



"This is the peer reviewed version of the following article which has been published in final form at <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12253>. This article may be used for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Wiley Terms and Conditions for Self-Archiving."

Curran, H. (2019) "'The SEND Code of Practice has given me clout": a phenomenological study illustrating how SENCOs managed the introduction of the SEND reforms', *British Journal of Special Education*, 46 (1), pp. 76-93.

ResearchSPAcE

<http://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/>

This version is made available in accordance with publisher policies.

Please cite only the published version using the reference above.

Your access and use of this document is based on your acceptance of the ResearchSPAcE Metadata and Data Policies, as well as applicable law:-

<https://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/policies.html>

Unless you accept the terms of these Policies in full, you do not have permission to download this document.

This cover sheet may not be removed from the document.

Please scroll down to view the document.

‘The SEND Code of Practice has given me clout’: A phenomenological study illustrating how SENCos managed the introduction of the SEND reforms

Introduction

The introduction of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms were hailed in 2014, by the then Coalition Government, as ‘the biggest transformation to SEND support for thirty years’ (Department for Education, 2014a). The seeds of change can be traced back over ten years with the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee reporting in 2006 on the failings of the then current Special Educational Needs (SEN) system. The reform process culminated in the 2014 Children and Families Act and the statutory guidance for organisations, including schools and Local Authorities (LA), who work with children with SEND: the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health (DoH), 2014). Small amendments followed with the current version of the SEND Code of Practice published in January 2015 (DfE and DoH, 2015) (hereafter referred to as the 2015 Code).

The 2015 Code states that the vision for children with SEND ‘is the same as for all children and young people – that they achieve well in their early years, at school and in college, and lead happy and fulfilled lives’ (DfE and DoH, 2015: 11). The system should be outcome focused and aspirational, with children and families at the centre. The guidance aims to create a system which is less confrontational and adversarial.

Whilst the 2015 Code (DfE and DoH, 2015) places a strong emphasis on the role and responsibilities of the teacher, the Special Educational Need Co-ordinator (SENCo) remains responsible for the co-ordination of provision for children with SEN (DfE and DoH, 2015). The role of the SENCo has previously been identified as an agent of change (Cowne, 2005; Pearson, 2010; Robertson, 2012); inferring that the role of the SENCo could be central to the implementation of 2015 Code. However, whilst there is emerging research in relation to the impact of the SEND reforms, research regarding how this central role implemented ‘the biggest transformation to SEND support for thirty years’ (DfE, 2014a) remains largely unexplored.

Yet, SEN policy is part of a wider, changing national educational landscape. As Ball and colleagues (2012) state, policy enactment does not take place in isolation and there are a number of factors which can influence the implementation of policy. Whilst the SEN system is ‘interdependent’ on the wider education system which encompasses ‘the National Curriculum and assessment, school inspection, the governance of schools and equality legislation’ (Norwich, 2014:404), it could also be

argued that there is tension between 'a policy for including and a policy for the standards raising agenda' (Ellis and Tod, 2014: 2015). Changing school structures, for example, the introduction of academisation, where schools have historically been encouraged to become independent, state-funded schools outside of the Local Authority control, may have provided both support and challenge for policy implementation.

This article forms part of a wider study which examined the role of the SENCo at a time of significant policy reform, during a period of wider educational change; the study aimed to understand the role of the SENCo as a policy actor tasked with policy implementation as well their perceptions of initial impact (Ball et al., 2012).

This article discusses the themes which arose from the in-depth, semi-structured interviews carried out with SENCo participants during the first year of the SEND reforms. The interviews took place with nine primary and secondary SENCos in mainstream schools every term between September 2014 and July 2015. The interviews explored the nature of the SENCo role and the type of the activities they carried out during this period, with specific consideration given to the policy actor roles SENCos could be seen to assume, or not, during this period (Ball et al., 2012).

The findings suggest that SENCos managed the introduction of new policy by immediately taking on a leadership role, selecting out priorities and narrating these to their colleagues. This occurred regardless of senior leadership status. SENCos used new policy to drive forward both statutory and non-statutory change. Statutory guidance was seen as a tool through which change could be driven; SENCos used policy to advocate for specific elements of policy, seeking to draw others towards their identified cause.

The introduction of the new SEND Code of Practice

The SEND reforms sought to respond to the criticisms leveled at the previous SEN system, specifically that the previous system was too complicated, identified issues too late, had too much duplication and did not focus on outcomes for children with SEN (Audit Commission, 2002; Warnock, 2005; House of Commons Select Committee, 2006; DCFS, 2009; Glazzard et al., 2015). Additional concerns highlighted an overly bureaucratic system, which disadvantaged parents and impinged on their collective and individual voice (Glazzard et al., 2015).

The culmination of this process was the introduction of the 2014 Children and Families Act and the related statutory guidance; the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and DoH, 2014; DfE and

DoH, 2015). The statutory requirements were due to be implemented in the early years, schools and colleges from 1st September 2014.

The 2015 Code (DfE and DoH, 2015) is underpinned by key principles which LAs must follow when executing their statutory functions in relation to children and young people with SEND. The principles state that the views of the child, young person and parents must be actively sought and incorporated and that authentic participation should be developed, particularly in relation to decision making. The principles also state that support should 'help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood' (DfE and DoH, 2015: 19).

The 2015 Code (DfE and DoH, 2015) states that the aim is for a more efficient, less confrontational, system. Additional needs will be identified early, and parents will be clear about the support their child/ young person will receive. Outcomes will relate to progress but will also focus on health, well-being, making friends and developing a voice, amongst others. The role of the parent/ carer is central to the guidance; the need for collaboration and involvement between schools and parents is clearly stated.

Since the inception of the SENCo role in 1994 (DfE, 1994), the SENCo has played a central role in the school, translating SEN policy into practice. As Layton suggests, when citing the Teacher Training Agency SENCo standards, there was an assumption by policymakers that the SENCo would be, 'the agent for achieving a whole-school approach to SEN, thus promoting the inclusion of all pupils' (2005: 54). Latterly Robertson (2012) argued that the SENCo would be central in bringing about the changes of the SEND reforms, with Pearson et al. (2015) suggesting that SENCos were familiar with the challenges of policy reform. A view echoed by Lehane who stated that the summer and early autumn of 2014 was a 'busy time for those concerned with SEN coordination' (2016: 51). The 2015 Code (DfE and DoH, 2015), similar to the previous Code, stipulates that it is advantageous for the SENCo to be part of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), although this is not a requirement. Yet, Pearson (2008) argues that the role of the SENCo is typically not in a senior position and, consequently, the role itself can be ineffective at influencing whole school policy.

The policy actor typology

The work of Ball and colleagues (2012) could be considered useful to further explore how SENCos implemented new policy, despite reported issues regarding seniority and status (Pearson, 2008). Ball and colleagues suggest that individuals take various policy positions during a period of policy implementation. Ball and colleagues have identified that there may be specific aspects of policy

work which are attributable to 'eight types of policy actor or policy positions which are involved in the making meaning of, and constructing a response to, policy through the processes of interpretation and translation' (2012: 49). This led to the suggested policy actor typology outlined in table 1.

Ball and colleagues suggest that that the actor types assumed during policy enactment, as described in table 1, are 'not necessarily attached to specific individuals, nor are they fixed, unified and mutually exclusive "types" of teacher in every case' (2012: 49). This suggests that the role of the SENCo, as a policy actor at a time of policy implementation, may be changeable, static or hold various roles concurrently. Such positions may also be dependent on the nature and activity of the individual at the time, as well as with whom the SENCo may be working with at the time.

This article seeks to apply the policy actor typology to explore the role of the SENCo as a policy implementer at a time of SEND reform. This is particularly significant not only due to the breadth and complexity of the role (Szwed, 2007a; Szwed, 2007b; Qureshi, 2014) but also because the role in practice does not reflect policy (Szwed, 2007b; Pearson, 2008). Additionally, international models of the SENCo role which incorporate senior leadership, for example in Hong Kong where the SENCo role is part of the deputy head role, have not been adopted in England (Poon-McBrayer, 2012). As such this can make the application of the SENCo role in context problematic, which could have wider ramifications for the implementation of new SEND policy in schools.

Research design

The study took a phenomenological approach, over the first year of SEND reform. The research design consisted of five phases:

- Phase one: a context-setting questionnaire which gathered initial views regarding the SENCos' understanding of the reforms and their views of preparedness (n=54).
- Phase two: semi-structured interviews with a group of SENCos, which explored the questionnaire responses further (n=9).
- Phase three: termly semi-structured interviews with the SENCos from Phase two. Interviews focused on the SENCos' narration of the SEND reforms for the first academic year of implementation (n=9).
- Phase four: a second questionnaire, focused on the SENCos' perceptions of the first six months of the reforms (n=74).

- Phase five: a final questionnaire to a broad group of SENCOs reflecting on the first year of reform (n=40).

Phases four and five involved a broader group of SENCOs, both in terms of experience and geography than Phases one, two and three. This article will report on Phase three.

Phase three

The purpose of this phase was to collect the long-term data which explored the experience of the SENCO as a policy actor at a point of policy reform. The aim was to work with a group of individuals and to interview them at the end of every new term (old half term) for the first academic year of the SEND reforms.

Phase one and two had indicated that SENCOs took a prominent role in determining how and when policy would be implemented. They prioritised, and led on, a range of actions. Therefore, phase three sought to explore these themes over the course of the academic year.

The semi-structured interviews at phase three explored the following areas:

- SENCO activities; both general and SEND reform related
- Reflections on the SENCO role
- Barriers and enablers to executing the role
- The SENCOs' perceptions of the implementation of the SEND reforms to date.

An interview schedule was piloted with thirteen educational professionals before the final semi-structured interviews were administered. SENCOs were given a choice of telephone, Skype or FaceTime. All participants chose to conduct the interviews via telephone. The interviews lasted between eleven minutes – fifty-two minutes. The average length was twenty to thirty minutes.

A thematic analysis (TA) approach was applied during data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Following the transcription of the interviews, each interview was coded, completely, considering the selected research questions and aims in relation to familiarity with the data and emerging ideas. The codes were then individually analysed by searching for themes and sub-themes. The findings have been reported and analysed using the policy actor typology (Ball et al., 2012).

Participants for Phase three

As per the earlier phases, the sampling method was specialist group sampling, with the aim of creating a representative sample. The group consisted of SENCOs, in post, working within maintained primary and secondary schools and academies in England. All SENCOs had completed the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination. The criteria for the sample was based on the mandatory criteria for the role of the SENCO in maintained primary and secondary schools and academies (DfE and DoH, 2015).

Due to the sampling methods, the participants were all were relatively new to the role of SENCO. All, bar one, had been in the post for one year at the start of the study. One participant had been an assistant SENCO and taken on the role of SENCO at the start of the study. Just under half of the participants held additional teaching responsibilities; this is broadly in line with larger studies (Tissot, 2013; Pearson et al., 2015). Three SENCOs from the sample were part of the SLT. This reflects previous research which indicates that membership to the SLT is mixed (Oldham and Radford, 2011; Tissot, 2013; Pearson et al., 2015). Non-contact time for the SENCOs within the sample was variable. Of the SENCOs who held teaching responsibilities (n=4), non-contact time to execute the role varied from none, to half a day/ day per week. This, therefore, provides a range of experience in terms of additional responsibilities, time to execute the role and seniority (Pearson et al., 2015).

In terms of school representation, the balance between primary and secondary schools was broadly reflective of the national data at the time (DfE, 2016) (n=5 primary and n=4 secondary). The schools were located within four unitary authorities and one borough council. At the time of data collection, the schools represented a mix of both Local Authority (LA) controlled and Academy schools, with two primary academies and 3 secondary academies. One school was a teaching school. This is pertinent as teaching schools are denoted by the DfE as 'strong schools led by strong leaders that work with others to provide high-quality training, develop and to support new and experienced school staff' (DfE, 2014b).

The school contexts were all varied. In terms of size, the smallest primary school was a village primary school with a population of 73 and the largest had a population 510. The smallest secondary school had a population of 470 and the largest had a population of 1789. This again reflects the varying experiences of SENCOs working in a variety of contexts (Hallett and Hallett, 2010; Pearson et al., 2015)

Findings from phase three

The following discussion explores each of the eight policy actor types and the degree to which, or not, the SENCo participants could be seen to assume these roles.

The role of narrator

The findings from this study illustrate that the SENCos immediately responded to the introduction of new policy guidance by selecting and narrating aspects of the 2015 Code (DfE and DoH, 2015). SENCos began by identifying and selecting both the statutory and non-statutory elements of the 2015 Code which they felt needed to be addressed within their setting; this selection began before the official guidance was finalised, with SENCos referring to draft advice before September 2014. SENCos quickly assumed this role and immediately began to implement school-wide change, regardless of seniority; a role echoed throughout all the phases of the study. Whilst there were statutory elements of the guidance which determined the way in which SENCos prioritised activities, for example, the requirement to have a SEND information report is statutory (DfE and DoH, 2015), SENCos were also using the new guidance to advocate for their self-determined priorities.

Despite the SENCos within this study assuming a lead role in 'deciding' policy, only three of the nine SENCos at phase three were members of the SLT. Therefore, the majority of SENCos within this study were taking a lead implementation role without the formal status of SLT membership. Policy interpretation and narration tend to be primarily assumed by head teachers and senior leaders (Ball et al., 2012). This presents an interesting juxtaposition; the SENCos were assuming a lead role in driving school change yet lacked the formal status that SLT membership can bring, which, it could be argued, is essential to effect change. Yet, SENCos did not perceive this to be, necessarily, a barrier.

It has been argued that the 2015 Code lacks specific guidance and clarity and is less prescriptive than previous versions (Norwich, 2014), perhaps reflecting not only the view of an increasingly school-led system, but also Ball and colleagues' (2012) suggestion that sometimes the onus is on the school to develop and interpret policy when it has not yet been developed by the policymakers. This view is reflected within the findings from this study, with SENCos suggesting that they were implementing their interpretation of the guidance. SENCos viewed this as both a concern and an opportunity. SENCos believed that this approach could lead to a varied interpretation of national policy within schools, yet also allowed them the freedom to take charge of processes.

The findings also indicate that priorities were determined, and decisions were often made, in isolation without apparent wider support. The research suggests that the issue of narrating new policy within a set of wider school policy priorities was challenging for the SENCOs; particularly for SENCOs who were not part of SLT. The findings suggest that the introduction of the SEND reforms at the same time as the New Curriculum (DfE, 2014c) was problematic for SENCOs, due to the primary focus on the latter in schools. The SENCOs within this study echoed this tension of competing policies and how to negotiate these, while also having to consider their alignment to new and existing policies, many of which they may find 'controversial and challenging' (Brundrett, 2011: 339). Such feelings may be exacerbated by a lack of experience of the SENCO or their understanding of the wider school picture; not being an SLT member could make it difficult to have a holistic picture of school policy (Oldham and Radford, 2011). This raises questions regarding how effectively SEND policy can be embedded if priorities are determined and decisions are made in isolation, without the involvement of SLT.

Yet, the findings from this study suggest that the SENCOs did not necessarily want to be part of the SLT, despite the argument that this is the most effective way of managing the strategic aspect of the role (Tissot, 2013). The findings did, however, suggest that SENCOs were concerned about issues regarding the seniority and status of the role. Feelings of loneliness, being 'stuck in the middle' and a lack of clout regarding the practical execution of policy were also reported, as well as feelings of wider accountability for developing an inclusive ethos. The SENCOs reported that they felt undervalued. This extended beyond the school settings, with SENCOs suggesting that some external agencies undervalued the professionalism of the role. This presents an interesting position where SENCOs appeared to be naturally assuming a senior role regardless of their official designated authority, driving forward change, whilst feeling undervalued. It may be argued that such issues could be alleviated through SLT membership for example, as this would provide opportunities for elevating the seniority of the role, as well as sharing responsibility. Yet, whilst automatic SLT membership may be the natural solution, the underlying tension suggested by this study is not just that SENCOs are not invited to join SLT, they do not want to be.

The role of entrepreneur

Despite such reported concerns, the findings from this study illustrate that the SENCOs were thinking about how to bring colleagues on board and 'make it easier' for them; SENCOs were seeking to 'mak[e] policy palatable and mak[e] it happen' (Ball et al., 2012: 50). They were acting as an

entrepreneur which suggests that the SENCOs were finding alternative means to create whole school change, other than SLT status.

The findings suggest that the SENCOs carried this out through a myriad of ways and that *entrepreneurial advocacy* was not always through overt means. The SENCOs described the various ways in which they engaged staff within new policy initiatives, including the immediate adoption of new language, for example, the phrases 'outcome focused' and 'with the child's family at the centre' figured prominently in the interviews when the SENCOs were describing interactions with staff. SENCOs put up information boards and held 'drop in surgeries' for teachers. SENCOs also described how they modelled the process of identifying and supporting children with SEN through the introduction of new processes, for example, new person-centred practices. In addition to this, there were more overt methods of implementing change, such as specific SEND reform training for staff.

Such methods may be considered subtle or measured, yet this illustrates a central finding from the study which relates to the way in which SENCOs used new policy as a vehicle to effect change. The application of such methods may reflect personal investment in policy principles as well as highlighting how alternative means to drive change can be adopted when seniority may be lacking. The inference from the SENCOs across all the study's phases was that legislation could bring personal distance *and* legislative clout when introducing change. SENCOs may hence be acting as *covert entrepreneurs* when leading policy change and using policy as a means through which to effect change.

The findings from this study indicated that the SENCOs felt invested in the new policy principles, even if they critiqued certain aspects. SENCOs reported that they felt responsible for provision; social and emotional, as well as academic. SENCOs reported feelings of responsibility in relation to securing good outcomes for children and facilitating family leadership. These areas reflect the central principles of the SEND reforms (DfE and DoH, 2015) and perhaps indicate professional investment as well as the longer-term government policy drive towards inclusion (Dyson and Gallannaugh, 2007). Yet this does call into question issues related to SENCO well-being if they are experiencing such significant feelings of responsibility, without a wider, more senior team to look to for support.

The role of enthusiast and translator

The findings suggest that while SENCOs were acting as policy narrators and entrepreneurs they were also acting as policy enthusiasts. SENCOs felt that *modelling* inclusive practice was essential; this was particularly evident from the interviews with the SENCOs who retained teaching responsibilities.

Such an approach allowed SENCoS to demonstrate the opportunity of new policy, for example, the new Assess, Plan, Do, Review procedure (DfE and DoH, 2015), thus demonstrating another way in which SENCoS mitigated their lack of official seniority. Certainly, within this study, the SENCoS reported how they wished to demonstrate that policy was 'do-able' to colleagues, illustrating that new processes were attainable.

However, it is interesting to consider how the role of *enthusiast* may change over time. The findings of the study suggest that the SENCo role is broadening in response to diminishing resources. This suggests that it may be more challenging for the SENCo to model effective practice if their role extends and opportunities to model diminish.

The findings from this study also indicate that SENCoS were seeking to recruit others to their cause to champion policy. SENCoS reported on the development of mini informal SEN teams and departmental SEN champions. It could be argued the idea of developing teams within SEN may become increasingly important as the role of the SENCo extends, but also whilst SLT status remains optional.

The role of transactor

The findings from the study illustrate that the SENCoS clearly felt accountable, although this was not related to typical accountability measures such as monitoring children's progress. Feelings of accountability related to advocacy for children and parents and the development of inclusive policy. The role of the transactor is typically seen by colleagues as acting, reporting and accounting for new policy (Ball et al., 2012). The findings illustrate that SENCoS felt accountable when trying to access provision for individuals, with SENCoS arguing that this was necessary when reviewing provision or trying to access additional services from the LA. SENCoS reported feelings of being 'in the middle', particularly because they had to convey messages between parties. When SENCoS had to account for and evidence policy, specifically for individuals, this could cause tensions between parties, for example, parents, teachers, SLT, school business managers and governors. SENCoS from the study who were part of Multi Academy Trusts particularly commented on this issue, citing the additional layer of management/ bureaucracy which brought about the need to advocate and mediate.

It could be argued that the transactor role represents the pressures of the multi-faceted SENCo role, particularly since measures of accountability for children have gained prominence through SEN legislation (Children and Families Act, 2014; DfE and DoH, 2015). This further underpins not only the importance of the role but also the fragility due to continuing issues related to status and support.

The role of the receivers

Whilst the findings illustrated that SENCOs quickly took on board new policy initiatives, the findings also suggest that some SENCOs adhered more rigidly to the guidance. The role of the policy receiver may reflect a lack of confidence in their role and their lack of understanding of the new policy or indeed their lack of experience. Equally, it could be due to a lack of clarity within the guidance (Norwich, 2014). This could present issues for driving forward change in schools, particularly if the SENCO role remains marginalised and lacking in status.

The role of the critic

The findings from this study did not highlight a specific role for the SENCO as a critic, a role Ball and colleagues describe as 'marginal and muted' (2012: 61). Despite being critical of the policy, particularly regarding LA support to implement the SEND reforms, SENCOs still quickly took on the role of policy narrator, entrepreneur and enthusiast. The findings did not suggest that their criticisms were taken further, for example to their head teacher or the LA. However, some SENCOs reported that they had stopped engaging with LA support as they did not perceive it to be useful. In addition to this, the findings illustrate how SENCOs 'protected' staff from some of the wider, more substantial changes which may indicate a critique of the policy itself or a reticence to add to their colleagues' workload.

It could be hypothesised that there are reasons why SENCOs did not assume the role of the critic; including the lack of time and space to reflect critically on the new policy (Ball et al., 2012). However, it could also be argued that there were others within the school who were providing this critical, counter voice. The findings from this study suggest that teacher resistance was a factor for SENCOs when trying to effect change, thus perhaps illustrating the voice of the critic. However, this should not be assumed as there may be other reasons as to why the teachers demonstrated resistance to change. This may be related to feelings of reform fatigue or the historical experience that criticising new policy and initiatives does not have the desired effect.

The role of the outsiders

It is notable that one aspect not addressed in depth within this research was the notion of the outsider policy actor (Ball et al., 2012). This reflects the idea that not all policy development is school-based and considers the wider voices of the other stakeholders who are invested, or involved, in the implementation of policy. The LA is cited by Ball and colleagues (2012) as a typical example of an outsider; this would be a pertinent area for future SEND reform research.

Concluding comments

In summary, the findings from this phase of the study illustrate that the SENCOs, at a time of policy implementation, could be seen to assume a number of policy actor roles concurrently. Through using the policy actor typology (Ball et al., 2012), the findings from this study indicate that the SENCOs took the lead narrating role when selecting, determining and interpreting new policy. SENCOs could be seen to assume this role immediately, before the statutory guidance was finalised, through both direct or indirect means. They were beginning to determine how policy would be interpreted in their settings, regardless of SLT status.

SENCOs were seeking to lead through determining and potentially influencing wider SEND priorities including the schools' inclusive approach for children with SEN, regardless of their level of experience, seniority, support, without the specific guidance they desired. SENCOs were seeking to lead via alternative means in the absence of traditional forms of leadership, through using new policy as a tool and through actions which sought to recruit others to their cause. SENCOs were actively advocating for SEND reform policy.

This suggests that the SENCOs were determining priorities and acting strategically alone during this period of implementation. Yet, whilst SENCOs reported feelings of being undervalued which they related to a lack of support and status, the SENCOs did not see joining the SLT as a desirable option despite research previously advocating that this is the most effective approach in the execution of the role (Szwed, 2007a; Pearson, 2008; Oldham and Radford, 2011).

A lack of SLT status was not viewed as a significant barrier to the role, yet it could be argued that this approach may have a wider impact on the role. SENCOs were clearly invested in the SEND reforms, which led to feelings of responsibility which extended beyond the operational elements of SEN provision and encompassed feelings of accountability, both for children and parents and for developing an inclusive ethos. A potential concern is the solitary nature of the role, amidst such feelings of responsibility and accountability, and the impact this may have not on SENCO well-being, as well as retaining SENCOs in the post.

An additional barrier related to the SENCOs' experience and confidence to undertake policy implementation. This concern was echoed in the findings of this study which suggest that some SENCOs potentially lacked experience or confidence in either the new policy or their role. Equally, SENCOs reported that they felt the guidance was not specific enough. This, therefore, raises questions regarding the position and prominence of inclusive policy at a time of significant reform, if the SENCO role remains one which may lack clarity, guidance, seniority and support.

Finally, despite the frustrations voiced regarding the introduction of new policy, and the myriad of policy actor roles concurrently assumed, the findings from this study imply that the introduction of new statutory guidance can provide the required weight, or clout, to bring about change, particularly if a role is viewed as marginalised or lacking in status (Rosen-Webb, 2011). From the perspective of the SENCO, this implies that the SEND reforms may have provided an opportunity for the SENCOs to act in a strategic manner, which potentially may not have presented itself in such a way before.

Table 1

Policy actor	Policy work
Narrators	Interpretation, selection, and enforcement of meanings mainly done by head teachers and the SLT
Entrepreneurs	Advocacy, creativity, and integration
Outsiders	Entrepreneurship, partnership, and monitoring
Transactors	Accounting, reporting, monitoring/ supporting, facilitating
Enthusiasts	Investment, creativity, satisfaction and career
Translators	Production of texts, artefacts and events
Critics	Union representatives: monitoring of management, maintaining counter-discourses
Receivers	Coping, defending and dependency.

References

Audit Commission (2002) *Special Educational Needs: a mainstream issue*. Available at:

<http://www.ttrb3.org.uk/audit-commission-special-educational-needs-a-mainstream-issue/>

(Accessed: 4th May 2016).

Ball, S., Maguire, M. and Braun, A. (2012) *How schools do policy: Policy enactments in secondary schools*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2013) *Successful Qualitative Research: a practical guide for beginners*.

London: Sage

Brundrett, M. (2011) 'The implementation of government policy on primary education: from analysis to action', *Education 3-13*, 39 (4), pp. 339-342.

Children and Families Act 2014, c. 6. Available at:

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/pdfs/ukpga_20140006_en.pdf (Accessed: 1st August 2014).

Cowne, E. (2005) *The SENCO Handbook: Working within a Whole-school Approach*. 5th edn.

Abingdon: David Fulton.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS) (2009) *The Lamb Inquiry: Special Educational Needs and Parental Confidence*. Available at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/01143-2009DOM-EN.pdf> (Accessed: 2nd February 2013).

Department for Education (DfE) (1994) *The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs*. London: HMSO.

Department for Education (DfE) (2014a) *Parents feel more supported ahead of radical SEND reforms*.

[Press Release]. 15th August 2014. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/parents-feel-more-supported-ahead-of-radical-send-reforms> (Accessed: 1st September 2014).

Department for Education (DfE) (2014b) *Teaching schools: a guide for applicants*. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-schools-a-guide-for-potential-applicants> (Access 9th

December 2018)

Department for Education (DfE) (2014c) *National Curriculum in England: framework for key stages 1 to 4*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4/the-national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4> (Accessed 4th September 2014).

Department for Education (DfE) (2016) *Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2016*
Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/552342/SFR20_2016_Main_Text.pdf (Accessed: 22nd June 2017).

Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health (DoH) (2014) *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0- 25 years*. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/342440/SEND_Code_of_Practice_approved_by_Parliament_29.07.14.pdf (Accessed: 10th September 2014).

Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health (DoH) (2015) *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0- 25 years*. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf (Accessed: 1st February 2015).

Dyson, A. and Gallannaugh, F. (2007) 'National policy and the development of inclusive school practices: a case study', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 37 (4), pp. 473-488.

Ellis, S. and Tod, J. (2014) 'Chapter 5. Special educational needs and inclusion: reflection, renewal and reality', *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 14 (3), pp. 205-210.

Glazzard, J., Stoke, J., Hughes, A., Netherwood, A. and Neve, L. (2015) *Teaching And Supporting Children With Special Educational Needs And Disabilities In Primary Schools*. London: Learning Matters.

Hallett, F. and Hallett, G. (eds.) (2010) *Transforming the role of the SENCo: achieving the national award for SEN coordination*. Maidenhead: Oxford University Press.

House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2006) *Special Educational Needs: third Report of the Session 2005-06*. (HC 478-1). London: The Stationery Office.

Layton, L. (2005) 'Special educational needs coordinators and leadership: a role too far?' *Support for Learning*, 20 (2), pp. 53-59.

Lehane, T. (2016) "'SEN's completely different now": critical discourse analysis of three "Codes of Practice for Special Educational Needs" (1994, 2001, 2015)', *Educational Review*, 69 (1) pp. 51-67.

Norwich, B. (2014) 'Changing policy and legislation and its effects on inclusive and special education: a perspective from England', *British Journal of Special Education*, 41 (4), pp. 40.

Oldham, J. and Radford, J. (2011) 'Secondary SENCo leadership: a universal or specialist role?', *British Journal of Special Education*, 38 (3), pp. 126-134.

Pearson, S. (2008) 'Deafened by silence or by the sound of footsteps? An investigation of the recruitment, induction and retention of special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) in England', *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 8 (2), pp. 96-110.

Pearson, S. (2010) 'The role of Special Educational Needs Co-coordinators (SENCOs): 'To be or not to be'', *Psychology of Education Review*, 34 (2), pp. 30-38.

Pearson, S., Mitchell, R. and Rapti, M. (2015) 'I Will Be 'Fighting' Even More for Pupils with SEN: SENCOs' Role Predictions in the Changing English Policy Context', *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 15 (1), pp. 48-56.

Poon-McBrayer, K.F. (2012) 'Implementing the SENCo System in Hong Kong: An Initial Investigation', *British Journal Of Special Education*, 39 (2), pp. 94-101.

Qureshi, S. (2014) 'Herding cats or getting heard: The SENCo-teacher dynamic and its impact on teachers' classroom practice', *Support for Learning*, 29 (3), pp. 217-229.

Robertson, C. (2012) 'Special educational needs and disability co-ordination in a changing policy landscape: making sense of policy from a SENCo's perspective', *Support for Learning*, 27 (2), pp. 77-83.

Rosen-Webb, S. (2011) 'Nobody tells you how to be a SENCo', *British Journal of Special Education*, 38 (4), pp. 159-168.

Szwed, C. (2007a) 'Reconsidering the role of the primary special educational needs co-ordinator: policy, practice and future priorities', *British Journal of Special Education*, 34 (2), pp. 96-104.

Szwed, C. (2007b) 'Managing from the Middle? Tensions and Dilemmas in the Role of the Primary School Special Educational Needs Coordinator', *School Leadership & Management*, 27 (5), pp. 437-451.

Tissot, C. (2013) 'The role of SENCos as leaders', *British Journal of Special Education*, 40 (1), pp. 33-40.

Warnock, M. (2005) *Special Education Needs: A New Look*. London: Continuum