know sort of like how he learnt in a situation he felt comfortable'* (Mya)

TEPs believed that DA was a non-threatening form of assessment. Becky felt that this was due to having fun with the child rather than making them feel like they were being tested.

*'I then started the dynamic assessment it didn't feel like I was doing a test to her or I was just like assessing her it felt to her I'm assuming or from my perception that I was still just having a conversation and getting to know her'* (Becky)

There was an idea among TEPs that DA was an inclusive form of assessment due to the assessor working collaboratively with the child. This was presented in the quote from Mya.

*'Yeah definitely you you know it feels collaborative and you feel like you're learning something together'* (Mya)

Emily shared that she had included the child by writing a summary of the DA for them.

*'I did it a few times last year where I actually kind of like I wrote like a little summary for the child'* (Emily)

DA was viewed as an approach which got the best out of the child, as expressed by Sophie.

*'to find out what children are capable of and what they can do but in a much more humane way perhaps in a much more supportive way or in a kind of a way that gets the best out of children'* (Sophie)

TEPs mentioned that they felt that they could focus on the child by choosing a DA tool that fit the child's strengths and interests. Furthermore, TEPs expressed they could be responsive to the child's needs during the assessment. For example, Becky shared their experience of choosing DA.

*I was going to do the Complex Figure Drawing as soon as I knew they didn't like drawing I was like 'well why am I going to make a child knowingly do something they don't think they are good at'...what did the 16 word memory test and they liked that because they liked remembering things'* (Becky)

#### 4.5.6.2. Transferable to the classroom

TEPs viewed DA as transferable to classroom practice. TEPs felt DA is representative of pupils' experiences of being in the classroom. One aspect relating to this was that in DA the assessor could support/mediate and work alongside the child to help their learning which was reflective of a child receiving support from a peer or friend. Patrick shared his thoughts on DA and classroom practice.

*'I just because it's more akin to a normal experience for a child in a classroom it is very rare especially like this was a primary school child that would just sit there being asked to do work on their own....they're going to be working with with TAs or with teachers or other classmates' (Patrick)*

Furthermore, there was an idea that DA translates well into the classroom expectations in terms of cognitive learning skills (such as memory) and following instructions. For example, Sophie expressed the following.

*'I think that relates like really nicely to what they're expected to do in a classroom and I think well if they can't hold three pieces of information in their head to follow my instructions' (Sophie)*

For some TEPs, DA was perceived as valuable for identifying strategies that could translate into classroom practice and were easy for teachers to implement. In Sophie's case, they felt DA was good at helping to identify classroom strategies.

*'Dynamic assessment is good in the you know if you've tried out a certain type of mediation or certain type of teaching strategy within that assessment and it was really useful so the the visuals as prompts and that really helps then you could say well he he responds well to visuals so therefore why can't you try doing X Y and Z in the classroom' (Sophie)*

It should be noted that in the previous theme regarding challenges, there was mentioned that some TEPs regarded DA as difficult to interpret. The researcher suggests this conflict could highlight the benefits of support. It could be that after support (e.g. reflection with their supervisor) TEPs felt better equipped to identify strategies.

#### *4.5.6.3. DA brings value to the context*

This subtheme captures the feeling from TEPs that DA adds value to the context. Many TEPs emphasised that DA provides specific information about a child's areas of strength and need, which is beneficial for their work with teachers and insightful for supporting a child's learning. A quote from Sophie highlights this.

*'I could I was able to pinpoint specific areas of need erm so rather than it being oh they've got an issue with cognitive and learning which is quiet big erm I was able to kind of narrow that down a little more'* (Sophie)

In some situations, DA was able to provide a way to reframe the narrative around a child or young person so that the key adults could better understand the child, as experienced and described by Jan.

*'Almost like an epiphany moment for the teachers and the parents who suddenly went 'but we had no idea like we literally didn't know'...I think it was probably masking actually quite quite a lot of fear and anxiety related to schoolwork'* (Jan)

#### *4.5.7. Give it some welly*

This theme encapsulates how TEPs put effort into using and developing their understanding of DA. This is likely to be influenced by the themes 'There are a few hurdles when using DA'

and ‘It has got to be DA’. TEPs may feel the need to put effort into using DA due to the challenges of using it and their motivation to use it.

#### *4.5.7.1. DA requires investment*

TEPs conceptualised DA as a method that requires you to invest in using it and continue to make investments in developing your practice in it. Some TEPs commented on having to put their own time and money into developing their DA knowledge. For example, Tracey laughed and sounded incredulous that they and their university cohort paid for further DA assessment training (this was in addition to the university training).

*‘We bought in someone we paid to fly in [Trainer name] ((laughter))...he gave us a day training package so we all paid it out of our own you know pocket’ (Tracey)*

Moreover, some TEPs felt the need to seek opportunities to further their training in DA and use their time and money to pay for this training once they were qualified. DA is seen as an ongoing learning process. TEPs recognised that they would need to continue to practice DA and broaden their use of different DA tools.

*‘It’s definitely something that I want to keep developing and keep using’ (Jan)*

#### *4.5.7.2. Persuading schools to use DA*

TEPs felt that, at times, they had to persuade schools to use DA. This subtheme links to the subtheme of ‘Finding the place for DA among traditional psychometric assessments’ as this highlights that some school staff can view psychometric assessments as ‘*gold standard*’ and more valuable than DA. TEPs described their experiences of persuading schools and the ways in which they have found helpful or would be helpful to convince schools that DA is a valuable assessment method. TEPs shared reflections that they needed to be assertive about using DA to assess children.

*'You're really kind of persistent and you can communicate erm with schools and you're showing your passion' (Poppy)*

There were comments from the TEPs that had to sell the benefits of DA to the school. Poppy shared their plan to do this in the future.

*I think now that's something I will do with my school...it's no as time consuming as doing a whole yeah BAS 3 assessment so maybe that will also sell it' (Poppy)*

One way TEPs could convince schools to use DA was by referring to the psychology and theory behind DA, as suggested by Patrick below. This links with the theme 'Ingredients for skilling TEPs to use DA' regarding how the learning was grounded in psychology and theory. It is beneficial for TEPs to learn the psychology and theory around DA so they can refer to this in their practice.

*I guess the theory and practice is always on your mind because you sort of you of eventually sort of linking things back to theory aren't ya and erm that gives it more weight' (Patrick)*

Some TEPs felt that showing key adults (e.g. parent/carer or teacher) DA either by presenting the findings visually in the report or having the adult shadow the DA as a helpful way to demonstrate the value of DA. Tracey shared their experience of this.

*That's always good to get the SENCo there because you can then talk in more general terms with the SENCo afterwards about how else like how might this help and understanding of other children' (Tracey)*

#### 4.5.7.3. *Practice makes perfect*

This subtheme was created to capture TEPs views of the importance of practising DA. Some TEPs felt that the first time they had completed DA, it had not gone to plan. For example, Tracey described the first few times they used DA.

*'I mean it would have been a complete not a complete disaster but a bit of a mess the first few times (.)' (Tracey)*

TEPs shared their experiences of practising DA with others, including family members, colleagues and peers, and spending time looking at the tools on their own.

*'It's nice to play about with physical kit like blocks and thing like that and you know the rush hour....you sort of thinking about ways you could incorporate that into your into your practice' (Patrick)*

This included the view that TEPs and EPs should give DA a go instead of fearing it as confidence and learning grow with practice. Patrick and Mya were both of this view.

*'I think er using it is key because it is is a thing that you do you do I guess you as a practitioner develop using it as well as and reporting it...it is a process for you as well and that's valuable so having the opportunity' (Patrick)*

*'I'm aware that you need to keep practising and you need to keep doing regularly to feel confident' (Mya)*

## 4.6. Summary of phase 2 (Qualitative data)

The researcher developed seven themes and seventeen subthemes. These were created by the researcher from the dataset to make sense of participants' experiences. The themes and subthemes have been used to tell a story about what had been said by the participants regarding

their understanding and use of DA. In summary, the researcher has used themes to inform the reader about TEPs reasons for choosing DA over standardised or psychometric assessments as well as TEPs reasons for feeling that DA is a valuable tool to use in schools. Furthermore, the researcher has identified the university and EP placement as influential to TEPs DA practice. Using themes, the researcher has acknowledged TEP's perceptions of the challenges TEPs faced in using DA. Additionally, the researcher has highlighted to the reader that TEPs recognised a need for peer, colleague and supervisor support to use DA. Lastly, the research has identified TEP's perceptions on the effort needed to use and learn about DA. Overall, the researcher has presented TEPs' experiences developing their understanding and use of DA using themes and subthemes formed from the data.

#### **4.7. Reflections from the researcher on completing Reflexive Thematic analysis**

Braun and Clarke (2022) emphasised the need for the researcher to spend time writing about how they applied Reflexive Thematic Analysis rather than just a generic description of the process. Therefore this section offers insight from the researcher about the process of data analysis.

After completing all the transcriptions and checking for validity, I felt lost of where to start with the data. Referring to my Braun and Clarke (2022) book, I used this to guide my thinking. I entered the first stage of familiarisation with uncertainty but quickly became immersed in the data noticing patterns and ideas which shaped my thoughts about the data. I noticed that to understand DA; the participants often used other assessments (mainly standardised and psychometric and sometimes projective assessments) to express their views, learning and use of DA. Participants touched upon their own values, the values of the university and those of EP services and noted the influences these had. I found that some participants drew me in, and

I agreed wholeheartedly with what they had to say. While others, I gritted my teeth and silently disagreed with what was said. I noted this mainly when a participant spoke about the importance of scoring a DA. I took time to reflect using supervision and a research diary on my own beliefs and experiences of DA, which were getting in the way of my immersion in the data.

The task of coding was daunting and complex for me. I spent days and weeks coding the data. After having gone through all of the transcripts once, I reviewed my codes and felt a sense of disappointment in myself for how I had coded the data. Some of the codes were one word (e.g. 'vulnerability' or 'confidence'); they were too broad and didn't mean anything. At the same time, other codes were too specific and could only capture something in one person's thought process. I went back to the battlefield and re-coded my dataset. I reminded myself of my critical realist perspective and took time identifying semantic and latent code from the lived experiences of the TEPs. After the third time of re-coding, I felt the codes were good enough. I came out of coding battered but triumphant; I had won the battle.

I felt surprisingly thrilled about looking at shared patterned meaning across the datasets and generating candidate themes. After untangling myself from the web of coding and I started to create a thematic map of potential themes. I became tangled again when trying to ensure that the themes addressed my study's aims and research questions. Some themes felt easy to create, while others felt more complex and nuanced to put into words. After coming up with my themes, I used my supervision space to look at and reflect on them. This helped me relook at some of my themes and supported me in justifying the reasoning behind other themes. After re-theming, I felt happy with the story I was telling about the dataset. Following this, I wrote up my analysis. During my write-up, I had to go back and alter some of the themes and subthemes.

#### **4.8. Chapter overview**

This chapter has provided an analysis of both datasets. The quantitative data has been described using frequencies and percentages, with the information being presented visually in tables and graphs. The qualitative data has been analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis. Themes and subthemes have been created to make sense of the interview data. The researcher provided reflections on completing Reflective Thematic Analysis, which can help the reader understand how the themes were developed. The findings will further be discussed in the next chapter. The qualitative (Phase 1) and quantitative (Phase 2) data will be mixed together and thought about in consideration of each sub research question. Furthermore, both datasets will be located in the current knowledge and literature.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **5.1. Chapter overview**

The final chapter provides commentary on the current research findings and makes links to the two research questions. The researcher will locate the findings in the current literature, theory and guidance from key professional bodies which was discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. The researcher has considered the following theories to understand the findings: 1) Bioecological Systems Theory, 2) Vygotsky, 3) Adult Learning Theories 4) Bandura's Social Learning Theory and 5) Psychoanalytic thinking. The findings will be discussed in relation to EP practice, and the researcher will outline a plan for disseminating the findings in the profession. The strengths and limitations of the study will be offered, and recommendations for future research will be made. Lastly, the researcher will share overall conclusions of the study.

### **5.2. Integrating findings and linking to the Research Question**

The current study aimed to address the research question '*What are TEP experiences of developing their understanding and practice in DA?*'. There were two sub questions for each phase of the research to help address the main research question. The findings will now be presented in relation to each of the sub research questions.

#### ***5.2.1. Commentary on sub question 1: What training have TEP's received and what opportunities to practice have they undertaken?***

The study's findings from Phase 1 (quantitative data from questionnaires) and Phase 2 (qualitative data from interviews) have provided insight into the training into the DA TEPs have received and the opportunities they have had to use DA in their practice. The findings indicate that the majority of TEPs (95%) had received training from their university on DA,

with most TEPs receiving up to 10 hours of training. A high percentage of TEPs felt that the training was helpful in supporting them to form an understanding of DA. A high amount of TEPs mentioned being DA users. Most frequently, TEPs had used DA with between 1 to 5 children and young people, with a few TEPs identifying using DA with a higher number. However, there was a feeling amongst TEPs that they were not using DA enough and would like to use it more in their practice. The findings suggest that TEPs are receiving training while completing the doctorate course and although many are using DA in their practice TEPs would like to be using it more.

### ***5.2.2. Commentary on sub question 2: What do TEP's say about their training and practice experiences?***

The qualitative data expanded on the quantitative data and has provided key factors which TEPs perceived as helpful in training. This included the characteristic qualities of the DA trainer. The findings suggest that TEPs valued the trainer's passion and expert knowledge of DA. TEPs also mentioned whether the trainer was a tutor on the course or from a nearby LA. In many cases, the trainer was an external EP from a local LA, suggesting the links between universities and LAs to upskill TEPs in DA. TEPs found it helpful in developing their understanding when the training session allowed discussions and practising DA. A number of TEPs felt that the training gave them a grounding for the theory and psychology behind DA, signifying that this is useful when using DA. There was an indication in the findings that TEPs felt that they needed to persuade schools to use DA. To do this, they had to have a good understanding of DA's background and the benefits of using DA compared to other assessment approaches.

Interestingly, although many TEPs in the questionnaires indicated that they found the training helpful, TEPs also commented that there is a need for ongoing learning. There was a sense that it was difficult for the TEPs to feel competent in their understanding of DA. This was due to

factors such as the vastness of DA methods and the ambiguity of DA. TEPs had paid for additional training, and others were prepared to do so after the course. Furthermore, many TEPs had found supplementary ways to learn about DA.

The findings showed additional ways in which TEPs developed their understanding of DA. One of the most vital factors appeared to be interacting with other people. This included having conversations and reflective spaces with EPs, TEP and supervisors. Moreover, TEPs felt that shadowing others and watching videos of people using DA supported their learning. The findings suggest that TEPs put effort into learning about DA. As mentioned above, some TEPs felt the need to seek more training. Additionally, many TEPs had spent time doing independent study/reading to develop their DA knowledge. For some TEPs, they felt that their EP service had supported their understanding of DA through CDP training. TEPs in this research suggested they thought they needed to use DA to understand it. Therefore it seems important to have opportunities to be using DA to deepen an understanding of DA.

The time in which this study was carried out needs to be considered. This research was conducted during Covid-19 where restrictions on gatherings impacted TEP's ability to access face-to-face learning. TEPs mentioned that Covid-19 and remote learning had a negative impact on the TEPs understanding of DA. This linked to the idea that TEPs felt they needed hands-on experiences and shadowing to understand DA better. TEPs mentioned that videos were important to their learning during this time. Although going forward, DA training to TEPs may be in person; this highlights the usefulness of videos. Furthermore, it seems essential to have practical and hands-on practice of DA during the training session.

This study indicated the importance of having a good understanding of a range of EP assessment tools. TEPs often spoke about their understanding of DA by comparing it to other EP assessments, such as standardised and projective assessments. TEPs expressed their thoughts on the pros and cons of DA by comparing it to other assessments. For example, DA

was viewed as a fun assessment for the assessor and child. In contrast, standardised and psychometric assessments were considered stressful for the assessor and a negative experience for the child. The reasons why standardised and psychometric assessments were seen to be a negative experience for the child included having to repeatedly fail, a lack of interaction with the adult, and the assessor being more focused on what the child cannot do. In addition, DA was seen to provide information about the child's areas of strength, whereas psychometric assessments were seen to offer information only about the child's areas of need.

When asked in the questionnaire about what the participants use DA tools, a wide range of DA tools were selected. This suggests that TEPs have a broad understanding of different DA tools. Feuerstein's methods seemed to be most familiar to TEPs, with a high percentage of TEPs selecting the Complex Figure Drawing and 16-word memory test in the questionnaire and speaking about these two tools in the interviews. In both the questionnaire and interviews, TEPs spoke about their views that anything could be DA and understood how to use DA principles in a game to assess a child. Some TEPs in the interviews expressed that they found the idea that anything can be DA challenging and unsure about how they would adapt a game to be used as a DA. This may suggest some difficulties in applying DA principles to novel tools.

In summary, to answer this first question TEPs in this study received training on DA, which was supportive of their understanding. Additionally, TEPs spend their time engaging in activities to enhance their DA understanding. TEPs felt they know about the psychology and theory behind DA and how to use DA tools. However, TEPs expressed concern that they would not be able to understand DA principles and tools fully. TEPs recognised the benefit of ongoing learning in DA.

TEPs used Feuerstein's tools the most in their practice, with the Complex Figure Drawing and 16-word memory test frequently used. TEPs also discussed using games in their DA (such

as Rush Hour). TEPs recognised that it was good that games could be used as they were fun and relatable to children. DA tools from Tzurriel and Lauchlan and Carrigan were also somewhat commonly used by TEPs. The wide range of tools selected in the questionnaires and TEPs comments that anything can be DA suggests that DA tools are vast. There were mixed feelings about this from the TEPs. TEPs expressed that having such flexibility was valuable. On the other hand, the vastness of DA made it somewhat difficult to follow and meant that the TEPs had to have adequate knowledge of DA principles and theory.

The findings indicate contextual factors which influenced TEPs DA use. Firstly, the university ethos was felt to be a factor which could encourage TEPs to use DA if tutors and part of the course valued it. Secondly, the EPS played a role in TEP's use of DA. Services which were viewed as more encouraging for learning about and using DA were those with accessible DA resources. Furthermore, the services that either expected the EPs and TEPs within the service to use DA or encouraged EPs and TEPs to use the assessment method they deemed the best for the child were also considered to be supportive of the use of DA. In comparison, TEPs indicated that EP services that valued and expected standardised or psychometric assessments made it more difficult to practice DA. Lastly, TEPs considered schools' expectations of EP assessment of children. There was a feeling among TEPs that there was pressure from schools to do psychometric assessments even though their preference was DA. Thus, TEPs felt that they needed to persuade schools to use DA by informing schools about the benefits of DA and linking DA to theory and psychology. In addition, some TEPs recognised that showing school staff DA either by using examples from the assessment in the report or having people observe them completing DA helped staff to see its value.

TEPs shared that DA was often the assessment they preferred and were motivated to use it. TEPs were motivated to use DA as they felt it was an enjoyable assessment to use. TEPs viewed DA as strengths based as it offers positive insight into the child's skills and abilities. They felt

that DA offered a transparent and honest way of working, which was not deceiving to children. Furthermore, TEPs felt that DA is an ethical form of assessment. There was an acknowledgement amongst TEPs that EPs often work with children who are vulnerable or from groups in which standardised and psychometric assessments have not been normed on (e.g. adopted children or children who have English as a Second Language). TEPs viewed DA as a valuable assessment tool to use on children from these groups.

To make sense of their experiences of using DA, lots of the TEPs compared their use of DA to standardised and psychometric assessments. In some ways, these two assessments were viewed as a negative or bad choice for assessing children. However, at times TEPs also recognised the place for standardised and psychometric assessments in the EP profession. Standardised and psychometrics was seen as a within-child approach centred around the problems; in comparison, DA is seen to be more holistic and provides information about a child's strengths. These assessments do not always seem to translate readily into classroom practice or be useful in identifying strategies. Some TEPs recognised DA's use in recommending strategies to use to support a child. TEPs also noted that they could find it challenging to interpret DA and felt uncertain about linking the findings from a DA to the child's abilities and support they could suggest.

Using DA was linked to feelings of anxiety and a lack of confidence among the TEPs. TEPs felt anxious when suggesting the use of DA. This is related to feeling worried about being judged by school staff and within the EP profession for suggesting the use of DA. Furthermore, TEPs mentioned feeling anxious or worried during the assessment due to concerns about not getting the DA right or missing something important. There was a feeling among TEPs that DA kits (e.g. CATM, CMB) provide more security about how to use them. In comparison, it was felt that standardised and psychometrics contained anxiety due to having scripts to ease administration. The TEPs expressed wanting to seek more training on dynamic assessment.

There seemed to be an acceptance that the DA training as a TEP was not quite enough and that the TEPs would need further or ongoing training to use DA in their practice. The researcher felt that there could be a feeling among TEPs that it was difficult to get to the point of feeling confident and competent to use DA.

To use DA, TEPs recognised the importance of support from others. Supervisors had an important role in support of using DA. TEPs felt that supervisors' views of DA could encourage or discourage them from using DA in their practice. A supervision space was felt supportive of DA if it provided a reflective space about the use and helped them to be confident to use it. Additionally, TEPs spoke about having support from their peers, including EP colleagues and TEPs. TEPs felt it was helpful to discuss experiences of using DA and share resources, including DA tools and reports. Lastly, TEPs felt that others influenced their confidence to use DA. The DA trainer's passion and knowledge of DA supported TEPs to feel more confident to go out and try to use DA. Support and supervision are viewed as essential for TEPs to maintain their DA practice.

In summary, to answer the question about TEPs' use of DA, the TEPs in this study were motivated to use DA and were commonly using various DA tools in their practice. However, TEPs would like more opportunities to use it. TEPs also felt anxious and not competent enough to use DA. TEPs perceived the university and EPS placement contexts as important to their use of DA and felt that support and supervision were needed.

### **5.3. Locating the findings in the existing knowledge and literature**

The researcher will make links between the findings, existing theories, and literature. These are based on their interpretations of the findings. The researcher independently reflected on these and made use of supervision space to consider her thoughts and ideas. Firstly, the current

literature outlined in Chapters 1 and 2 will be discussed. Secondly, the researcher will use different theories to relate to the research.

### ***5.3.1. Links to the literature***

#### *5.3.1.1. TEP's access to training in DA*

There is a limited amount of research considering DA training. The current researcher completed a literature search in Chapter 3 on DA practice. This provided three papers on DA training generally and highlighted that no previous research into TEPs DA training had been completed. Therefore, the current study adds to the general understanding of DA training and offers new information on DA training for TEPs.

Previous research indicates a lack of clarity around the amount of training that is adequate to practice DA. A study by Green (2015) found that 41% of EPs indicated that they felt four days or less was adequate training for DA. In comparison to these findings, Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) found that EPs who had less than 3 days of training did not feel that this was enough training for them to be confident to use DA in their practice. The findings from the current study suggested that TEPs from a range of universities in the UK are trained on DA during the doctorate programme with most receiving 10 hours of training. A high percentage of TEPs said that they felt the amount of DA training they had was sufficient. Although this suggests that 10 hours was felt to be good enough for DA practice, due to the descriptive nature of the analysis, it is not possible to infer connections between the number of hours received and feelings on whether this was sufficient. It is difficult to determine how similar this finding is to other literature due to the lack of clarification in previous studies on how many hours would constitute as a day.

#### *5.3.1.2. Content of DA training*

Currently, DA practice lacks a well-defined training and professional development pathway. Unlike Psychometric Assessments, DA approaches lack guidance from professional bodies

associated with Educational Psychology. Previous research has offered information about the content for DA training. As well the BPS Framework for Psychological Assessment and Intervention provide useful information on assessment practice which can inform DA training for TEPs and EPs (BPS, 2017b). The current research has contributed to understanding what content should be included in training in DA approaches; this was mostly highlighted in the theme ‘The ingredients for a training session to upskill TEPs in DA’.

An understanding of current psychological theories and research is essential knowledge for EP assessment practice (BPS, 2017b). Further to this, research into DA training has highlighted the need for individuals to be competent in the theory (Haywood & Lidz, 2005; Green & Birch, 2019). Green and Birch (2019) offered competencies which included understanding the origins of DA and Feuerstein’s theory. The current findings are consistent with previous research. TEPs who participated in the interviews felt that it was important for them to be provided training which was grounded in psychology and theory.

The BPS framework outlines that assessment should inform intervention (BPS, 2017b). A high amount of previous research suggested that DA can provide useful links to classroom practice (Lidz, 1991; Frisby & Braden, 1992; Haywood, 1997; Freeman & Miller, 2001; Haywood & Lidz, 2007; Lidz, 2014). Research conducted by Green and Birch (2019) suggested that DA users should be competent to link the results from the assessment to cognitive intervention. In the current study, the researcher generated the subtheme ‘Transferable to the classroom’ to capture TEP's views that DA provides recommendations which are translatable to the classroom. TEPs in the current research also noted that they perceived DA to provide more transferable recommendations than psychometric tests, this was also suggested by Freeman and Miller (2001). However, in opposition to this view, TEPs also viewed DA as challenging to interpret and therefore hard to form recommendations from. This contradicting finding that DA is valuable to the classroom and challenging to link to classroom

practice was also found by Deutsch and Reynolds (2000). It may highlight a need for adequate teaching and support to understand cognitive interventions and their links to DA approaches.

Green and Birch (2019) identified having the skills to use a range of DA tools as an essential competency for practice. Time to practice DA tools was deemed important during training in the current study. Haywood and Lidz's (2005) study also concluded that DA training needed to include time to learn specific DA tools as well as general principles of how to approach an assessment dynamically. In the latter study, there was a lack of clarity regarding whether more weight should be given to understanding principles of DA such as gradual mediation or learning specific DA tools. However, from the current study, it does seem important to TEPs to have some understanding of specific DA tools they can use.

#### *5.3.1.3. TEPs use of DA*

In the current research, the questionnaires indicated that a high proportion of TEPs identified themselves as a DA user. This differs from the findings in the study by Deutsch and Reynolds (2000). Deutsch and Reynolds found that out of the 88 EPs who responded to their survey, 58% identified as DA users; they concluded that this suggests that DA practice is limited. This may indicate that at the beginning of their journey to becoming an EP, TEPs are keen to use DA in their practice; however, over time, their use of DA becomes less. The researcher wonders about the differences between being an EP in training and being a qualified EP. Along with the current study, previous research suggested that EPs DA practice is influenced by training and support (Deutsch & Reynolds, 2000; Green & Birch, 2019). Therefore, it is possible that once qualified, EPs are not provided with the necessary ongoing training and support to effectively use DA and thus, their use of this assessment approach lessens. While in training, TEPs may have a certain level of protection regarding their time, giving them more opportunities to try using different DA tools. TEPs are provided with weekly supervision; however, once qualified supervision is reduced, and so EPs may feel less supported to use DA. Considering that Deutsch

and Reynolds study was conducted in 2000, the researcher also feels the differences between this research could reflect a change in time regarding training and highlight that there is now more DA training while on the doctorate.

The current study highlights the impact of the EPS context on DA practice. This was suggested in the subtheme 'EP service'. In the findings EPS expectations, attitudes and approaches to assessment were mentioned as key influences; these were also highlighted by two previous studies (Deutsch & Reynolds, 2000; Hussain & Woods, 2019). Additionally, the current study indicates the importance of the university context, this is a new insight into DA training due to TEPs DA use not having been researched previously. Such as the importance of the value the university tutors put on DA and the opportunities to learn about various assessment practices and their pros and cons.

#### *5.3.1.4. Support and supervision*

The BPS Framework for Psychological Assessment and Intervention indicated that EPs require ongoing support and supervision in their assessment practice (BPS, 2017b). The findings of this research and previous literature suggest the importance of support and supervision for the ongoing use of DA. In previous research, follow-up supervision is considered vital to using DA (Haywood & Lidz, 2015; Green & Birch, 2019) and those without supervisor or support did not start or maintain their use of DA in their practice (Deutsch & Reynold, 2000). The researcher found further evidence for the need for support and supervision within the current study. A high proportion (97%) of TEPs indicated that supervision was essential to DA practice within the questionnaire findings. The theme 'Don't go it alone' related to TEP's views on the importance of support from others (e.g. colleagues, tutors and supervisors) and suggestions about what this support would look like. The research highlights the usefulness of shadowing opportunities, discussions with colleagues and sharing resources for DA practice. Within supervision, participants indicated a number of ways supervisors could

support DA practice and learning. This included feeling encouraged by supervisors, being provided with DA tools and having a space within supervision to reflect on DA practice.

### ***5.3.2. Bioecological Systems Theory***

The findings indicate a need for a systemic approach to developing TEP DA practice. The researcher feels that these ideas can be extended to EP practice. The researcher made sense of the data using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems approach (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). In the 1970s, Bronfenbrenner (1979) founded the ecosystems approach. Bronfenbrenner suggested the environment of the child is embedded in an arrangement of systems (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Each structure is contained within the next one and the impact of one system on a child's development will depend on its relationship with the other systems. Bronfenbrenner organised these in order of effect on the child. Bronfenbrenner and colleagues later developed this to include the biosystem, which acknowledges the child and their physiological needs, and the chronosystem, representing changes over time in all systems. This developed theory was referred to as the bioecological system (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). With the child at the centre (e.g. the biosystem), there are five interrelated systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. Bronfenbrenner's work has contributed to the understanding of the development of children and young people; his work has been influential when working with children with SEND.

The researcher will now offer an adapted approach to Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) with the TEP at the centre to understand the layers of systems around the TEP which influence their DA practice. See Figure 5.1 for a visual representation of the researcher's adapted bioecological systems theory.

### 5.3.2.1. *The systems around the TEP influencing DA practice*

*Biosystem:* At the centre is the TEP. The TEP will have their own individual characteristics (e.g. age, learning needs, gender, biological sex), which may influence their DA practice.

*Microsystem:* The first level around the TEP is the microsystem; this refers to the people in direct contact with the TEP in their immediate environment. The findings suggest that these would be supervisors, EP and TEP colleagues, the DA trainer and university tutors. The relationships in the microsystem are bi-directional, meaning that the TEP is influenced by the thoughts and actions of others in their environment and can also influence others. The relationships are personal and critical to supporting the TEP's DA practice. For example, the findings suggest the need for a supervisor who can support DA practice by sharing resources and encouragement, providing a reflective supervisory space and assisting the TEP in developing their confidence. Therefore, TEP's relationships with supervisors who can help the TEP develop their DA are likely to affect the TEP positively.

*Mesosystem:* The mesosystem encompasses the interactions between the TEPs microsystems. The microsystems are seen to be interconnected and influence one another. For example, the interaction between the DA trainer and the placement supervisor. One participant mentioned that the DA trainer had offered to train placement supervisors in DA. An additional example which was not spoken about by the participants could be the interaction between a placement supervisor and tutor supervisor. According to Bronfenbrenner, if the microsystems (e.g. represented by interaction between supervisors) have a good relationship, this will positively affect the TEPs DA practice.

*Exosystem:* The exosystem incorporates the formal and informal social structures which indirectly affect the TEP as they influence the microsystem. These are the environments in which the TEP is not directly involved but impacts them. The data could include the following in the exosystem: the university training offered to TEPs, the EPS policies and assessment

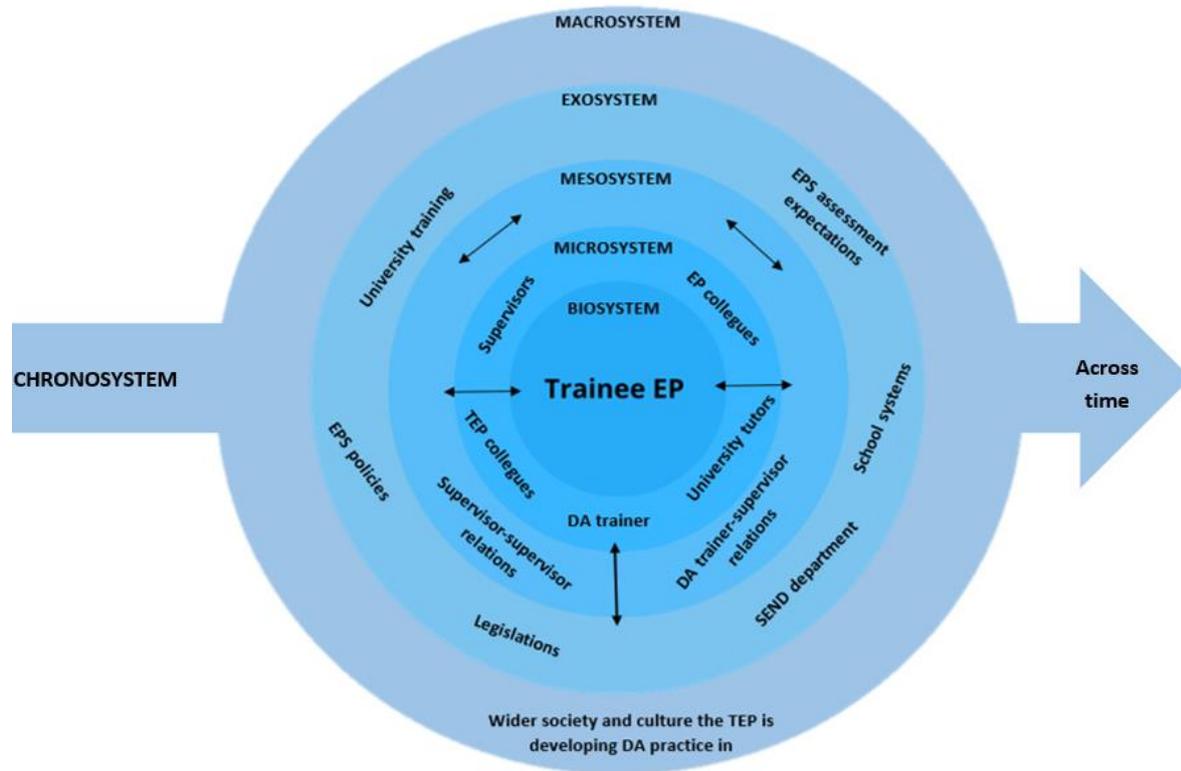
expectations, the SEND department and the school systems with which TEPs work. The research also wishes to expand upon TEPs views and offer the following to the exosystem, the EPS service delivery model (e.g. traded, non-traded or part traded), the current educational funding, current legislation (e.g. The Equality Act, 2010 and Children and Families Act, 2014) and SEN processes for resource allocation.

*Macrosystem:* The macrosystem focuses on cultural elements impacting on TEPs. Based on the data, the researcher feels that the demographics of the children in the borough would fit into the macrosystem. Many participants spoke about the type of children they have completed DA with (e.g. vulnerable children and those with EAL). Additionally, the researcher has suggested that the EP culture around assessment practice (e.g. whether this is part of the EP role and what assessments EPs should be using) could be influential in TEP DA practice.

*Chronosystem:* The Chronosystem includes the environmental changes that occur over the TEP's lifetime, which influence development. In the research findings, TEP's previous jobs are mentioned as an influence on their DA practice as well as the need for ongoing support and supervision to use DA. Furthermore, the researcher has considered other factors which were not mentioned by the TEPs, such as changes over time in the values and experiences of universities regarding assessment practice, changes over time to the EP role and the legislations linked to their role. For example, the researcher acknowledges that assessment practice in EP practice has changed over time, and more emphasis has been given to using alternative methods to assessment other than psychometric assessments (Freeman & Miller, 2001).

**Figure 5. 1**

*An adapted version of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological Systems theory to relate to TEP DA practice*



### 5.3.3. Vygotsky

Bronfenbrenner's theory has been used to think about the systems influencing the TEP (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The researcher considered the link between the importance of the microsystem for TEPs learning about DA and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development Theory.

Within the findings, those in the TEPs microsystem (e.g. the DA trainer and supervisors) were important for TEP's learning and many TEPs expressed feeling incompetent and not confident to use DA. Views from Vygotskian thinking see adults, or more competent others, as essential to the cognitive development of children (Haywood & Lidz, 2007). In this theory, Vygotsky suggests working in the child's zone of proximal development. This means working within the gap between what the individual can do without support and what they

cannot yet do. In the case of supervising TEPs, this model may be used as a way to scaffold support effectively. Supervisors and TEPs could collaboratively work together to think about what would bridge the gap in the TEP's learning and support them in developing their DA practice. As suggested above, there is a range of ways in which supervisors could support TEPs. Supervisors would play a role in making suggestions to develop learning and overcome challenges to create more effective practice. This may involve offering problems within the TEP's capacity to answer (e.g. their zone of proximal development). Additionally, the supervisor would allow for success and for TEPs to demonstrate their competence. Vygotsky's idea of the zone of proximal development and the importance of the social learning context puts the assessor (or supervisor) in the role of the mediator who works to create the conditions that will lead a TEP a higher level of competence and confidence in DA practice.

#### ***5.3.4. Adult Learning Theories***

The research was interested in understanding how TEPs are learning about dynamic assessment. Research and theories relating to adult learning were used to understand the findings. Adult learning Theories were developed in the mid-twentieth century and adopted a humanistic psychology perspective which focused on how adult learning could be distinguished from children's learning (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). A humanistic perspective highlighted personal growth and development. Three core Adult Learning will be discussed and linked to the current research.

##### ***5.3.4.1. Andragogy***

Knowles distinguished adult learning from children's learning in his theory of Andragogy (Knowles, 1980; 1984). He provided a set of assumptions about adult learners, these included the following:

1. As a person develops, their self-concept shifts from that of a dependent personality towards a self-directing one.
2. An adult gathers a growing reservoir of experience, which is a valuable means of learning.
3. The readiness of an adult to learn is associated with the developmental tasks of their social role.
4. There is a change in time perspective as people mature and adults shift from the future application of knowledge to the immediacy of application. Therefore, an adult is problem-centred in learning (Knowles, 1980).
5. Adults are primarily propelled by internal motivators.
6. Adults need to know the reason for learning something (Knowles, 1984).

#### *5.3.4.2. Self-Directed Learning*

At a similar time to Knowles's introduction of Andrology, Self-Directed Learning further noted the difference between adult and children learners. Knowles's assumption that as a person develops, they become more self-directing links to the theory of Self-Directed Learning coined by Tough (1971). Self-directed learning recognises the importance of a learner taking control of their learning.

#### *5.3.4.3. Transformative learning*

Both Andrology and Self-Directed Learning theories focus on the characteristics of adult learners' while Mezirow's transformative learning focuses on the cognitive process of meaning-making for adult learners. Transformative learning is dependent on experiences provided by adult life and more advanced levels of cognitive functioning that adults have (Mezirow, 1978). According to this theory, learning in adulthood is not just about acquiring more information. It is also about making sense of experiences and can lead to a change in belief, attitude or perspective. Perspective transformation is key to this type of learning.

Mezirow (2000) outlined the steps in the transformational learning process which usually start with a sudden or dramatic experience wherein adults are challenged to examine their assumptions and beliefs which may no longer be seen as sufficient. The learner then moves to explore new ways of managing the predicament which may result in changes in belief, attitude and perspective (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). The new perspective an adult has is more inclusive and accommodating of a wider range of experiences than the previously held perspective.

#### *5.3.4.4. Linking adult learning to the current research*

In relation to the findings, many TEPs mentioned how they felt learning around DA is an ongoing process and seeking further learning opportunities (e.g. CPD, additional training, speaking to colleagues and peers and further reading). This links to both Knowles's Andrology of becoming more self-directed and Self-Directed Learning. This highlights the importance for those supporting TEPs learning around DA to aid TEPs to be self-directed in their learning and promote further ways they can expand on their learning. Furthermore, LA and universities should provide opportunities for TEPs to continue to learn about DA.

One of Knowles's concepts expresses the need for adult learners to understand why they are learning something. In the interviews many TEPs spoke about standardised and psychometric assessments alongside their learning and use of DA. They would frequently make comparisons between the two assessments, and some spoke about the history of IQ assessments being used by EPs. This suggests that understanding the history of assessment and why DA may be an alternative form of assessment to psychometric testing is an important foundation to start with in DA training. Furthermore, Knowles highlights the readiness of learning in adulthood is associated with the developmental tasks of their social role. A clear link between the learning and the TEP's role should be made in training to

support TEPs to understand how DA may fit into their role as a TEP and qualified EP and further their understanding of why they are learning about DA.

Within the findings, TEPs expressed feeling anxious or judged about using DA. These assumptions emphasize the need for DA trainers and supervisors to ensure the 'adult classroom' or environment is a suitable place for TEPs to learn both physically and psychologically. The findings suggest that TEPs need spaces which promote discussion and provide resources and information on the theory of DA. Knowles' key concept that adult learning is orientated to problem-centred suggests that training on DA needs to acknowledge the difficulties TEPs may face and provide solutions to how they may tackle challenges. For example, TEPs mentioned feeling judged by schools to use DA and how useful it is to understand theory in order to explain the value of DA. This suggests that it is helpful for DA trainers and supervisors to reinforce the theoretical basis of Vygotsky and Feuerstein around DA so that TEPs can use this in their practice.

Knowles androgogy highlight the importance of experience as valuable for learning. In regard to the current research findings, TEPs mentioned the importance of using DA to understand it. This suggests the importance of LA offering placements to be providing TEPs with experiences of using DA so that learning and practice can be supported. To further an adults learning, Mezirow (1978) emphasized the need for adult learners to make sense of experiences. In regard to TEPs' learning and practice of DA, this suggests that TEPs need space such as supervision or discussions with colleagues to think about, reflect and make sense of their experience of using DA so that they can enhance their practice and solidify their understanding of DA.

All three Adult Learning theories mentioned focus on how individuals learn in adulthood. There is a lack of consideration for the social and political context in which learning is taking

place. Previously Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory was explored in relation to the results and can provide a framework alongside Adult Learning research and theories to ensure that the context is considered.

### ***5.3.5. Bandura: Social Learning Theory***

Similarly to Vygotsky and Feuerstein, Bandura viewed learning as happening through interactions with others (Bandura, 1977). Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986) outlined the importance of learning through modelling and observing others. Social learning theory attends to social and interactive aspects of learning. The current research findings acknowledge the importance of other people on TEP's learning and use of DA. The quantitative data revealed that a high percentage (97%) of TEPs felt that supervision and/or support are essential to DA practice. To expand on this, the researcher generated the theme 'don't go it alone' in response to participants expressing the need for support from peers, colleagues and supervisors to use DA. Participants felt it was important to interact with others to develop DA practice through sharing and reflecting on practice and DA tools. Furthermore, the subtheme 'watch and learn' highlighted the importance of seeing DA in practice. Participants shared watching videos of others completing DA and shadowing EPs using DA as helpful to their practice.

The researcher highlighted how theories directly relating to DA practice (e.g. theories from Feuerstein and Vygotsky) could be used in supervision. The researcher feels that by using the theories and principles from Vygotsky and Feuerstein, TEPs are having direct exposure to the theories of DA via supervision. In addition to this, using the adapted key features of a mediated learning experience by Feuerstein (2002), TEPs have direct exposure to mediation strategies that they can use in their DA practice.

### ***5.3.6. Psychoanalytic thinking about containment***

The feelings of anxiety and a lack of confidence in using DA were common in the findings. In the interviews, TEPs expressed not feeling confident and competent to use DA despite having training and some support. This was captured by the theme ‘DA can stir up feelings of anxiety’. The TEPs expressed feeling worried about being judged by others (including school staff and colleagues) when suggesting they wished to use DA. Furthermore, when completing DA TEPs felt anxious that they were going to miss something important and/or concerned that they would do the DA incorrectly. This highlights the importance of those in the microsystem to contain the TEP's anxieties and worries about using DA.

Bion (1985) conceptualised the idea of containment. In relation to an adult-child relationship, containment describes how the main caregiver acts as a container by holding the child's upsets and frustrations. The caregiver returns these feelings to the child in a more manageable form, so the child is contained. Feeling contained includes feeling safe in the understanding that someone or something is holding the difficult feeling (Bion, 1985). In terms of containment relating to TEPs DA practice, we may think of key people in the microsystem (e.g. supervisors, DA trainers and tutors) as acting as the container for the TEP by providing words of reassurance or support for them to use DA. One TEP in the study expressed feeling more confident in using DA because their supervisor provided a reflective space for them. If the TEP feels contained and supported to use DA, it is likely to lead to TEPs feeling safer in their ability to practice and learn about DA.

## **5.4. Implications for EP practice and profession**

The researcher believes DA is a worthwhile topic for EP research and assessment. Alongside previous literature, the current research has offered useful findings for EP practice about TEPs and EPs DA practice. This study has provided an overview of TEPs' perceptions of their

learning and use of DA. As well as offered insight into TEP's perceptions of how they develop an understanding of DA and their experiences of using DA. The researcher views this study as having implications for EP practice in the following ways 1) contribution to research, 2) DA and the role of the EP, 3) importance of university and EPS context, and 4) an alternative way of assessing to standardised and psychometric assessments.

#### ***5.4.1. Contribution to research***

Psychologists should remain up to date on the current research, literature and practice (Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2018). TEPs and EPs should take responsibility for maintaining up-to-date knowledge of assessment practice and research. This research has provided further insight into DA practice in the UK and made suggestions of how this can be enhanced. The research could link to the current EP service policy so that TEPs, and EPs, can be supported to practice DA.

#### ***5.4.2. DA and the role of the EP***

DA fits well with the role of the EP in relation to current UK practice. The Children and Families Act (2014) and SEND CoP (2015) stress the importance of individual planning and assessment of children with SEND. There is an emphasis on the importance of a child-centred way of working and the need to focus on positive future outcomes. This research suggests that TEPs perceive DA to be a collaborative assessment method which keeps them at the centre of the work. Furthermore, there was a recognition from TEPs that DA provides positive information about the child's ability and aids TEPs in thinking about what outcomes to work towards. Additionally, TEPs perceived DA to be an ethical and inclusive way of assessing children. This is in line with the Equality Act (2010), which EPs abide by in their practice.

#### ***5.4.3. Importance of university and EPS contexts***

The research suggests the importance of the context and the individuals within the environmental systems on TEPs DA practice. The identification of theoretical links to the findings could support universities and EP services to train and support DA practice for TEPs. These findings of the EPS context could also be extended to EPs to enhance their use of DA. Such as the need for ongoing support and supervision around DA practice which includes scaffolding and modelling DA as well as containing the anxiety of using it. Services could set up DA interest groups within their service to support all members of the EP service using DA. Furthermore, the research has shown the emotional element of assessment practice and indicated that supervisors at university and the EPS placement need to contain feelings of anxiety when using DA.

#### ***5.4.4. An alternative way of assessing to psychometric. assessment***

Assessment is part of EP practice (BPS, 2017). Some research suggests that schools value individual assessments from EP involvement (MacKay & Boyle, 1994; Ashton & Roberts, 2006). Due to some of the concerns with psychometric assessments (Buckingham, 1921; Lidz, 1987; Haywood & Tzuriel, 1992; Dockrell & McShane, 1993; Lokke et al., 1997; Tzuriel, 2001), DA provides an alternative way of assessing. This study highlights that TEPs were keen to use DA instead of psychometric and could see many benefits of DA. Thomson's (1996) research indicated that teachers wanted EPs to complete assessments and provide recommendations for intervention. In the current research, TEPs felt that DA offered teachers recommendations for intervention.

### **5.5. Strategy for dissemination**

The researcher plans to disseminate this research in a range of formats. It is hoped that disseminating this will encourage individuals working directly with TEPs and in the wider systems around TEPs to develop an understanding of DA practice and offer information about how to support this. Firstly the research will be published as a full thesis. The researcher hopes to publish an edited version of the thesis in an EP journal such as Educational Psychology in Practice. This journal is accessed by EPs who are a member of the Association of Educational Psychology (AEP), and thus would allow the findings to be available for access by a wide number of EPs. In addition, the researcher plans to disseminate her findings to the interviewees in Phase 2 (qualitative data) by sharing a one-page profile.

Furthermore, the researcher plans to run a training session and set up a DA support group at their local authority. This would allow EPs in the service to be upskilled in DA. Within this training, the researcher will discuss the thesis findings and offer ways forward to the service. The Reflexive Thematic Analysis themes will be discussed in relation to TEPs experiences of DA and how the service can work to support both TEPs and EPs to use DA in their practice. An ongoing DA support group will allow for continued discussions around DA practice within the service. The aim of delivering this training would be to increase the knowledge of DA and how to support DA within the service to help people feel confident to both use DA and supervise those using it. This training and support group will be monitored and evaluated, and the researcher would potentially like to expand this to more services in London.

### **5.6. Strengths and limitations of this study**

This research has presented an overview and in-depth exploration of TEPs DA practice. DA has been around for many years and is viewed more highly than it is practised (Deutsch & Reynolds, 2000). DA has become a more prevalent means of assessing children and young

people within EP practice in the UK. Therefore this research is highly relevant to the current context and offers insight into the EP profession around supporting DA practice.

The researcher did not find any research which focused on TEPs' experiences of developing an understanding of DA and their use of DA. Therefore the current research is unique in its field. The researcher did find a study by Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) which looked at EP's DA practice; this was considered useful to the current study as it provided an already used questionnaire which could be adapted. Therefore a strength of the current research is that it offers a replicable questionnaire which could be used in the future to look if there have been any changes to TEP's DA practice. This study also adds to the findings of Deutsch and Reynolds's research. In the current study, a high percentage (95%) of TEPs were trained in DA however, Deutsch and Reynolds found that only 58% of EPs were using DA. The researcher proposes two possible reasons for this. 1) Throughout EP practice EPs use DA less this may be due to not receiving support/supervision, the EPS context and/or the lack of ongoing training. 2) There have been changes to the doctorate programme with more universities offering DA training, so there has been an increase in DAs use since 2000, when Deutsch and Reynolds conducted their study. The researcher acknowledges the bias in those wishing to participate and contribute to this piece of research. A limitation to the choice of sampling method may be susceptibility to selection bias (e.g. only those interested in DA took part in the questionnaire).

The questionnaire looked at DA training from those starting the course from 2018 to 2021. The questionnaire had a good response rate, with 175 questionnaires returned and analysed. The questionnaires captured TEPs experiences from every university in the UK offering the EP doctorate training. However, some universities had as little as 1 to 3 TEPs responding while others had 20 plus TEPs; therefore, for some universities, there is not a high representation of TEPs. Additionally, the questionnaire had a range of TEPs from different year groups with most participants being from Year 2 (41%) and a good response rate from Years 1 (37%) and

Years 3 (22%). As mentioned above, it is possible that those who took part in the questionnaire were interested in DA; if this is the case, the findings indicate that a high level of TEPs are motivated to use DA.

The interviews took place between June and September 2021. As with the questionnaires, the interviews had a range of TEPs from different universities and Year groups. Therefore the findings offer a range of TEPs experiences. Participants in the interviews had to have had DA training and used it in their practice as the aim of the interviews was to explore their experiences. The number of participants interviewed in this study (9 TEPs) aligns with the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2013), who suggested between 6 to 10 participants when conducting a small-scale qualitative project which involves data analysis such as Reflexive Thematic analysis. Therefore the total number of TEPs interviewed is high and should be regarded as a strength of this study. By keeping to Braun and Clarke's suggestion, the researcher was able to analyse the qualitative data in detail and provide themes generated from a high amount of TEPs views for this type of research.

A strength of this study is the use of a mixed methods design. The use of a mixed methods approach permitted the study to gain a national perspective on TEPs DA practice. At the same time, the interviews allowed a more detailed exploration of TEPs' experiences. By collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher has been able to limit some of the weaknesses of using one data collection method and combine the strengths of both methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The interviews used a semi-structured interviewing method, guiding participants to talk openly about 1) experiences of how they have developed their understanding of DA and 2) their experiences of using DA. This allowed for rich data to be collected on the topic of interest while allowing the researcher to prompt for more information. The use of semi-structured

interviews meant that there is a question guide to be used by future researchers interested in DA.

The researcher analysed the questionnaire findings as descriptive statistics, allowing a large amount of quantitative data to be analysed and presented succinctly. This offered a clear overview of TEP DA practice, as was one of the aims of this study. Using Reflexive Thematic Analysis allowed for a thorough analysis of the qualitative data and contributed to explaining findings from the quantitative data. The researcher feels that the method of analysis is coherent with the study methodology, including the research aims, the purpose, critical realist ontology and contextualist epistemology.

Reflections from the researcher are critical in a Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012; 2019 & 2022). In this study, the researcher acknowledges the influence they may have on the research. The researcher took time to reflect on their position, views and values at all stages of the research process. The researcher is aware of their own values and beliefs, which may have influenced this study, including the questionnaire and questions asked and the data analysis. In line with a critical realist ontology that the researcher influences the research and Braun and Clarke (2021), the researcher took the stance that she was constructing the research, including the themes, rather than ‘finding’ themes within the data. The researcher used peers, supervision and a Reflexive diary to help her think through her findings. Peers and supervision supported reflection and generated further thinking rather than a positivist view that the findings needed to be validated by others. The researcher was aware that given the same data set, someone else may generate different ideas and themes but felt equipped to justify the themes and subthemes they had created. This contributes to the strength of this study as it demonstrates the researcher took time to reflect in different ways.

### 5.7. Directions for further research

The following directions for future research are based on the current literature and the findings from this study:

- The current study and literature identified the importance of support to develop an understanding of DA and use DA in practice. Supervision was identified as a major factor for support. There is no research that looks at the components that would deem a supervisor helpful or supportive of DA practice. Further research may wish to find out from TEPs who use DA a lot in their practice what factors of supervision are supportive to them. Furthermore, research could consider supervisors' experiences of supervising a TEP using DA and specifically look at the things that are working well and things they need support with.
- The current research has expanded upon understanding DA practice within the UK in the EP profession. The researcher feels future research could look again into an overview of TEP practice in the UK. Additionally, Deutsch and Reynold's (2000) survey was originally used to investigate EP's DA practice. Using the Deutsch and Reynolds survey would be beneficial to see if there have been any changes in EP DA practice. The researcher believes it would be valuable to continue looking at how EP's DA practice is changing in the UK.
- The researcher thinks further exploration to get a better picture of what EP doctorate training programmes offer TEPs in regards to DA. This would include considering the number of hours of training offered throughout the three years and the content (e.g. theories and DA tools taught on the course). The researcher suggests future researchers could contact course directors and ask them to complete a questionnaire about the training they offer TEPs on DA.

- The researcher wonders if further research analysing the quantitative data about the context using inferential statistics would contribute a deeper meaning to the context and inform the researcher about the relationships between the answers. For example, inferential statistics could provide information about whether the Year of training correlated to satisfaction of DA practice and the perception of feeling supported to use DA. Furthermore, inferential statistics could have looked into the following hypothesis  
1) TEPs who receive a higher amount of training use DA more in their practice  
2) TEPs who receive support/supervision use a wider range of DA tools.

## **5.8. Conclusion**

The current study supports and contributes to current literature on EP's DA practice in the UK. The findings outline TEP's current experiences of using DA and developing their understanding of this assessment approach. DA appears to be highly valued and utilised by TEPs. Many of the TEPs within this study had, had some form of training in DA from their university, this differed in terms of how much time was given for the training. However, there was a feeling that ongoing training, support and supervision is needed to keep practising DA, this is in line with previous research. The TEPs who participated in this research provided insight into the influences on their DA practice. The most influential factors were the EP service, the university, and the support of colleagues/peers and supervisors. TEPs experiences of using DA were linked to feelings of anxiety and lack of competence in using this assessment, this needs to be thought about further to ensure TEPs feel confident in their use of knowledge of DA approaches. Considering these findings, the researcher agrees with previous literature (Green & Birch, 2019) that there is a need for guidance on DA training pathways for TEPs and EPs from key professional bodies, BPS and HCPC. This would provide clarity on what training should look like and enable TEPs and EPs to feel supported and more confident to use DA.

The researcher has provided their own thinking of theoretical frameworks that can help explain the research's findings. Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory was used to highlight the importance of the context that TEPs sit in and how these influence DA training and practice. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development Theory has been suggested to be explicitly used by supervisors to ensure they are working in the TEP's zone of proximal development and help aid understanding of this theory. The researcher has drawn on Adult Learning Theories to link the findings to literature on what is supportive for adult learning and consider factors which would be supportive for TEPs learning about DA, which could be used in doctorate training courses. Additionally, the researcher referred to Bandura's (1977; 1986) social learning theory to emphasise the importance of modelling DA. As well, Bion's (1985) idea around containment highlighted the need for containment of anxious feelings when using DA. The researcher has highlighted the strengths and limitations of this study, these should be considered in relation to the implications of the findings in the EP profession. Overall, DA is well suited to EP practice as it is a child-centred and inclusive assessment tool. A DA method has the ability to be an empowering tool for the child and the adults around the child. Therefore, DA is an essential tool for EPs to understand and use in their work. In a supportive context and with ongoing training and supervision, TEPs and EPs can strengthen their DA practice and become competent, confident DA users.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### *Questionnaire information and consent form*

**Researcher:** Emma Murphy (Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) at the Tavistock and Portman), under the supervision of Dale Bartle.

**About the research:** The research will explore TEPs' experiences of training and using dynamic assessment in their practice. The questionnaire has been adapted from Detusch and Reynold's (2000) research.

**Who has given permission for this research?** Ethical permission has been given by The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.

**What does your participation involve?** You will be asked multiple-choice questions about your experiences of training and using dynamic assessment in your practice as a TEP. If you wish you can also request to participate in interviews about your experiences of dynamic assessment.

**Do you have to take part?** No, your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time before completing the questionnaire. As the questionnaire is anonymous, once you complete participation, we cannot remove your data.

**Requirement:** You are a TEP enrolled on a UK course.

**How much time will participation involve?** The questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

**Will your participation in the project remain confidential?** Your name will not be recorded and individual information from the study will not be disclosed.

**By completing this questionnaire, you're consenting to your data being used anonymously for research purposes.**

**Please email me if you have further questions about the research. My email is [emurphy@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:emurphy@tavi-port.nhs.uk)**

**At the end of the survey, I will provide you with further information about participating in interviews about dynamic assessment. Please email me to express your interest.**

**Appendix B***Questionnaire*

1. What university course are you from?
  - a) Bristol University
  - b) Exeter University
  - c) Newcastle University
  - d) University of East Anglia
  - e) Sheffield University
  - f) University of Nottingham
  - g) University of Birmingham
  - h) University of Manchester
  - i) Institute of Education
  - j) Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust
  - k) University College London
  - l) University of East London
  - m) University of Southampton
  - n) Cardiff University
  - o) Queens University Belfast
2. What year of training are you in?
  - a) 1<sup>st</sup> year
  - b) 2<sup>nd</sup> year
  - c) 3<sup>rd</sup> year
3. What year did you start training?
  - a) 2018
  - b) 2019

- c) 2020
  - d) 2021
4. a. Have you received training on dynamic assessment from your university?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
5. a. Approximately how many hours did you receive training on dynamic assessment from your university?
- (Participants were asked to choose from a drop-down menu of numbers)*
5. b. (If yes) Did you find this training useful in your practice?
- a) Yes
  - b) Somewhat
  - c) No
6. Have you developed your understanding of dynamic assessment in any of the following ways? You can choose more than one answer.
- a) Independent studying/reading
  - b) Conversations with colleagues on the course or on placement
  - c) Training on placement (e.g. CPD)
  - d) From specific training on dynamic assessment (not including university training). Please tell me more about this.....
  - e) Other, please specify.....
  - f) I have only been taught about dynamic assessment on the university training course
  - g) I have not learnt about dynamic assessment (either on the course or elsewhere)
7. a. Are you presently using DA in your practice as a TEP?

- i. Yes
    - ii. No
  - a) (If yes) How many children and/or young people have you used dynamic assessment with?
    - i. 1 to 5
    - ii. 6 to 10
    - iii. 11 to 15
    - iv. 15 to 20
    - v. 20 plus
8. What dynamic assessment material do you use? You can choose more than one answer.
- a) Numerical Progressions (Feuerstein's LPAD)
  - b) Complex Figure Drawing (Feuerstein's LPAD)
  - c) 16 word memory test (Feuerstein's LPAD)
  - d) Raven's Matrices (Feuerstein's LPAD)
  - e) Organisation of dots (Feuerstein's LPAD)
  - f) Verbal Abstraction (Feuerstein's LPAD)
  - g) Representational Stencil Design (Feuerstein's LPAD)
  - h) Organiser (Feuerstein's LPAD)
  - i) Children's Analogical Thinking Modifiability (CATM) (Tzuriel & Klein)
  - j) Children's Inferential Thinking Modifiability (CITM) (Tzuriel)
  - k) Cognitive Modifiability Battery (CMB) (Tzuriel)
  - l) Children's Conceptual and Perceptual Analogical Modifiability (CCPAM) (Tzuriel)
  - m) Children's Seriation Thinking Modifiability (CSTM) (Tzuriel)

- n) Cognitive Abilities Profile (CAP) (Deutsch & Mohammed)
  - o) Carol Lidz's approach
  - p) Other, please specify.....
9. Do you receive ongoing support/supervision to use dynamic assessment?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
10. (If yes) Who is the support provided by? You can choose more than one answer.
- a) Placement supervisor
  - b) University / personal supervisor
  - c) A tutor at the university
  - d) A dynamic assessment support group
  - e) A peer support group
  - f) Other, please specify.....
11. Do you think support/supervision is needed to maintain practice in dynamic assessment?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
12. Are you satisfied with your present use of dynamic assessment?
- a) Yes
  - b) No

Questionnaire completed.

Thank you for taking part!

I am completing follow-up interviews with TEPs' about their experiences with dynamic assessment. This will provide you with an opportunity to further talk and explore your experiences of assessment as a TEP. Interviews will take approximately 1 hour.

To take part, you will need to meet the following criteria:

- Be enrolled on an Educational Psychology course at a UK university
- Have had teaching on dynamic assessment
- Have at least one experience of using dynamic assessment in practice

Please email [emurphy@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:emurphy@tavi-port.nhs.uk) to take part

## Appendix C

*Email to the course director*

Dear (INSERT COURSE DIRECTOR NAME),

I am a 2<sup>nd</sup> year Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) at the Tavistock and Portman. I am completing my Thesis project on TEPs' experiences of training and using dynamic assessment (DA). The research aims to explore TEPs' experiences of DA to develop an understanding of the current context for DA training while on the course and the TEP's use of DA in their practice.

The first part of this research involves a questionnaire that can be completed by **all TEPs'** on the course.

The second part of the research involves follow-up interviews via Zoom (online platform). TEP's will need to meet the following criteria in order to participate in the interviews:

- Be enrolled on a Educational Psychology doctoral course at a UK university
- Have had teaching on dynamic assessment
- Have at least one experience of using dynamic assessment in practice

TEP's will need to email me to let me know if they are interested in taking part. My email address is [emurphy@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:emurphy@tavi-port.nhs.uk).

In the event of any distress being caused by the questionnaire and/or interview, TEPs will be advised to speak to course tutors and supervisors.

I would appreciate if the following link for the questionnaire could be emailed to all trainees currently on the training programme:

[https://essex.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_daOqrwvKbmEAvd4](https://essex.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_daOqrwvKbmEAvd4)

Kind regards,

Emma Murphy

(Trainee Educational Psychologist)

## **Appendix D**

### *Participant information sheet for interviews*

#### **Research title: Exploring Trainee Educational Psychologists' experience of training and use of dynamic assessment in the UK.**

You are being invited to take part in a follow-up interview to explore your experience of training and using dynamic assessment. Before deciding whether you want to take part, please take the time to read the following information carefully so that you understand why the research is taking place and what your participant will involve.

#### **Who is doing the research?**

My name is Emma Murphy, I am a practising Educational Psychologist (EP), in my second year of studying for a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. I am conducting this research as a requirement for my course.

#### **What is the purpose of the research?**

The purpose of the research is to explore TEPs experiences of DA to develop an understanding of the current context for DA training and using DA in professional practice. The aim of this study is to contribute to literature and understanding of DA practice in the UK by the Educational Psychology (EP) profession.

#### **Who has given permission for this research?**

Ethical permission has been given by The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.

#### **Who can take part in this research?**

I am looking to recruit TEPs who have received teaching on dynamic assessment and who have at least one experience of implementing dynamic assessment in practice. If more than the required number of TEPs volunteer to take part, participants will be randomly selected from the responses received.

#### **What does your participation involve?**

I am looking for volunteers to participate in an interview as a follow-up to the survey you completed. If you agree to participate, you will be provided with a Zoom link to meet with me remotely. In the meeting we will talk for approximately one hour about your experiences of training and using dynamic assessment. This will be explored using interview questions, including open ended questions. With your consent, I will also be making audio recordings of the interviews which will be transcribed for analysis and then deleted.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Assessment is a core part of EP work and there has been ongoing interest in EPs assessment practice in the UK, in particular looking at the use of dynamic assessment. Your involvement will help to contribute to understanding dynamic assessment practice in the EP profession, in particular how it forms part of the core training programme.

The research will provide you with the opportunity to explore and reflect on your teaching and understanding of dynamic assessment, as well as how you have implemented dynamic assessment in your practice. There may also be a personal benefit in having time to reflect on your practice, which may in turn help to improve the quality of your assessment practice.

**What are the possible risks of taking part?**

Discussions about work with children and young people can be uncomfortable and invoke an emotive response. As well as this, reflecting on practice can at times cause some distress. However, the questions have been left open-ended to allow you freedom in choosing what you would like to share.

If you experience any distress after completing the questionnaire and/or interview, please speak to a tutor or supervisor on your course.

**What will happen to the findings from the research?**

The findings will form part of my thesis; this will be read by examiners and will be available at the Tavistock and Portman library. I may also use the findings in a presentation to peers and/or publish the research, at a later date, in a peer-reviewed journal. You will have the option to read a summary of my findings in the form of verbal or written feedback of my findings or the full thesis.

**What will happen if I do not want to carry on with the research?**

Participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw consent, or unprocessed interview data, at any time before the analysis without providing a reason. In order to do this, please contact me by email within 2 weeks of being interviewed. Any interview data collected before your withdrawal may still be used unless you request that it is destroyed.

**Will my participation be kept confidential?**

Yes, participation is confidential. All records related to your participation in this research will be handled and stored securely. Your identity on these records will be indicated by a pseudonym rather than by your name.

**How will my data be stored?**

Data collected during the study will be stored and used in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Act (2018) and the University's Data Protection Policy. The data in this study will be kept for up to 10 years.

**Are there times when my data cannot be kept confidential?**

Confidentiality is subject to legal limitations, or if a disclosure is made, that suggests any harm to self and/or others may occur. The small sample size (6 to 10 TEPs) may mean that you recognise some examples and experiences you have shared in the interview. However, to protect your identity, pseudonyms will be used, and any identifiable details will be changed.

**Further information and contact details:**

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of the research, please contact me on the following:

Email: [emurphy@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:emurphy@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

Telephone: 07847622269

**If you have any concerns about the research then you can contact Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance at the Tavistock and Portman. Contact details are:**

/

Email: [academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

**Thank you for your help**

## Appendix E

### *Participant consent form for interviews*

**Research title: Exploring Trainee Educational Psychologists' experience of training and use of Dynamic Assessment in the UK.**

**Research conducted by Emma Murphy, under the supervision of Dale Bartle**

Please read the statements below and initial if you agree with them

Initial  
here

1.	I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the chance to ask questions.	
2.	I understand that my participant in this research is voluntary and I am free to withdraw consent, or unprocessed data, without providing a reason.	
3.	I agree for my interview to be recorded.	
4.	I understand that what I say/report will be anonymised, to minimise the chance of being linked to the data.	
5.	I understand the limitations to confidentiality (i.e. small sample size), in relation to legal duties and the threat of harm to self and/or others.	
6.	I understand that my interview will be used for this research and cannot be accessed for any other purposes.	
7.	I understand that the findings from this research will be published in a thesis and potentially in a presentation and/or peer reviewed journal.	
8.	I am willing to participate in this research.	
9.	I would like to be provided with feedback, either verbal or written, following this research.	

Your name: .....

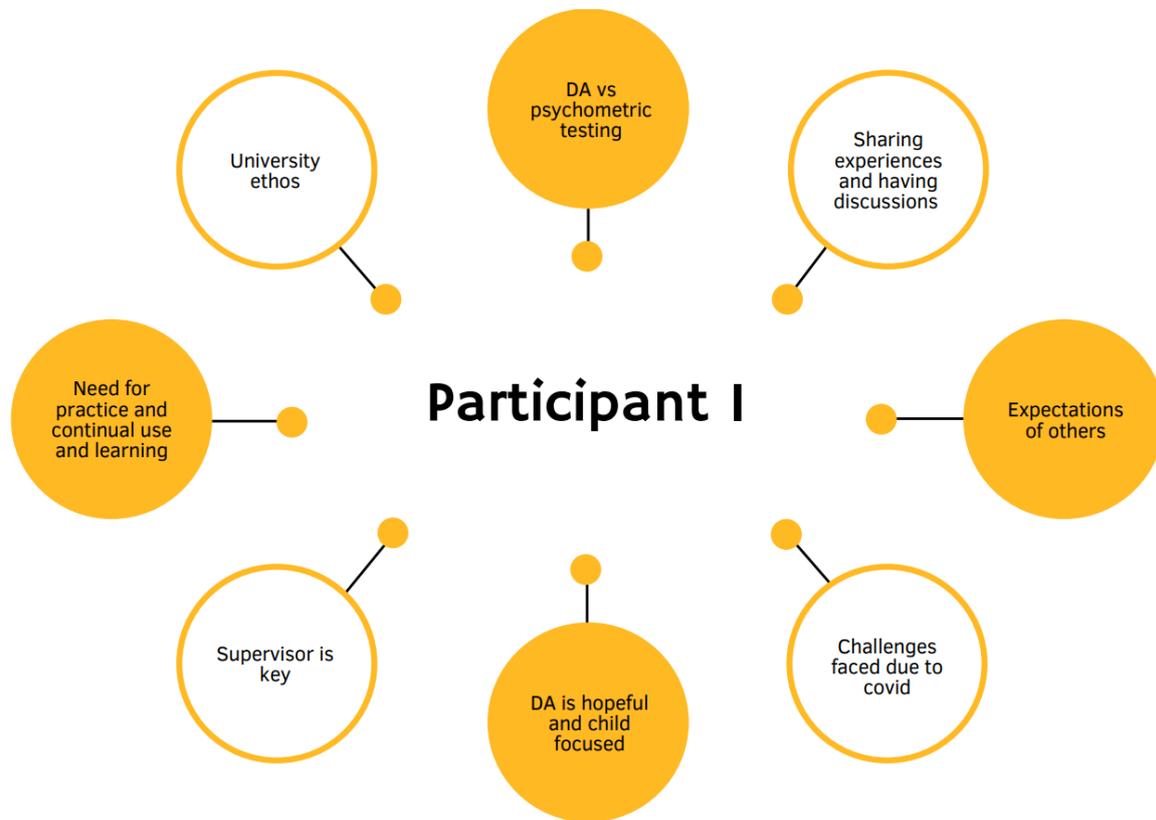
Signed: ..... Date...../...../.....

Researcher name: Emma Murphy

Signed: ..... Date...../...../.....

**Thank you for your help**

**Appendix F**



## Appendix G

### Examples of coding

Code System	Count	Annotation
<b>Code System</b>	<b>921</b>	Total codes
Learning about DA tools	9	Memos
Fan of DA	8	
Limited chances to use DA	7	
Supervisor supports reflection	8	Example of semantic code
Collaborative with CYP	6	
Worry you will miss something important	5	
Confidence develops overtime	14	
Splitting - DA/standardised	5	
Ambiguity causes anxiety	3	Example of Latent code
DA is abstract	6	
University encourages DA practice	6	
Investing time, money and effort to use DA	8	Number of segmented text per code
Standardised/psychometrics are 'cold' assessment	4	
Limited shadowing	3	
Fear of judgement	9	
Training allowed for practicing DA tools	6	Coding name
Learning was grounded in theory and psychology	10	
Service uses DA	3	

## Appendix H

### *Ethics submission form*

#### **Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC)**

#### **APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW OF STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS**

**This application should be submitted alongside copies of any supporting documentation which will be handed to participants, including a participant information sheet, consent form, self-completion survey or questionnaire.**

Where a form is submitted and sections are incomplete, the form will not be considered by TREC and will be returned to the applicant for completion.

For further guidance please contact Paru Jeram ([academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk))

#### **FOR ALL APPLICANTS**

**If you already have ethical approval from another body (including HRA/IRAS) please submit the application form and outcome letters. You need only complete sections of the TREC form which are NOT covered in your existing approval**

Is your project considered as 'research' according to the HRA tool? ( <a href="http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/index.html">http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/index.html</a> )	Yes
Will your project involve participants who are under 18 or who are classed as vulnerable? (see section 7)	No
Will your project include data collection outside of the UK?	No

#### **SECTION A: PROJECT DETAILS**

<b>Project title</b>	Exploring Trainee Educational Psychologists' experience of training and use of Dynamic Assessment in the UK.		
<b>Proposed project start date</b>	May 2021	<b>Anticipated project end date</b>	May 2022

<b>Principle Investigator (normally your Research Supervisor):</b> Dale Bartle	
<b>Please note: TREC approval will only be given for the length of the project as stated above up to a maximum of 6 years. Projects exceeding these timeframes will need additional ethical approval</b>	
<b>Has NHS or other approval been sought for this research including through submission via Research Application System (IRAS) or to the Health Research Authority (HRA)?</b>	<b>YES (NRES approval)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>YES (HRA approval)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Other</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<b>NO</b>
<b>If you already have ethical approval from another body (including HRA/IRAS) please submit the application form and outcome letters.</b>	

### **SECTION B: APPLICANT DETAILS**

<b>Name of Researcher</b>	Emma Murphy
<b>Programme of Study and Target Award</b>	M4: Child, community and educational psychology
<b>Email address</b>	emurphy@tavi-port.nhs.uk
<b>Contact telephone number</b>	07847622269

### **SECTION C: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

**Will any of the researchers or their institutions receive any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research over and above their normal salary package or the costs of undertaking the research?**

<p><b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If <b>YES</b>, please detail below:</p>
<p><b>Is there any further possibility for conflict of interest? YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Are you proposing to conduct this work in a location where you work or have a placement?</b></p> <p><b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If <b>YES</b>, please detail below outline how you will avoid issues arising around colleagues being involved in this project:</p>

<p><b>Is your project being commissioned by and/or carried out on behalf of a body external to the Trust? (for example; commissioned by a local authority, school, care home, other NHS Trust or other organisation).</b></p> <p>*Please note that 'external' is defined as an organisation which is external to the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (Trust)</p>	<p><b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If <b>YES</b>, please add details here:</p>	
<p><b>Will you be required to get further ethical approval after receiving TREC approval?</b></p> <p>If <b>YES</b>, please supply details of the ethical approval bodies below AND include any letters of approval from the ethical approval bodies (letters received after receiving TREC approval should be submitted to complete your record):</p>	<p><b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

If your project is being undertaken with one or more clinical services or organisations external to the Trust, please provide details of these:	
If you still need to agree these arrangements or if you can only approach organisations after you have ethical approval, please identify the types of organisations (eg. schools or clinical services) you wish to approach:	
<b>Do you have approval from the organisations detailed above? (this includes R&amp;D approval where relevant)</b>	
YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> NA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Please attach approval letters to this application. Any approval letters received after TREC approval has been granted <b>MUST</b> be submitted to be appended to your record	

### **SECTION D: SIGNATURES AND DECLARATIONS**

<b>APPLICANT DECLARATION</b>	
I confirm that:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and up to date.</li> <li>• I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research.</li> <li>• I acknowledge my obligations and commitment to upholding ethical principles and to keep my supervisor updated with the progress of my research</li> <li>• I am aware that for cases of proven misconduct, it may result in formal disciplinary proceedings and/or the cancellation of the proposed research.</li> <li>• I understand that if my project design, methodology or method of data collection changes I must seek an amendment to my ethical approvals as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct.</li> </ul>	
<b>Applicant (print name)</b>	Emma Murphy

<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Date</b>	28.04.2021

**FOR RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENT APPLICANTS ONLY**

<b>Name of Supervisor/Principal Investigator</b>	Dale Bartle
--	-------------

<b>Supervisor –</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the student have the necessary skills to carry out the research? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li>▪ Is the participant information sheet, consent form and any other documentation appropriate? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li>▪ Are the procedures for recruitment of participants and obtaining informed consent suitable and sufficient? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li>▪ Where required, does the researcher have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	
<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Date</b>	29.4.21

<b>COURSE LEAD/RESEARCH LEAD</b>	
Does the proposed research as detailed herein have your support to proceed? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Signed</b>	A Styles
<b>Date</b>	29.04.2021

## **SECTION E: DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH**

- 1. Provide a brief description of the proposed research, including the requirements of participants. This must be in lay terms and free from technical or discipline specific terminology or jargon. If such terms are required, please ensure they are adequately explained (Do not exceed 500 words)**

The research will explore Trainee Educational Psychologist's (TEP) experiences of dynamic assessment (DA) training and their use of DA in practice. The purpose of the research is to explore TEPs experiences of DA to develop an understanding of the current context for DA training and using DA in professional practice while on the professional while completing the core training programme for Educational Psychology. The aim is to contribute to the literature and understanding of DA practice in the UK Educational Psychologists (EP).

Firstly, an email will be sent to the Course Directors of the 15 Educational Psychology professional doctorate training courses in the UK to introduce my research and request a survey link is sent to Trainees. Trainee's will be asked to complete closed questions about their experiences of training and using DA, this will provide a broad picture of the current context of TEPs DA practice. See appendix A for the draft survey questions.

Following this, TEPs who meet the inclusion criteria (see question 4) and wish to take part in a follow up interview will need to email me to express their interest to be interviewed about their experiences of DA. The intention is to recruit 6 to 10 TEPs to take part in interviews. I intend to use open ended questions and prompts to elicit TEPs views and gather a rich picture of their knowledge, understanding and experiences of DA. See appendix B for draft interview questions, the prompts will be tweaked according to TEPs answers and adapted throughout the interview process. The interviews will be conducted via a remote platform (e.g. Zoom). Participants will need to sign up to this platform and find a quiet and confidential space to complete the interview. The interviews will be recorded on a laptop and transcribed.

- 2. Provide a statement on the aims and significance of the proposed research, including potential impact to knowledge and understanding in the field (where appropriate, indicate the associated hypothesis which will be tested). This should be a clear justification of the proposed research, why it should proceed and a**

**statement on any anticipated benefits to the community. (Do not exceed 700 words)**

Assessment work has been identified by the British Psychological Society (BPS) (2017) as one of the core roles for EPs. This is further highlighted by the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Association of Educational Psychologists (2010). Previous literature has suggested a variation in assessment practiced in the UK and a need to understand EP's practice and assessment (Woods and Farrell, 2006). DA is one form of assessment EPs use in their practice. DA can be defined as an interactive method of assessment that focuses on the cognitive functions of a child/young person (CYP). It offers insight into why a CYP has particular needs and strengths (Fredrickson et al, 1991). The literature exploring experience of teaching and use of DA in the EP profession is limited. Specifically, there is no previous literature exploring trainees' experiences.

The theoretical underpinnings which DA is based on is complex. DA is linked to Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and the zone of proximal develop (ZPD). The ZPD is described as the difference between what a CYP can do independently and what a CYP can do with guidance. In addition, Feuerstein and colleagues developed theories referred to as Structural Cognitive Modifiability and Mediated Learning experience, which focus on the CYP's learning potential and the adult mediation. The complexity of the theory behind DA highlights further need to understand what theories/models and resources are being taught to TEPs.

Previous literature clearly outlines the positive implications of DA. DA has been found to be an accurate and beneficial approach for measuring individual's cognitive abilities and linking the findings from DA to an educational setting and intervention (Tzuriel, 2000). In addition, Hill (2015) described the link between DA fits and guidelines for assessment outlined by the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (2002) which describes assessment as supporting understanding of 1) what is happening, 2) who is concerned, 3) why there is a problem and 4) what can be done to make a difference to the situation. Research by Freeman and Miller (2001) concluded that although SEND Coordinators in schools felt less familiar with DA, they could see DA's potential for supporting interventions. This is encouraging for EP's as it suggests the importance to implement this approach in practice.

Furthermore, some literature has considered EP's DA practice. Deutsch and Reynolds (2000), completed a survey of EP's practice and perceptions of DA. The results found that DA was viewed positively however that DA had a low level of implementation. The reasons for low implementation were due to feeling insufficient trained, a lack of time because of other assessment priorities and a lack of support to use DA. Deutsch and Reynolds discussed the requirement for EP training programmes to commit to teaching about DA. Furthermore, Green and Birch (2019) identified issues related to using DA in practice to be the lack of a clear pathway for training and professional development, the researchers suggested this may cause a lack of confidence in EPs to administer DA. Both

of these studies demonstrate the usefulness of exploring TEPs experiences of DA to understand DA in the Educational Psychology practice.

The research aims to explore TEP's experiences of training and use of DA whilst on the doctorate course. Two research questions will guide the research: 'What are TEPs' experiences of DA training?' and 'What are TEPs' experiences of using DA in their professional practice?'. The research will use a survey adapted from Deutsch and Reynolds (2000) study to be suitable for Trainee's experiences and the current context. The survey will provide descriptive data on the current experiences of DA training and using DA from the perspective of TEPs. In addition, interviews will provide further in-depth exploration of individuals experiences of DA.

By exploring DA with TEPs it is hoped that this study will contribute to the literature on DA practice in the UK by the Educational Psychology profession. The outcomes may affect how EP training programmes are teaching and supporting the use of DA. As well, the findings could impact how Local Authorities who offer placements for TEPs are enabling TEPs to use DA on placements. Increasing course and training providers understanding of TEPs knowledge and experience of DA may lead to reflections about how to increase learning and use of DA.

**3. Provide an outline of the methodology for the proposed research, including proposed method of data collection, *tasks* assigned to participants of the research and the proposed method and duration of data analysis. If the proposed research makes use of pre-established and generally accepted techniques, please make this clear. (Do not exceed 500 words)**

The proposed research is underpinned by a critical realise ontology and epistemology. A mixed methods approach will be used. Data collection will include quantitative data from survey. The survey will be disseminated on a secure survey platform (e.g. qualtrics). The survey will be analysed and descriptive statistics will be produced. Descriptive statics will provide a summary of what is current TEPs experiences of DA training on course programmes in the UK and their experience of using DA.

Furthermore, data collection will include qualitative data from interviews to provide further in-depth exploration of selected TEPs experiences' of DA. TEPs who have volunteered to be involved in a follow-up interview and meet the inclusion criteria (see question 4) will attend an interview over a remote platform (e.g. zoom) and be asked open-ended questions to elicit their experiences of DA. Interviews will be transcribed and analysed using Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is anticipated that data analysis will be conducted over a 3 month period after the completion of interviews. Interviews will be transcribed by Zoom software and checked by myself as the principle researcher.

## **SECTION F: PARTICIPANT DETAILS**

**4. Provide an explanation detailing how you will identify, approach and recruit the participants for the proposed research, including clarification on sample size and location. Please provide justification for the exclusion/inclusion criteria for this study (i.e. who will be allowed to / not allowed to participate) and explain briefly, in lay terms, why these criteria are in place. (Do not exceed 500 words)**

The proposed participants are TEPs (from 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of study) from UK doctorate Educational Psychology training courses. Any TEP can be included in the survey. To be included in the interview, individuals need to meet the following criteria:

- Be on role at a doctorate programme in Educational Psychology in the UK;
- Have received training on DA;
- Had at least one occasion of using DA in their professional practice.

This inclusion criteria is in place to ensure that TEPs have adequate understanding and experience of DA to inform the research. At the interview stage, to make sure there is a variation of TEPs from different courses no more than 2 TEPs from each training course will be permitted to take part.

A volunteer sampling approach will be used to recruit participants for surveys and interviews. The sample size of participants proposed for interviews is 6 to 10. This amount of participants has been outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) for a thematic analysis research. In the event of more participants requesting to be involved in the interviews, participants will be randomly selected from the responses received.

An email and survey link will be sent to the course directors at universities who run the doctorate Educational Psychology training programme (see appendix C for draft email ). Following this TEPs who have expressed an interest in being interviewed will be sent an email (see appendix D for draft email) along with an information sheet (see appendix E for draft information sheet) which outlines the research aims and what is involved in participation and consent form (see appendix F for draft participant consent form). All participants will be required to sign and return a consent form prior to being interviewed.

**5. Please state the location(s) of the proposed research including the location of any interviews. Please provide a Risk Assessment if required. Consideration should be given to lone working, visiting private residences, conducting research outside working hours or any other non-standard arrangements.**

**If any data collection is to be done online, please identify the platforms to be used.**

Due to covid-19 and social distancing measures, the interviews will be conducted remotely over Zoom. A link will be sent to participations prior to the interview. To ensure the room is secure a password will be generated and given to participants, as well the 'waiting room' function will be used to filter in participants and the room will be 'locked' once the participant is there.

**6. Will the participants be from any of the following groups?(Tick as appropriate)**

- Students or Staff of the Trust or Partner delivering your programme.
- Adults (over the age of 18 years with mental capacity to give consent to participate in the research).
- Children or legal minors (anyone under the age of 16 years)<sup>1</sup>
- Adults who are unconscious, severely ill or have a terminal illness.
- Adults who may lose mental capacity to consent during the course of the research.
- Adults in emergency situations.
- Adults<sup>2</sup> with mental illness - particularly those detained under the Mental Health Act (1983 & 2007).
- Participants who may lack capacity to consent to participate in the research under the research requirements of the Mental Capacity Act (2005).
- Prisoners, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
- Young Offenders, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
- Healthy volunteers (in high risk intervention studies).
- Participants who may be considered to have a pre-existing and potentially dependent<sup>3</sup> relationship with the investigator (e.g. those in care homes, students, colleagues, service-users, patients).
- Other vulnerable groups (see Question 6).
- Adults who are in custody, custodial care, or for whom a court has assumed responsibility.
- Participants who are members of the Armed Forces.

<sup>1</sup>*If the proposed research involves children or adults who meet the Police Act (1997) definition of vulnerability<sup>3</sup>, any researchers who will have contact with participants must have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.*

<sup>2</sup>*'Adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, or a reduction in physical or mental capacity, and living in a care home or home for people with learning difficulties or receiving care in their own home, or receiving hospital or social care services.'* (Police Act, 1997)

<sup>3</sup>*Proposed research involving participants with whom the investigator or researcher(s) shares a dependent or unequal relationships (e.g. teacher/student, clinical therapist/service-user) may compromise the ability to give informed consent which is free from any form of pressure (real or implied) arising from this relationship. TREC recommends that, wherever practicable, investigators choose participants with whom they have no dependent relationship. Following due scrutiny, if the investigator is confident that the research involving participants in dependent relationships is vital and defensible, TREC will require additional information setting out the case and detailing how risks inherent in the dependent relationship will be managed. TREC will also need to be reassured that refusal to participate will not result in any discrimination or penalty.*

7. Will the study involve participants who are vulnerable? YES  NO

For the purposes of research, 'vulnerable' participants may be adults whose ability to protect their own interests are impaired or reduced in comparison to that of the broader population. Vulnerability may arise from:

- the participant's personal characteristics (e.g. mental or physical impairment)
- their social environment, context and/or disadvantage (e.g. socio-economic mobility, educational attainment, resources, substance dependence, displacement or homelessness).
- where prospective participants are at high risk of consenting under duress, or as a result of manipulation or coercion, they must also be considered as vulnerable
- children are automatically presumed to be vulnerable.

7.1. If YES, what special arrangements are in place to protect vulnerable participants' interests?

If YES, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check **within the last three years** is required.

Please provide details of the "clear disclosure":

Date of disclosure:
Type of disclosure:
Organisation that requested disclosure:
DBS certificate number:

*(NOTE: information concerning activities which require DBS checks can be found via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance>). Please **do not** include a copy of your DBS certificate with your application*

8. Do you propose to make any form of payment or incentive available to participants of the research? YES  NO

If YES, please provide details taking into account that any payment or incentive should be representative of reasonable remuneration for participation and may not be of a value that could be coercive or exerting undue influence on potential participants' decision to take part in the research. Wherever possible, remuneration in a monetary form should be avoided and substituted with vouchers, coupons or equivalent. Any payment made to research participants may have benefit or HMRC implications and participants should be alerted to this in the participant information sheet as they may wish to choose to decline payment.

**9. What special arrangements are in place for eliciting informed consent from participants who may not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information provided in English; where participants have special communication needs; where participants have limited literacy; or where children are involved in the research? (Do not exceed 200 words)**

N/A participants will be Trainee Educational Psychologists so will be educated to at least an undergraduate level.

## **SECTION F: RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

**10. Does the proposed research involve any of the following? (Tick as appropriate)**

- use of a questionnaire, self-completion survey or data-collection instrument (attach copy)
- use of emails or the internet as a means of data collection
- use of written or computerised tests
- interviews (attach interview questions)
- diaries (attach diary record form)
- participant observation
- participant observation (in a non-public place) without their knowledge / covert research
- audio-recording interviewees or events
- video-recording interviewees or events
- access to personal and/or sensitive data (i.e. student, patient, client or service-user data) without the participant's informed consent for use of these data for research purposes
- administration of any questions, tasks, investigations, procedures or stimuli which may be experienced by participants as physically or mentally painful, stressful or unpleasant during or after the research process

- performance of any acts which might diminish the self-esteem of participants or cause them to experience discomfort, regret or any other adverse emotional or psychological reaction
- Themes around extremism or radicalisation
- investigation of participants involved in illegal or illicit activities (e.g. use of illegal drugs)
- procedures that involve the deception of participants
- administration of any substance or agent
- use of non-treatment of placebo control conditions
- participation in a clinical trial
- research undertaken at an off-campus location (risk assessment attached)
- research overseas (please ensure Section G is complete)

**11. Does the proposed research involve any specific or anticipated risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to participants that are greater than those encountered in everyday life?**

YES  NO

If YES, please describe below including details of precautionary measures.

**12. Where the procedures involve potential hazards and/or discomfort or distress for participants, please state what previous experience the investigator or researcher(s) have had in conducting this type of research.**

I have prior experiences from my undergraduate and masters courses of working with participants and checking in with them whether the research is causing them any distress. As a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I have relevant training and experiences of asking questions to explore people's experiences. On my doctorate course I have received training on, and obtained experiences of using, active listening skills and consultation. I have skills to provide participants a containing and reflective space, using active listening skills and asking open questions to elicit individuals' views. Moreover, I have received teaching on

DA and have used DA in my practice, therefore I have relevant experiences of thinking about this type of assessment and reflecting on practice.

I regularly receive supervision in relation to my practice as a Trainee, in addition I have research supervision in regards to my thesis project. My research supervisor has experience of supervising individuals undertaking research projects. By using supervision I can check in with my supervisor if potential discomfort or distress was experienced by a participant and inform participants to get in touch with their course tutors and supervisors.

**13. Provide an explanation of any potential benefits to participants. Please ensure this is framed within the overall contribution of the proposed research to knowledge or practice. (Do not exceed 400 words)**

**NOTE:** Where the proposed research involves students, they should be assured that accepting the offer to participate or choosing to decline will have no impact on their assessments or learning experience. Similarly, it should be made clear to participants who are patients, service-users and/or receiving any form of treatment or medication that they are not invited to participate in the belief that participation in the research will result in some relief or improvement in their condition.

The survey will provide participants time and space to explore their experiences of DA training and using DA with children and young people. Moreover, participants involved in interviews will have a further more in-depth opportunity to reflect on their experiences of DA. Participants may not have been provided an opportunity to reflect on their assessment practice in a contained and structured space 1:1 with a fellow TEP. The TEPs involved will be contributing to literature exploring the use of DA practice in the UK which may contribute to changes in training courses and Local Authority training providers. For example, how DA is thought about, how it is taught on the course, and how it is supported by tutors and placement supervisors. The benefits for TEPs include reflecting on their own DA knowledge and practice and contributing to improving future assessment practice.

**14. Provide an outline of any measures you have in place in the event of adverse or unexpected outcomes and the potential impact this may have on participants involved in the proposed research. (Do not exceed 300 words)**

Throughout the interviews I will monitor and respond to participant's emotional state. If a participant appears distressed I will check in with them to see if they would like to stop or need to take a short break. At the end of the interview I will check how the participant feels to ensure no distressing thoughts or emotions have been brought up for them. In the event of adverse or unexpected outcomes, I will sign post participant to speak to their course tutors or supervisors.

**15. Provide an outline of your debriefing, support and feedback protocol for participants involved in the proposed research. This should include, for example, where participants may feel the need to discuss thoughts or feelings brought about following their participation in the research. This may involve referral to an external support or counseling service, where participation in the research has caused specific issues for participants.**

After the interview participants will be debriefed and have the opportunity to ask me any questions they have about the research. TEPs will be informed to speak to their course tutors and supervisor if they feel they would like to further discuss their experiences with someone. Participants will be provided the opportunity to receive a follow up discussion following their involvement with the options of verbal feedback, a summary of the findings or access to the full thesis write up.

**16. Please provide the names and nature of any external support or counselling organisations that will be suggested to participants if participation in the research has potential to raise specific issues for participants.**

NA – due to the nature of the research participants who feel the research has raised specific issues for them will be directed to course tutors and their course supervisor.

**17. Where medical aftercare may be necessary, this should include details of the treatment available to participants. Debriefing may involve the disclosure of further information on the aims of the research, the participant's performance and/or the results of the research. (Do not exceed 500 words)**

NA – medical aftercare is not necessary.

### **FOR RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN OUTSIDE THE UK**

**18. Does the proposed research involve travel outside of the UK?**

YES  NO

**If YES, please confirm:**

I have consulted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for guidance/travel advice? <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/>

I have completed a RISK Assessment covering all aspects of the project including consideration of the location of the data collection and risks to participants.

All overseas project data collection will need approval from the Deputy Director of Education and Training or their nominee. Normally this will be done based on the information provided in this form. All projects approved through the TREC process will be indemnified by the Trust against claims made by third parties.

If you have any queries regarding research outside the UK, please contact [academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk):

Students are required to arrange their own travel and medical insurance to cover project work outside of the UK. Please indicate what insurance cover you have or will have in place.

**19.** Please evidence how compliance with all local research ethics and research governance requirements have been assessed for the country(ies) in which the research is taking place. Please also clarify how the requirements will be met:

N/A – the research is not being carried out within one LA, therefore ethical approval will not sought by a LA.

## **SECTION G: PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND WITHDRAWAL**

**20. Have you attached a copy of your participant information sheet (this should be in *plain English*)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials.**

YES  NO

If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

**21. Have you attached a copy of your participant consent form (this should be in plain English)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials.**

YES  NO

If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

**22. The following is a participant information sheet checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.**

- Clear identification of the Trust as the sponsor for the research, the project title, the Researcher and Principal Investigator (your Research Supervisor) and other researchers along with relevant contact details.
- Details of what involvement in the proposed research will require (e.g., participation in interviews, completion of questionnaire, audio/video-recording of events), estimated time commitment and any risks involved.
- A statement confirming that the research has received formal approval from TREC or other ethics body.
- If the sample size is small, advice to participants that this may have implications for confidentiality / anonymity.
- A clear statement that where participants are in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers that participation in the research will have no impact on assessment / treatment / service-use or support.
- Assurance that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw consent at any time, and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
- Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.
- A statement that the data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the Trusts's Data Protection and handling Policies.:  
<https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/about-us/governance/policies-and-procedures/>
- Advice that if participants have any concerns about the conduct of the investigator, researcher(s) or any other aspect of this research project, they should contact Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance ([academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk))
- Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

**23. The following is a consent form checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.**

- Trust letterhead or logo.
- Title of the project (with research degree projects this need not necessarily be the title of the thesis) and names of investigators.
- Confirmation that the research project is part of a degree
- Confirmation that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw at any time, or to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
- Confirmation of particular requirements of participants, including for example whether interviews are to be audio-/video-recorded, whether anonymised quotes will be used in publications advice of legal limitations to data confidentiality.
- If the sample size is small, confirmation that this may have implications for anonymity any other relevant information.
- The proposed method of publication or dissemination of the research findings.
- Details of any external contractors or partner institutions involved in the research.
- Details of any funding bodies or research councils supporting the research.
- Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

**SECTION H: CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY**

**24. Below is a checklist covering key points relating to the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Please indicate where relevant to the proposed research.**

Participants will be completely anonymised and their identity will not be known by the investigator or researcher(s) (i.e. the participants are part of an anonymous randomised sample and return responses with no form of personal identification)?

The responses are anonymised or are an anonymised sample (i.e. a permanent process of coding has been carried out whereby direct and indirect identifiers have been removed from data and replaced by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers).\*

The samples and data are de-identified (i.e. direct and indirect identifiers have been removed and replaced by a code. The investigator or researchers are able to link the code to the original identifiers and isolate the participant to whom the sample or data relates).\*

Participants have the option of being identified in a publication that will arise from the research.

Participants will be pseudo-anonymised in a publication that will arise from the research. (I.e. the researcher will endeavour to remove or alter details that would identify the participant.)

The proposed research will make use of personal sensitive data.

Participants consent to be identified in the study and subsequent dissemination of research findings and/or publication.

**\*The survey's will not ask for TEPs names and therefore will be anonymous. The interviews will be de-identified, this includes the participants name, any names, places and/or services they mention.**

**25. Participants must be made aware that the confidentiality of the information they provide is subject to legal limitations in data confidentiality (i.e. the data may be subject to a subpoena, a freedom of information request or mandated reporting by some professions). This only applies to named or de-identified data. If your participants are named or de-identified, please confirm that you will specifically state these limitations.**

YES  NO

If NO, please indicate why this is the case below:

**NOTE: WHERE THE PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVES A SMALL SAMPLE OR FOCUS GROUP, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ADVISED THAT THERE WILL BE DISTINCT LIMITATIONS IN THE LEVEL OF ANONYMITY THEY CAN BE AFFORDED.**

### **SECTION I: DATA ACCESS, SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT**

**26. Will the Researcher/Principal Investigator be responsible for the security of all data collected in connection with the proposed research? YES  NO**

If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

**27. In line with the 5<sup>th</sup> principle of the Data Protection Act (1998), which states that personal data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes for which it was collected; please state how long data will be retained for.**

1-2 years  3-5 years  6-10 years  10> years

**NOTE: In line with** Research Councils UK (RCUK) guidance, doctoral project data should normally be stored for 10 years and Masters level data for up to 2 years

**28. Below is a checklist which relates to the management, storage and secure destruction of data for the purposes of the proposed research. Please indicate where relevant to your proposed arrangements.**

- Research data, codes and all identifying information to be kept in separate locked filing cabinets.
- Research data will only be stored in the University of Essex OneDrive system and no other cloud storage location.
- Access to computer files to be available to research team by password only.
- Access to computer files to be available to individuals outside the research team by password only (See **23.1**).
- Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically within the UK.
- Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically outside of the UK.

**NOTE:** Transfer of research data via third party commercial file sharing services, such as Google Docs and YouSendIt are not necessarily secure or permanent. These systems may also be located overseas and not covered by UK law. If the system is located outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or territories deemed to have sufficient standards of data protection, transfer may also breach the Data Protection Act (1998).

Essex students also have access the 'Box' service for file transfer:  
<https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/it-services/box>

- Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers.
- Collection and storage of personal sensitive data (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs or physical or mental health or condition).
- Use of personal data in the form of audio or video recordings.
- Primary data gathered on encrypted mobile devices (i.e. laptops).

**NOTE:** This should be transferred to secure University of Essex OneDrive at the first opportunity.

All electronic data will undergo secure disposal.

**NOTE:** For hard drives and magnetic storage devices (HDD or SSD), deleting files does not permanently erase the data on most systems, but only deletes the reference to the file. Files can be restored when deleted in this way. Research files must be overwritten to ensure they are completely irretrievable. Software is available for the secure erasing of files from hard drives which meet recognised standards to securely scramble sensitive data. Examples of this software are BC Wipe, Wipe File, DeleteOnClick and Eraser for Windows platforms. Mac users can use the standard 'secure empty trash' option; an alternative is Permanent eraser software.

All hardcopy data will undergo secure disposal.

**NOTE:** For shredding research data stored in hardcopy (i.e. paper), adopting DIN 3 ensures files are cut into 2mm strips or confetti like cross-cut particles of 4x40mm. The UK government requires a minimum standard of DIN 4 for its material, which ensures cross cut particles of at least 2x15mm.

**29. Please provide details of individuals outside the research team who will be given password protected access to encrypted data for the proposed research.**

N/None – the data will only be accessible by myself as the principle researcher. Interviews will be recorded via zoom and stored on a password protected, secure laptop. Data will be transcribed via zoom and checked by the researcher, transcriptions will be stored on a password protected, secure laptop.

**30. Please provide details on the regions and territories where research data will be electronically transferred that are external to the UK:**

N/A

**SECTION J: PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

**30. How will the results of the research be reported and disseminated? (Select all that apply)**

- Peer reviewed journal
- Non-peer reviewed journal
- Peer reviewed books
- Publication in media, social media or website (including Podcasts and online videos)
- Conference presentation
- Internal report
- Promotional report and materials
- Reports compiled for or on behalf of external organisations
- Dissertation/Thesis
- Other publication
- Written feedback to research participants
- Presentation to participants or relevant community groups
- Other (Please specify below)

**SECTION K: OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES**

**31. Are there any other ethical issues that have not been addressed which you would wish to bring to the attention of Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC)?**

N/A

**SECTION L: CHECKLIST FOR ATTACHED DOCUMENTS**

**32. Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.**

- Letters of approval from any external ethical approval bodies (where relevant)
- Recruitment advertisement
- Participant information sheets (including easy-read where relevant)
- Consent forms (including easy-read where relevant)
- Assent form for children (where relevant)
- Letters of approval from locations for data collection
- Questionnaire
- Interview Schedule or topic guide
- Risk Assessment (where applicable)
- Overseas travel approval (where applicable)

**34. Where it is not possible to attach the above materials, please provide an explanation below.**

## Appendix I

### *Ethics Permission Letter*

The Tavistock and Portman   
NHS Foundation Trust

Quality Assurance & Enhancement  
Directorate of Education & Training  
Tavistock Centre  
120 Belsize Lane  
London  
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2699  
Fax: 020 7447 3837

Emma Murphy

**By Email**

25 May 2021

**Re: Research Ethics Application**

**Title:** Exploring Trainee Educational Psychologists' experience of training and use of Dynamic Assessment in the UK.

Dear Emma,

I am pleased to inform you that subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee your application has been approved. This means you can proceed with your research.

**Please note that any changes to the project design including changes to methodology/data collection etc. must be referred to TREC as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct.**

If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,



**Paru Jeram**

Secretary to the Trust Research Degrees Subcommittee

T: 020 938 2699

E: [academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

cc. Course Lead, Supervisor, Course Administrator

## Appendix J

### *List of games*

This is a list of games mentioned by participants as dynamic assessment tools. The total number of mentions was 37 and therefore the percentage represents the whole of the 'other' sections.

<b>Game title</b>	<b>Number(%)</b>
<b>Barrier Games</b>	1(2%)
<b>Camelot junior</b>	1(2%)
<b>Connect 4</b>	1(2%)
<b>Dobble</b>	1(2%)
<b>Roadblocks</b>	1(2%)
<b>IQ stars</b>	1(2%)
<b>Lego</b>	2(3%)
<b>Card game</b>	3(5%)
<b>Puzzles/Tangrams</b>	4(6%)
<b>Not specified</b>	6(9%)
<b>Rush hour</b>	16(25%)

## Appendix K

*Example of an early coded transcript (pages 1 to 6) from participant 4 (Tracey)*

	1	Interviewer: Okay so just to begin I just want to gather some background information about participants and if you're happy to just share what year of training you're in that would be great?
	2	P4: Yes so I just finished my third year
	3	Interviewer: Okay erm so I just sort of an open-ended question erm if you'd like to tell me what your experiences of dynamic assessment training have been?
<p>Training provided externally /</p> <p>Amount of training</p> <p>Influence of university</p> <p>Paid/booked for additior</p> <p>Paid for additional traini</p> <p>DA training on placement</p>	4	<p>P4: Mm hm so I've had some input from the university and I was trying to think is in the first year or the second year I think it might have been the first year erm and it was another service that was nearby that had a couple of EPs that had particular interest came to do a day I'm pretty sure it was just a single day but it was quite a full on day so that was sort of the only university input formally but we also had erm one of us it was one of the course directors so at the time there were two course directors and one of them erm was particularly interested in dynamic assessments so he was my tutor so we had a lot of conversations informally erm about how he used dynamic assessment (.) erm and then also in the I'm I think it was between the first and second years over the summer break or like at the end of the first year potentially we brought in someone we paid to fly in [Trainer name] ((laughter)) from [Country] which is where he lives and he gave us a day's training package so we all paid it out of our own you know pocket I think we tried to claim it back from university but we didn't erm so we have that as well but then in addition to that I've done some training at the service I was on placement in my third year erm and they just did it was like a days CPD but it was in house it was EPs that had a lot of experience with were doing the training so I've done that as well</p>
	5	Interviewer: And when you say about [Trainer name] so so the did the trainees decide that they wanted to fly him in to have the training?
<p>Requested more input on DA</p>	6	<p>P4: ((in overlap)) Yeah yeah I mean when we I think we were we were asking for quite a while about more input on dynamic assessment because we were all quite surprised that we only had that one day formally on the timetable and we'd all said you know we think we need more than this</p>



because [university name] is a particularly kind of I suppose quite like well they're all reflective right but erm I think it's a sort of established scepticism about psychometrics at [university name] so very much like do you know is it ethical like what about eugenics like got history and all of that and look at the standardisation of the BAS and WISC and whatever so they said they were kind of encouraging us to do more dynamic assessment but one day of training just nobody would feel even remotely able to do it with that I think and without supervision so we asked for it and they kind of just basically said there's no space in the timetable so we looked at who can we bring in we thought well we all look like know this book by Fraser Lachlan and Donna Carrigan I think it is really like this book we inquired with him and he was like yeah well you have to cover my flights as well ((laughter)) so just like okay ((laughter)) so it's EasyJet to [Country] I think he's train like the hire of a car and all of us but [Trainer name] packaged it all up I mean we we offered it to we ran it we kind of organised it but we offered it to all three years of the training so we had some Year three's at the time we had some I don't think any Year ones because I guess we were Year ones but yeah I think they had year threes and yes we put them all together and split the cost it wasn't that bad about sixty pounds but still I just feel like you know we shouldn't have to do that really

7 Interviewer: Yeah yeah and what was kind of your yeah I suppose what kind of did you feel about the training sort of the training provided by the university and by [Trainer name]?

8 P4: I guess somewhat disappointed with [Trainer name's] training clearly we're anonymous here right? I'm confidential

9 Interviewer: Yes

10 P4: It was good but it was very much reproducing what was in the book so it's like okay the book was great read the book loads great resources it was essentially he was like pointing us to the resources in the book training from the university was really really good er because they were practising EPs I was [Trainer name] is I guess he is a trained EP isn't he? But he's I think he came from yeah so he was trained by [Trainer name] I can't remember surname did his PhD I think and then became an EP potentially and then

Requested more input on DA

Training offered resource

Lost DA resources

Offered standardised res

Not easy to get hold of C

DA is worth the effort

he's he's not a practising EP and certainly not in the UK so erm maybe he is practising but yeah not he's not working a local authority put it that way so basically yeah the er in the the university training was more applicable I think to what we're doing but we could have done that for two weeks like we could have two weeks like you know it was erm and they just get they threw so many resources at us er including like an adapted CATM that then I went on to and a lot of us went on to use because we didn't have CATM at the service you know because it's a standard thing like 'oh we've lost all the bloody blocks and we've lost the manual' like we just want just give me a resource you know they said 'we got the BAS' I don't want the BAS I want the CATM and I think do I have to buy it myself like it's it's not made easy put it that way I just felt it wasn't easy erm it took more effort to do it but it was worth doing it and I still feel

11 Interviewer: ((in overlap)) Right

12 P4: Yeah

13 Interviewer: Okay so you felt that it was helpful but that it could have been a longer training?

Need supervision/suppo

Lack of support/supervisi

More discussions ar

Discussions/convers

Lack of support/supervision

14 P4: Yeah and some supervision like some like you know there was we have we did have a kind of group supervision set up erm I think they called it group consultation which was like a general supervision but and I think that ran in the first year or the second maybe the beginning of the second year I can't remember but that was sort of more tended to be more about like you know er relational dynamics within you know your work rather than let's talk about our assessment and like are more of a sort of CPD development in terms of yeah using dynamic assessment so that that would have been better if we had that but we didn't we did informally talk with each other trainees would just we often share stuff and but from a university side not much support

15 Interviewer: Okay

16 P4: Yeah

	17	Interviewer: Yeah yeah so perhaps some more support from them would have been helpful to be able to use dynamic assessment do you think?
More support	18	P4: Yeah to use it to use it confidently to use more tools you know to share erm I think I just like now we talk about I think we were asking about that like for the whole like duration of the course and then probably had COVID not happened maybe that would have materialised and maybe we would have had more of like a resource sharing group I think there was talk and also yeah this reminds me there's a there's a Facebook group there was like a dynamic assessment group on Facebook that I joined and I know a couple of my colleagues went to and then they brought back resources that they talked about there erm and I was planning to go too because it was like a regional thing and I think they met up near us it was like er I think they met up near [county name] yeah erm but COVID was a bit of a you know like for everyone a bit of a bomb to that so erm and I could talk about remote dynamic assessment if that's interesting?
Requested more input or		
Practice hindered/chang		
Social media and DA		
	19	Interviewer: Yeah yeah
Practice hindered/changed by	20	P4: Because so obviously with COVID like we were forced to go online and we still had all the EHC assessments to do er and suddenly we were trying to scramble for ways we could do that and er I never use much psychometric I think I've only ever done one BAS because I just didn't like them erm and of course those aren't really valid well there not that especially valid remotely so dynamic assessment remotely seemed like quite a promising route so then a colleague at our service adapted the CATM to use remotely and that was brilliant so used loads of that over the last year erm (.) but again not much from the uni- I mean no I mean I mean you we don't you don't get any input really in the third year anyway but in terms of having resources to use remotely like there was zilch because everything we did was prepare you know it was in person back then so it had all been offer our own backs since that yeah
Standardised tests are bi		
Remote Da is promising		
Online/Remote ways of i		
Lack of university input		
To get through had to do it yc		
	21	Interviewer: Have you found in your service that's been quite supportive of using dynamic assessment? You said about that they offered training as well
Influence of PEP	22	P4: Yeah definitely yeah because one of the the person that was the joint



course director who then retired from the university was is the PEP at the service and he's very interesting dynamic dynamic assessment and he's had lots of training you know from like Tzurriel em and he's been to Israel to do the extra training and everything so he's like really on it and he was particularly kind of keen that people will be using it and erm so yeah I think it is I think it's a very very supportive placement for dynamic assess- I'm just trying to think the others I've been on because I went I did a different placement in the second year (.) erm and they too were di- us- like generally just used a lot of a lot of like dynamic assessment but I just I guess (.) I'm trying to think of like why it's almost like I want to say like a dirty secret it's not like a dirty secret but it's like erm not talked about I don't know because maybe externally when you have those pressures of tribunals especially in placement service I'm at it's a lot of tribunals and you have attitudes from SEN services er and perhaps parents and schools that you know you've got a sort of hierarchy of what's considered a good assessment and often they will assume a psychometric is like an EP assessment you know they'll assume like a WISC and that EP will come in with a briefcase and do this erm and it's almost like we talked to each other about dynamic assessment but like no one else sort of knows what it is so then you kind of having to explain what it is but even EPs don't often talk about what they're using (.) erm and I think I and we talked about this in the [Trainer name] training erm and he was very much like 'just do what you want like you can use anything you don't have to use like an official set' you don't have because a lot of the kind of traditional you know LPAD and all those things they seem very clunky to me they seem very like 1970s and the language to read them is impossible like the papers and the manuals are just like impenetrable terms of the language I find so [Trainer name] was like 'just use anything like you can use a jigsaw puzzle you can use a game you can use whatever like you can do literally anything dynamic' because it's the process it's not the product like so erm he said just try and be confident and yet I don't know it's like you just you just kind of messing around you just feel like you're messing around so I think that's hard as a trainee to feel confident you're actually doing something that is valid because you've got that not you know haven't got the certainty or the confidence that that you get from a psychometric well it's always talked about in parallel with a psychometric as though psychometric some kind of like you know ideal which is which is nonsense if you know anything about it's not it's not an ideal is it ((laughter)) erm but yes I think dynamic is something that you just the more



you do the the more you kind of feel there's to learn so yeah I don't know that you ever become confident in it and that's what [Trainer name] was saying is like you just have to try it out and see what works basically and try anything maybe it can't be taught although the process you know the kind of basic principles we were introduced to but then from there it's lots of experimentation (.) and yeah but maybe more I think more supervision would have helped us with that I mean some supervision from the university or even the placements like there was a it wasn't a dynamic assessment group but there was like a remote assessment group that was run at my placement erm which was really good actually every two weeks and that was a resource sharing thing so people had like adapted for example the CATM to use online and like the Complex Figure Drawing you can do on the screen stuff like that you know just talking about ways of using different tools like Google what's it jam board and you know like different things you could use with a child without actually being there with them

23 Interviewer: Yeah

24 P4: Yeah sorry it's complete ramble

25 Interviewer: ((laughter)) No that was really interesting I really liked kind of how you said about dynamic assessment being a kind of dirty secret and maybe something that EPs don't speak about as much and maybe not even just dynamic assessment but just our practice sometimes and not sharing practice as much and who knows what dynamic assessment is for example yeah when you was talking about like tribunals and things do parents and schools feel that they know what dynamic assessment is and that it is a valid assessment of children and young people

26 P4: ((in overlap)) Mm yeah yeah

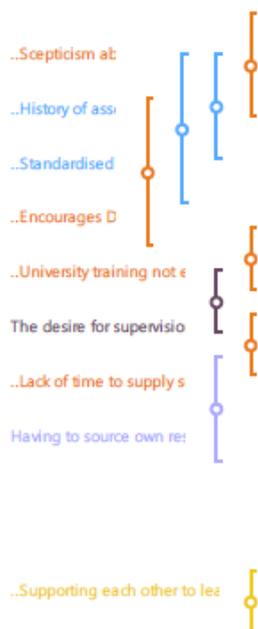
27 Interviewer: Yeah I thought that was really interesting and and I also picked up on what you said about sort of nonsense of psychometric and I wondered if you could just sort of mention anything else about that

28 P4: Yeh I just think it's a nonsense I think it's a nonsense like I think I mean

## Appendix L

Example of a later coded transcript (pages 1 to 6) from participant 4 (Tracey)

	1	Interviewer: Okay so just to begin I just want to gather some background information about participants and if you're happy to just share what year of training you're in that would be great?
	2	P4: Yes so I just finished my third year
	3	Interviewer: Okay erm so I just sort of an open-ended question erm if you'd like to tell me what your experiences of dynamic assessment training have been?
<p>..University training provided</p> <p>..Amount of training</p> <p>..Course director val</p> <p>..Discussions/conve</p>	4	<p>P4: Mm hm so I've had some input from the university and I was trying to think is in the first year or the second year I think it might have been the first year erm and it was another service that was nearby that had a couple of EPs that had particular interest came to do a day I'm pretty sure it was just a single day but it was quite a full on day so that was sort of the only university input formally but we also had erm one of us it was one of the course directors so at the time there were two course directors and one of them erm was particularly interested in dynamic assessments so he was my tutor so we had a lot of conversations informally erm about how he used dynamic assessment (.) erm and then also in the I'm I think it was between the first and second years over the summer break or like at the end of the first year potentially we brought in someone we paid to fly in [Trainer name] ((laughter)) from [Country] which is where he lives and he gave us a day's training package so we all paid it out of our own you know pocket I think we tried to claim it back from university but we didn't erm so we have that as well but then in addition to that I've done some training at the service I was on placement in my third year erm and they just did it was like a days CPD but it was in house it was EPs that had a lot of experience with were doing the training so I've done that as well</p>
<p>Having to source own re:</p> <p>..University training not e</p>	5	Interviewer: And when you say about [Trainer name] so so the did the trainees decide that they wanted to fly him in to have the training?
<p>..DA learning provided b</p> <p>..Tutors/Trainer are know</p>	6	<p>P4: ((in overlap)) Yeah yeah I mean when we I think we were we were asking for quite a while about more input on dynamic assessment because we were all quite surprised that we only had that one day formally on the timetable and we'd all said you know we think we need more than this because</p>
<p>..Sufficient training is ne</p> <p>..University training not e</p>		



[university name] is a particularly kind of I suppose quite like well they're all reflective right but erm I think it's a sort of established scepticism about psychometrics at [university name] so very much like do you know is it ethical like what about eugenics like got history and all of that and look at the standardisation of the BAS and WISC and whatever so they said they were kind of encouraging us to do more dynamic assessment but one day of training just nobody would feel even remotely able to do it with that I think and without supervision so we asked for it and they kind of just basically said there's no space in the timetable so we looked at who can we bring in we thought well we all look like know this book by [Authors name] I think it is really like this book we inquired with him and he was like yeah well you have to cover my flights as well ((laughter)) so just like okay ((laughter)) so it's EasyJet to [Country] I think he's train like the hire of a car and all of us but [Trainer name] packaged it all up I mean we we we offered it to we ran it we kind of organised it but we offered it to all three years of the training so we had some Year three's at the time we had some I don't think any Year ones because I guess we were Year ones but yeah I think they had year threes and yes we put them all together and split the cost it wasn't that bad about sixty pounds but still I just feel like you know we shouldn't have to do that really

7 Interviewer: Yeah yeah and what was kind of your yeah I suppose what kind of did you feel about the training sort of the training provided by the university and by [Trainer name]?

8 P4: I guess somewhat disappointed with [Trainer name's] training clearly we're anonymous here right? I'm confidential

9 Interviewer: Yes

10 P4: It was good but it was very much reproducing what was in the book so it's like okay the book was great read the book loads great resources it was essentially he was like pointing us to the resources in the book training from the university was really really good er because they were practising EPs I was [Trainer name] is I guess he is a trained EP isn't he? But he's I think he came from yeah so he was trained by [Trainer name] I can't remember surname did his PhD I think and then became an EP potentially and then he's he's not a practising EP and certainly not in the UK so erm maybe he is practising but



..Lack of time to supply s

..Training offered practic

..Difficulties accessi

..Standardised read

..Rejecting standard

Having to source own re:

Investing time and effort to u:

yeah not he's not working a local authority put it that way so basically yeah the er in the the university training was more applicable I think to what we're doing but we could have done that for two weeks like we could have two weeks like you know it was erm and they just get they threw so many resources at us er including like an adapted CATM that then I went on to and a lot of us went on to use because we didn't have CATM at the service you know because it's a standard thing like 'oh we've lost all the bloody blocks and we've lost the manual' like we just want just give me a resource you know they said 'we got the BAS' I don't want the BAS I want the CATM and I think 'do I have to buy it myself?' Like it's it's not made easy put it that way I just felt it wasn't easy erm it took more effort to do it but it was worth doing it and I still feel

11 Interviewer: ((in overlap)) Right

12 P4: Yeah

13 Interviewer: Okay so you felt that it was helpful but that it could have been a longer training?

14 P4: Yeah and some supervision like some like you know there was we have we did have a kind of group supervision set up erm I think they called it group consultation which was like a general supervision but and I think that ran in the first year or the second maybe the beginning of the second year I can't remember but that was sort of more tended to be more about like you know er relational dynamics within you know your work rather than let's talk about our assessment and like are more of a sort of CPD development in terms of yeah using dynamic assessment so that that would have been better if we had that but we didn't we did informally talk with each other trainees would just we often share stuff and but from a university side not much support

..Discussions/conversatic

..Lack of support/supervis

15 Interviewer: Okay

16 P4: Yeah

17 Interviewer: Yeah yeah so perhaps some more support from them would

		have been helpful to be able to use dynamic assessment do you think?
..Sufficient training need		18 P4: Yeah to use it to use it confidently to use more tools you know to share
..Lack of opportunities to		erm I think I just like now we talk about I think we were asking about that like
Sharing experiences/res		for the whole like duration of the course and then probably had COVID not
..Lack of opportunities to		happened maybe that would have materialised and maybe we would have
		had more of like a resource sharing group I think there was talk and also yeah
		this reminds me there's a there's a Facebook group there was like a dynamic
		assessment group on Facebook that I joined and I know a couple of my
		colleagues went to and then they brought back resources that they talked
		about there erm and I was planning to go too because it was like a regional
		thing and I think they met up near us it was like er I think they met up near
		[county name] yeah erm but COVID was a bit of a you know like for everyone
		a bit of a bomb to that so erm and I could talk about remote dynamic
		assessment if that's interesting?
		19 Interviewer: Yeah yeah
..Uncertain of how to assess c		20 P4: Because so obviously with COVID like we were forced to go online and we
..Dislikes standardis		still had all the EHC assessments to do er and suddenly we were trying to
..Remote standardis		scramble for ways we could do that and er I never use much psychometric I
..Using DA remotel		think I've only ever done one BAS because I just didn't like them erm and of
Adapting DA tools		course those aren't really valid well there not that especially valid remotely
Stick to familiar DA tools		so dynamic assessment remotely seemed like quite a promising route so then
..Lack of support/supervis		a colleague at our service adapted the CATM to use remotely and that was
Having to source own re:		brilliant so used loads of that over the last year erm (.) but again not much
		from the uni- I mean no I mean I mean you we don't you don't get any input
		really in the third year anyway but in terms of having resources to use
		remotely like there was zilch because everything we did was prepare you
		know it was in person back then so it had all been offer our own backs since
		that yeah
		21 Interviewer: Have you found in your service that's been quite supportive of
		using dynamic assessment? You said about that they offered training as well
..PEP driving DA use		22 P4: Yeah definitely yeah because one of the the person that was the joint
		course director who then retired from the university was is the PEP at the

..PEP driving DA use  
 ..Supportive service  
 ..EPs in service use DA a lot  
 DA is unspoken  
 Is DA believable/Makir  
 ..Standardised is thi  
 Fear of judgement  
 ..EPs do standardise  
 DA is unspoken  
 Anything can be DA  
 Outdated tools  
 Anything can be DA  
 ..DA can be anything an  
 ..Confidence is linked to  
 ..Standardised is thi  
 ..Standardised is no  
 DA is an ongoing learni  
 ..Impossible to get to a

service and he's very interesting dynamic dynamic assessment and he's had lots of training you know from like Tzuriel em and he's been to Israel to do the extra training and everything so he's like really on it and he was particularly kind of keen that people will be using it and erm so yeah I think it is I think it's a very very supportive placement for dynamic assess- I'm just trying to think the others I've been on because I went I did a different placement in the second year (.) erm and they too were di- us- like generally just used a lot of a lot of like dynamic assessment but I just I guess (.) I'm trying to think of like why it's almost like I want to say like a dirty secret it's not like a dirty secret but it's like erm not talked about I don't know because maybe externally when you have those pressures of tribunals especially in placement service I'm at it's a lot of tribunals and you have attitudes from SEN services er and perhaps parents and schools that you know you've got a sort of hierarchy of what's considered a good assessment and often they will assume a psychometric is like an EP assessment you know they'll assume like a WISC and that EP will come in with a briefcase and do this erm and it's almost like we talked to each other about dynamic assessment but like no one else sort of knows what it is so then you kind of having to explain what it is but even EPs don't often talk about what they're using (.) erm and I think I and we talked about this in the [Trainer names'] training erm and he was very much like 'just do what you want like you can use anything you don't have to use like an official set' you don't have because a lot of the kind of traditional you know LPAD and all those things they seem very clunky to me they seem very like 1970s and the language to read them is impossible like the papers and the manuals are just like impenetrable terms of the language I find so [Trainer name] was like 'just use anything like you can use a jigsaw puzzle you can use a game you can use whatever like you can do literally anything dynamic' because it's the process it's not the product like so erm he said just try and be confident and yet I don't know it's like you just you just kind of messing around you just feel like you're messing around so I think that's hard as a trainee to feel confident you're actually doing something that is valid because you've got that not you know haven't got the certainty or the confidence that that you get from a psychometric well it's always talked about in parallel with a psychometric as though psychometric some kind of like you know ideal which is which is nonsense if you know anything about it's not it's not an ideal is it ((laughter)) erm but yes I think dynamic is something that you just the more you do the the more you kind of feel there's to learn so yeah I don't know that you ever become confident in it

<p>..Learning through experience</p>		<p>and that's what [Trainer name] was saying is like you just have to try it out and see what works basically and try anything maybe it can't be taught although the process you know the kind of basic principles we were introduced to but then from there it's lots of experimentation (.) and yeah</p>
<p>The desire for supervisio</p>		<p>but maybe more I think more supervision would have helped us with that I mean some supervision from the university or even the placements like there</p>
<p>Sharing experiences/res</p>		<p>was a it wasn't a dynamic assessment group but there was like a remote assessment group that was run at my placement erm which was really good</p>
<p>Adapting DA tools</p>		<p>actually every two weeks and that was a resource sharing thing so people had like adapted for example the CATM to use online and like the Complex</p>
		<p>Figure Drawing you can do on the screen stuff like that you know just talking about ways of using different tools like Google what's it jam board and you</p>
		<p>know like different things you could use with a child without actually being there with them</p>
		<p>23 Interviewer: Yeah</p>
		<p>24 P4: Yeah sorry it's complete ramble</p>
		<p>25 Interviewer: ((laughter)) No that was really interesting I really liked kind of</p>
		<p>how you said about dynamic assessment being a kind of dirty secret and maybe something that EPs don't speak about as much and maybe not even</p>
		<p>just dynamic assessment but just our practice sometimes and not sharing practice as much and who knows what dynamic assessment is for example</p>
		<p>yeah when you was talking about like tribunals and things do parents and schools feel that they know what dynamic assessment is and that it is a valid</p>
		<p>assessment of children and young people</p>
		<p>26 P4: ((in overlap)) Mm yeah yeah</p>
		<p>27 Interviewer: Yeah I thought that was really interesting and and I also picked</p>
		<p>up on what you said about sort of nonsense of psychometric and I wondered if you could just sort of mention anything else about that</p>
		<p>28 P4: Yeh I just think it's a nonsense I think it's a nonsense like I think I mean</p>
		<p>what's interesting to me is we got a very clear message from the university</p>
<p>..Standardised is nonsense/n</p>		

## Appendix M

THEME	SUBTHEME	CODE
There are a few hurdles when using DA	Finding a place for DA among traditional psychometric assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Splitting – DA/psychometric</li> <li>- Psychometrics do have a place</li> <li>- Psychometrics are straightforward/containing</li> <li>- Many people view psychometrics as the ‘gold’ standard</li> </ul>
	DA is shrouded in some mystery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- DA is abstract</li> <li>- The ‘so what’ factor of interpreting</li> <li>- In the dark about how to use DA tool</li> <li>- There is an element of subjectivity to DA</li> </ul>
	Covid-19 limited the development of DA learning and use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited chances to use DA</li> <li>- Limited shadowing</li> <li>- Limited opportunities to share practice</li> <li>- Limited changes to practice the tools</li> </ul>
	DA can stir up feelings of anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impossible to get to a point of feeling competent</li> <li>- Fear of judgement</li> <li>- Stick to familiar DA tools</li> <li>- Worry about getting it wrong</li> <li>- Worry you will miss something important</li> <li>- Ambiguity causes anxiety</li> <li>- The vastness of DA is overwhelming</li> <li>- Could have done with more training</li> </ul>
It has got to be DA	DA fan club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enjoyment using DA</li> <li>- Fan of DA</li> <li>- Go to assessment</li> <li>- DA is more ethical</li> <li>- DA is a hopeful assessment/feel positive to use</li> <li>- DA is fun</li> </ul>

	Rejection of standardised and psychometric assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You are helpless to support when doing psychometrics</li> <li>- Standardised/psychometrics are a 'cold' assessment</li> <li>- Dislikes standardised/psychometrics assessment</li> <li>- Psychometrics don't translate/transfer into classroom</li> <li>- Standardised/psychometrics are hard for the CYP/disliked by the CYP</li> <li>- Standardised/psychometrics doesn't give a holistic view/within child</li> <li>- Uncomfortable doing Standardised/psychometrics</li> </ul>
Don't go it alone	A little help from my friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sharing resources with each other</li> <li>- Having a reflective space with others</li> <li>- Example reports</li> <li>- Having conversations</li> <li>- Sharing experiences</li> </ul>
	A supervisor's helping hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supervisor encourages use of DA</li> <li>- Supervisor provides support to use DA</li> <li>- Supervisor supports reflection</li> <li>- Supervisor contains anxieties</li> </ul>
	Watch and learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To understand/feel the confident need to shadow</li> <li>- DA becoming 'alive' through videos in training sessions</li> <li>- Seeing DA in action helps understanding</li> </ul>
Wider systems have a strong influence	EP service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service expects standardised/psychometrics</li> <li>- DA not widely used in the service</li> <li>- Service uses DA</li> <li>- Allows EPs to choose/autonomy over assessment choice</li> <li>- Service expectation will influence assessment practice</li> <li>- Service provides opportunities to support DA practice</li> </ul>
	University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developed assessment practice through an essay</li> <li>- DA aligns with university values on a systemic level</li> <li>- University expresses scepticism about standardised/psychometrics</li> <li>- University encourages DA practice</li> </ul>

The ingredients for a training session to upskill TEPs in DA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Valued the passion of trainers/tutors</li> <li>- Learning was grounded in theory and psychology</li> <li>- Learning about DA tools</li> <li>- Training offered practical resources</li> <li>- Training from DA ‘experts’</li> <li>- Training allowed for practicing DA tools</li> </ul>
DA is applicable to EP work in schools	Centred around the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborative with the CYP</li> <li>- Leaves the child on a positive</li> <li>- CYP seems happy and comfortable</li> <li>- Motivating for a CYP</li> <li>- It is non-threatening</li> <li>- Gets the best from the child</li> <li>- Inclusive of the CYP</li> <li>- Feedback to the CYP</li> <li>- Responding to the CYP needs</li> <li>- Relational aspects</li> <li>- Choosing DA tools based on CYP</li> <li>- Collaborative with CYP</li> </ul>
	Transferable to the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is valid to the classroom environment</li> <li>- Strategies are applicable to the classroom environment</li> <li>- Identifying a goal for the CYP</li> </ul>
	DA brings value to the context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify needs</li> <li>- Reframing the narrative around a CYP</li> <li>- DA identifies the CYP strengths</li> <li>- Insight into supporting learning</li> </ul>
Give it some welly	DA requires investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to broaden DA tools used</li> <li>- Continue to develop practice</li> <li>- Further training to support understanding</li> <li>- Putting own time, money and effort to use DA</li> </ul>
	Persuading schools to use DA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selling the benefits of DA to the school</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Assertiveness to use it</li><li>- Talking about psychology/theory makes DA believable</li><li>- Explaining DA using an example e.g. drawings</li><li>- Staff present for the DA</li></ul>
	Practice makes perfect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Disaster/tricky the first few times</li><li>- Learning through the experience of going out and doing DA</li><li>- Practising DA tools</li><li>- Confidence develops overtime</li></ul>