Policy, Provision and Practice for Special Educational Needs and Disability: Perspectives across countries.

Teacher education for SEND inclusion in an international context: the importance of critical theoretical work

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Abstract

Global commitments to inclusive education have been made in UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal, 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for persons with disabilities' (UNDESA, 2018. p75). With clear evidence that students with disabilities have heightened vulnerability to inequity, teacher education is considered an essential strategy for improving this situation. This chapter explores best practice in teacher education for SEND and inclusion and places emphasis on the importance of theoretical work in the teacher education curriculum. Best practices in teacher education must offer teachers opportunities to resist binary positions on the relevance of impairment to inclusive planning. It argues that critical theory in the form of critical disability studies provides useful theoretical tools, such as the explanation of 'othering.' These can make visible and *'workable-on',* hidden barriers to inclusion including normative discourses. The chapter proposes two practical tools to support critical theorising on practice, *reflexive practice,* and *transgression.* Both support critical work on *self* and *system.* They also scaffold teacher agency in constructing hybrid forms of resistance/compliance in harmony with the freedoms and constraints operating in local and national sites for practice.

(200 words)

Introduction

This chapter explores the crucial role of preservice and in-service teacher education in achieving equitable education for children and young people (CYP) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in ordinary classrooms and schools. In a context where global policies prioritise inclusive education for this group, the chapter reviews critical debates about what approaches to teacher education are most effective. It will take the position that effective teacher education for SEND and inclusion will include critical-theoretical work since inclusion is a complex, mutable, and politically situated phenomenon as well as a pedagogic one. The implications for the teacher education curriculum will also be considered with reference to the practices of critical reflexion and transgression. To begin, the international context for educational equity and disability is explored in what follows, so as to position the debate on teacher education within its own conceptual dilemmas.

The international context: Equity and SEND

It is important to note that, internationally, there has been a move toward framing the pursuit of inclusion as *Education for All* rather than for distinct constituencies of vulnerable learners such as those with SEND. The appropriateness of this is persuasively defended (Ainscow, 2020). However, this chapter holds its focus on SEND. This is to recognise that persons with disabilities are often the worst served for educational and social inclusion (Simplican et al., 2015) and 'face persistent inequality in social, scientific, and economic spheres' (UNDESA, 2018, p.36). Globally, it is recognised that CYP with SEND experience inequities in education. The Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM, UNESCO, 2020) notes that children with disabilities are at particular risk of educational exclusion, in part because of a lack of reliable data and variations in the ways that countries define both *inclusion* and *disability*. Where there is data, it indicates that prevalence rates for SEND are as high as 20% in Scotland, and as low as 1% in Sweden, indicating that SEND is, at least in part, socially and systemically constructed. This is because prevalence variations this wide cannot be

explained by population differences alone. The GEM Report (UNESCO, 2020), notes that 14 middle and low countries showed prevalence to be 12% (ranging from 6% to 24%) and that 15% of the out of school population are children with disabilities. Further, compared to their peers, children with intellectual, physical, or sensory disabilities are over twice as likely to have never been in school compared with non-disabled peers. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs reports that, though there has been progress, persons with disabilities continue to experience significant barriers to their full inclusion and participation in society. For example, 54% of people with disabilities are literate compared to 77% of those without disabilities. In more than 10% of countries, children with disabilities are refused entry to school and more than a quarter of disabled persons have reported that schools were not accessible or hindered them (UNDESA, 2018).

The factors leading to this situation are many and complex and reveal patterns of intersection with gender and poverty. Recently, this has been manifested in the heightened vulnerability of this group to exclusion in situations of crises, such as the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic (Toquero, 2020). There remains some ground to make up if the 2030 target for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for persons with disabilities' (UNDESA, 2018 p75) is to be achieved. There is a widespread belief that improvements to teacher education for inclusion is a priority strategy for achieving SD4 and equity for children with SEND. Also, there is convincing evidence that teachers perceive in their own training, a lack of focus on inclusion and the teaching of vulnerable groups, such as those with disabilities (OECD, 2014; OECD, 2020). With this in mind, it is important to explore current debate about how Teacher Education might be constructed through exploring its conceptual complexities.

SEND and disability as problematic concepts: the need for dexterity of thought and action

There is debate about what models for teacher education are likely to be most effective for inclusion and SEND. Much of this debate centres on the relative importance of impairment, with different positions on how much emphasis should be given to preparing teachers for specific types of SEND such as autism, dyslexia, or visual impairment for example. At the core of the debate is the question, 'is inclusion dependent on expert knowledge of specific impairments and their related special practices, or is it about learner centred practices that are responsive to diversity at the universal and individual level?' In some ways, this question is a welcome artefact of the social model, which locates barriers to educational *presence*, *participation,* and *progress* in the environment, for example, within inappropriate curricula, pedagogy, and attitudes (Ainscow, 2020). The framing of environment as a constructor of learning difficulty serves the purpose of calling education systems and educators to order. This is because this framing shifts the focus from what is wrong with learners, a *pathognomic* perspective, to what is wrong with the educational approaches that are used to serve them, an *interventionist* perspective (Jordan et al., 2009). The latter perspective triggers solution finding and inclusive innovation (Pantić and Florian, 2015). Interventionist perspectives have also been shown to correlate with dialogic teaching approaches, more intense pupil engagement, fluid conceptions of ability and higher self-efficacy for SEND among teachers (Jordan et al., 2009).

International policy has moved toward a social model of disability (UNESCO, 2020) with learner centred education (LCE) positioned as congruent with inclusion (Klang et al., 2020) as will be explored later. However, in recognition that impairment can also be an embodied experience, international definitions have continued to be conceptualise disability as an interaction between an individual's impairment (e.g., learning disability) and intersecting environmental barriers. For example, the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2011, p3) recognises that 'people are disabled by environmental factors as well as their bodies,' in a

context where disability is 'complex, dynamic, multidimensional and contested.' A response has been to develop a model of disability that decussates environmental factors with personal ones. For example, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF, WHO, 2001) conceptualises disability as an outcome of highly contextualised combinations of factors, experienced in a unique way by each individual. Hence the extent to which impairment is relevant to a person's experience of life is very variable and cannot be predicted through knowledge of an impairment's general characteristics or even its relative severity.

The factors in the ICF definition (WHO, 2001) include *environmental* ones, referring to the world where people with varied bodily and psychological function must live. The built environment, technologies, services, systems, and policies can either increase or diminish the disabling effects of impairment. For example, a wheelchair user is less disabled by an impairment (which may be in the form of paralysis) in an accessible built environment and transport system, with the result that their ability to experience independence and social inclusion is improved. The same may be true for a learner with a specific learning difficulty like dyslexia. Their progress in learning may be better with a teacher who uses accessible reading material and visual resources than with another teacher who uses high-density reading materials. *Personal factors* refer to phenomena such as self-esteem, motivation, personality, and self-efficacy. These interact with a person's capacities and prevailing environmental conditions to determine the performance of actions in real life. *Impairment* refers to problems in body function or alterations in the structure of the body, such as paralysis, blindness or cognitive functioning which consequently limit activity (e.g., walking, hearing, learning). So, when applied to education, this bio-psycho-social model does not posit impairment as either relevant or irrelevant to educational planning in a binary way. Rather, it proposes a flexible and personalised view of the relevance of impairment in a holist way.

This is relevant to teacher education because it presents important challenges. Teachers must use their professional judgement to mediate complex, interacting factors, such that the most inclusive learning can take place within, what are likely to be, circumstantial restrictions such as inflexible national curricula and assessment regimes (Robinson, 2017). Binary positions on the relevance of impairment to educational planning are unlikely to enable flexibility of thought and action (Robinson and Goodey, 2018). In what follows, the idea that theoretical content in teacher education can provide tools for flexible thinking, is explored.
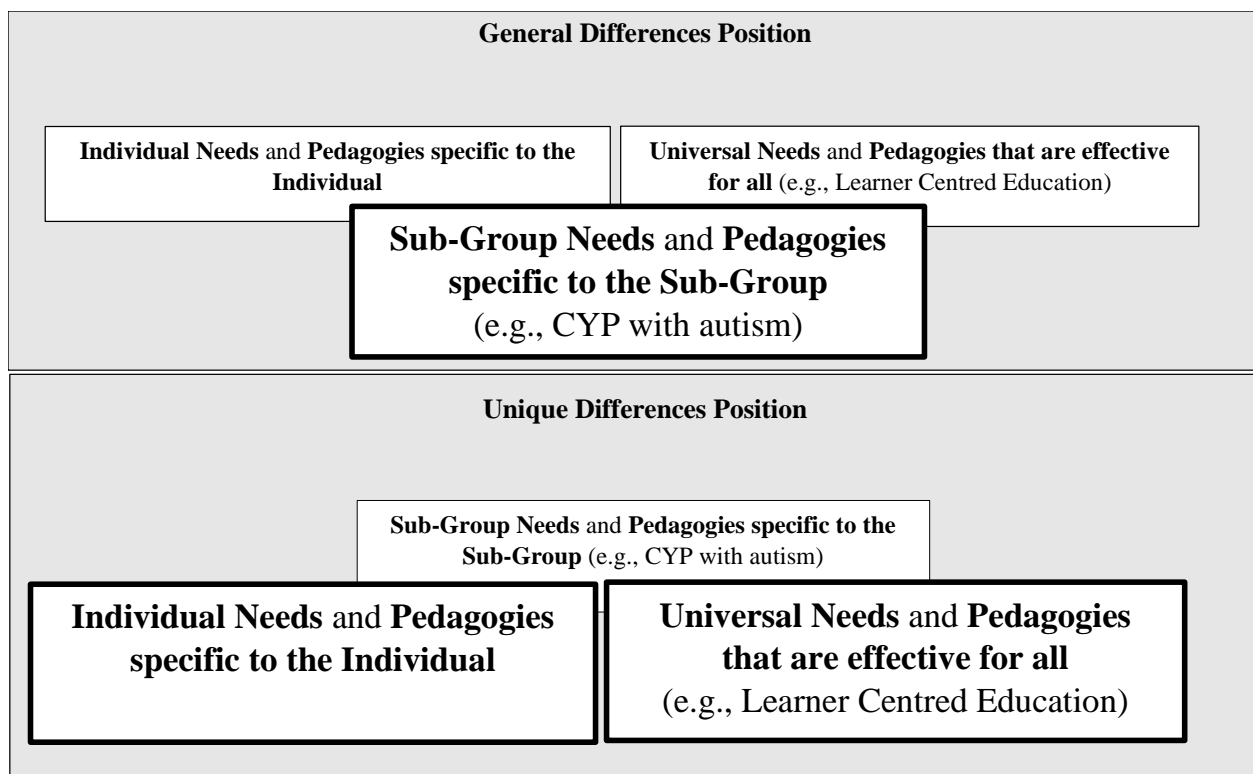
Theorising effective inclusive responses

There is evidence that effective teacher education for SEND and inclusion will include both practical and theoretical dimensions. These can combine to disrupt the traditional ways of thinking and practising that perpetuate exclusion. Along with a broad series of interconnected elements for teacher education (such as placements in varied educational settings and research oriented inquiry), theory offers tools for intellectual engagement in practice-design for inclusion (Robinson, 2017). Usefully, Lewis and Norwich (2005) have explored pedagogic positions on SEND of relevance to the theoretical content of teacher education. Outlined are two conceptual stances on teaching and learning which are termed the *general differences position* and the *unique differences position,* with each holding a different posture on what forms of professional knowledge are priorities for inclusive practice. In the general differences position, decisions about educational responses draw on *knowledge of the specific needs of a sub-group* of CYP with SEND (such as those labelled as having moderate learning difficulties or dyslexia) which is combined with k*nowledge of effective practice for <u>all</u> children* and *knowledge of effective practice for individual learners*. The general differences position combines these knowledges but puts the type of difficulty (or the impairment) in the foreground. This position is underpinned by a belief in the validity of the sub-group or category, meaning that the category of learners with autism, for example, is a trusted signifier

for a type of human difference that is scientifically defensible. This position also holds trust in the generalisability of traits and special practices to all members of this sub-group. When this position is in play, the logical conclusion is that teachers need to be trained to use practices that are specific to that subgroup in order to achieve inclusion.

In contrast, the unique differences position combines the same knowledges but places knowledge about categories of impairment in the background. This is a position that assumes that while all learners are the same, they are also all different. Differences between individuals are accommodated within this position, not within sub-groups. Hence, decisions about educational responses are led by knowledge of individual needs combined with knowledge about universal best practice. Knowledge about the traits and pedagogies for a sub-group is deprioritised because it is believed that good teaching is good teaching for all. One of the conditions for good teaching for all is responsiveness to the learning profile of individuals and groups in their uniqueness. This is in a way that transcends the need for labels or categorisation, making impairment less relevant.

In proposing these positions, Lewis, and Norwich (2005) present a theoretical framework that can be understood as interpositional. Interposition is a perceptual depth clue (Chapanis and Mcleary, 1953) which helps with the judgement of relative distance. Objects that cut in front of other objects are perceived to be closer than those which are partially obscured. This idea of depth and distance is represented in Figure 1, to demonstrate how the general differences position and the unique differences prioritise forms of teacher knowledge for SEND and inclusion.

General Differences Position	
Individual Needs and **Pedagogies specific to the Individual**	**Universal Needs** and **Pedagogies that are effective for all** (e.g., Learner Centred Education)

Sub-Group Needs and **Pedagogies specific to the Sub-Group**
(e.g., CYP with autism)

Unique Differences Position	

Sub-Group Needs and **Pedagogies specific to the Sub-Group** (e.g., CYP with autism)

Individual Needs and **Pedagogies specific to the Individual**	**Universal Needs** and **Pedagogies that are effective for all** (e.g., Learner Centred Education)

Figure 1: Interposition of knowledge in the Unique Differences and General Differences Positions

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1 provides a theoretical resource for teachers to use such that false binaries are exposed and navigable. This is an example of how theoretical resources support intellectual work on dilemmas, such that they are more 'deal-able with' and more available as a resource for teacher agency in practice design. Viewing teacher education through the lens of this conceptual framework, makes it clear that teacher education should be preparing teachers to adopt and make actionable both stances. What's more, it is likely that flexible hybridisation may be called for. Hybridisation means the ability to combine the general and unique differences position such that they are appropriate to context or individuals. This is relevant because for some learners an impairment is very relevant to planning, and for others it is almost irrelevant because of the influence of a broad range of factors. Further, some learners with the label of autism may have needs that are very well served by the special pedagogies described for this subgroup (e.g. the TEACCH approach) and others may not.

On this point, it is important to note that international and national policies for inclusion are tending toward a unique differences position. This is manifested in the broadening reach of *Learner Centred Education*, a movement that recognises the need for improvements to teacher education. A global move towards the unique differences position is not unproblematic since it may demote impairment in ways that leave impacts unacknowledged. As noted above, this may be unhelpful for some CYP. Again, this indicates how flexible and fluid teachers need to be in translocating conceptual positions on inclusion and SEND such that the least restrictive response can be found. It implies that teacher education must give teachers the tools they need to achieve this flexibility of thought and action. The international literature offers some valuable insights into the need for non-binary conceptualisations of best practice in education for all in relation to Learner Centred Education, with particular reference to hybridisation (Mendenhall et al., 2005; Bremner, 2019).

Learner Centred Education (LCE), hybridisation and teacher agency

UNESCO (January 2021), consider LCE as a marker of quality in education for all. LCE is associated with terms such as participatory, student centred, active, dialogic and constructivist. LCE draws on theories that image learners as active constructors of their own learning, and teachers as facilitators who structure their teaching such that is congruent with current levels of understanding. The aim is to be continually responsive to learners' needs (Mendenhall et al., 2015). LCE is also identifiable in broader literature as synonymous with inclusive pedagogy (Villa and Thousand, 2016; Ring et al., 2021) and combines with attention to anti-discriminatory practices, where teachers are aware of the influence of their own biases when interpreting pupil progress and potential.

LCE is seen as more humane and flexible than teacher centred education (TCE) which is characterised by methods such as whole class teaching, rote memorisation, and call-response

interaction. TCE demands that learners and their families take responsibility for catching up or fitting in with the pace of teaching. In contrast to this *sink or swim* dynamic, LCE facilitates a high level of active control among learners over what is learned and how. The teacher must know where children are in their learning and respond accordingly to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and the learning is accessible for all (Mendenhall, 2015.) LCE is identified as a progressive policy that has travelled far and wide (Ozga and Jones, 2006) having been endorsed by global agencies and national policymakers as a marker of quality education for all (Schweisfurth, 2013).

At the international level, implementing LCE in pure form does bring challenges. For example, in countries where very large, multigrade classes are required for geographical or economic reasons, it is harder to implement LCE and its dialogic elements because teachers are restricted in how much time they can spend interacting with individual and small groups of children (Kivunja and Sims, 2019). Similarly, contextual constraints in the working contexts of teachers impact on their ability to implement LCE. For example, Bremner (2019) studied five teachers in Mexico, who developed increasing belief in LCE but had to combine it with TCE approaches in varying combinations to ensure that their practices were both workable and effective in supporting learning. Bremner (2019), along with other commentators on international best practice (An and Mindrilla, 2020; Sperduti, 2017), argues that there should not be a blueprint or rule book for LCE, but an acknowledgement that teachers use their professional insight and agency to develop appropriate pedagogies that maximise outcomes for learners within specific contexts. These hybrid models develop to ensure that teaching is learning centred, rather than learner centred (Bremner, 2019).

An emerging question centres on whether teachers as professionals should also be equipped to interpret and challenge the constraints (or unfreedoms) that limit the scope of inclusive practice for SEND. That is, should they be empowered to call their communities, societies,

and states to order? In acknowledging the way that teachers create hybrids of LCE with TCE it seems fair to propose that teacher activism and compliance are also drawn on a continuum rather than being all one or all the other. It is likely that teachers would construct a hybrid of resistance/compliance in response to economic, cultural and political conditions at the local and national level. In what follows, it will be argued that 'work on the self' offers a vehicle for teachers to navigate this continuum through the application of reflexive practice.

Work on the self: Reflective practice is not enough

So far, it has been argued that inclusive practice is dependent on teachers' skill in navigating and flexibly 'holding' contradictory positions on pedagogy and impairment. Dextrous hybridisation has been identified as one of the conditions for quality education for all (Bremner, 2019). This has been exemplified through an examination of the general and unique differences positions (Lewis and Norwich, 2005). It has also been explored through accounts of the hybridised models of LCE as an expression of teacher agency.

The challenge is to ensure that for teachers, hybridisation is not experienced by them as a compromise too far, a failure, a surrender, or an experience of 'being done to.' Neither would it be acceptable for hybridisation to permit uncritical acceptance of forms practice that are counterproductive to learning and equity. We might also assume that experience of being oppressed into unconscionable practice cannot help teachers to feel fulfilled, energised, or self-efficacious in their wish to transform CYPs with SEND's educational experience. Rather, teachers need to be able to understand constraints in a way that does not lead to capitulation or self pathologisation. Consequently, teacher education needs to equip them with the intellectual tools that will help them to find freedoms and routes to influence that can transform (or at least work within), the structural conditions that constrain them (Moore, 2004). One route for this is critical work on the 'self'.

Prevailing in theories of effective teacher development for inclusion, is the view that teachers should be supported in learning reflective practice. When authentic, rather than technicist, forced or instrumentalist, reflective practice actively seeks to 'problematise situations and to challenge existing views, perspectives, and beliefs' in support of productive change (Moore, 2004 , p111). Such change may include more socially just practices for SEND in a local context (O'Hanlon, 2003). Traditionally, reflective practice is considered as a cycle, where practitioners reflect as they act (reflection *in* practice) or after they act (reflection *on* practice) to identify what is working, what isn't working and how it might be improved (Schön, 1991). This is followed with a continuing cycle of action and review. The aim is to reflect on experience in a productive and continuous way such that one's work is more effective and/or more aligned with one's goals and values. As such, reflection is a strategic process that selects a focus within a whole picture, such that improved inclusive practice can unfold. However, there is the danger that in neoliberal societies, reflective practice over-emphasises self-improvement such that *work on the self* becomes the only site of agency. This is potentially problematic because it can result in self-pathologisation and perpetuate the 'pedagogy of discomfort' (Boler, 1999) where self-regulation dominates over the transformative work required for inclusion at the systemic level (Robinson, 2017). For example, teachers may decide that their struggles with inclusion are caused by inferior knowledge or skill, when actually they are caused by systemic issues such as funding policies that demand labelling and a focus on what children cannot do.

Reflective practice becomes a tool for deepening and broadening teacher agency when it is elevated to *reflexive* work. Reflexive work combines work on the self with critical awareness of prevailing social, cultural, economic, and political conditions. Reflexive practice, like reflective practice, is intellectually challenging because it demands 'active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed from of knowledge in light of the grounds that

support it and the further consequences to which it leads' (Dewey, 1933, p9). However, reflective practice centres on singular and situated aspects of practice in localised spaces (i.e., the classroom or school) whereas reflexive activity adopts the lens of *critical theory* to help teachers to identify the ethical consequences of their practice and the political and societal origins of the problems they encounter. What is critical theory and how can it support teacher education for inclusion? This is discussed in what follows.

Critical theoretical work and the pursuit of equity: the role of critical disability studies in teacher education.

When using the term critical theory, there is emphasis on how a theory is applied to *thinking through* and *acting on* power structures such that the outcome for people is emancipatory or liberating (Deutscher and Lafont, 2017). Critical theoretical work is about practical and moral action toward social justice, and it synthesises sociological and philosophical tools so that power, structure, agency, and normativity can be explained. In the field of inclusion and SEND, critical theory is most powerfully represented by critical disability studies, a discipline that seeks to understand how the oppression of disabled people is sustained in society. Critical disability studies casts light on the systemic and structural construction of oppression 'in support of justice for people with stigmatised bodies and minds' (Minich, April 2016). In summary, the purpose of critical theory is to find ways of increasing freedom whilst decreasing domination.

An example of a phenomenon explored in disability studies is that of *othering*. Originally, a feminist concept (de Beauvoir, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier, 2010), othering describes the process through which persons come to know themselves and their place in society through dualist comparisons with the 'other.' Where the 'other' are the minority, (for example, disabled persons) they are discursively positioned by a powerful majority as

inferior, marginal, dangerous, and outside. These normative discourses construct the disabled subject as abnormal and in need of reconstruction (Tremain, 2005). Where reconstruction is not possible, then segregation or delineation are next steps. Othering prevails in education for many reasons, mainly because education is structured normatively around, for example, what children are expected to achieve at particular ages.

Fiscal systems can also construct children with SEND as the 'other.' Capitalist societies tend to operate welfare systems that require the identification of additional or exceptional need so that finite resources for additional support can be shared out to those most in need, rather than those who may be seen by taxpayers as unworthy. This demands bureaucratic systems of delineation and identification so that additional resources can be granted, and their impact monitored. This manifests an *identification dilemma*, (Norwich, 2008) since on the one hand, identification and its resulting signifier (i.e., a label) can garner additional support (e.g., in the form of equipment, transport or personal assistance). Additional support can make conditions more equitable for a learner with SEND. However, this is dilemmatic since identification is likely to result in in the allocation of labels such as 'SEND' or 'autism' to individuals or groups who are now identified as the 'other' with potentially exclusive consequences (Norwich, 2012). This further illustrates a core argument in this chapter, that teachers must use their professional judgement to navigate dilemmas such that inclusion is maximised, and exclusion minimised in a manner that is suited to context. In this case, teachers are mediating the potentially exclusive consequence of labelling and othering. For example, though teachers may adopt impairment focussed language and deficit models (i.e., a focus on what pupils cannot do) in applications for additional resourcing, they may need to adopt an opposing stance on the relevance of the impairment to inclusive planning. It is useful for teachers to be aware of the way that labels, as artefacts of identification, manifest asymmetrical discourses given that they are founded on the perceptions of able-bodied persons. A critical theoretical

lens would make visible the possibility that identification is arbitrary because what is constructed as an impairment, is also arbitrary, (Runswick-Cole, 2014). In this way, critical theory has constructed valuable resources for thinking reflexively about practice and should be central to the content of teacher education for SEND and inclusion.

Critical theoretical tools in teacher education for SEND and inclusion

Discussions thus far have shown that the resources for thinking deeply about inclusion and exclusion provided by critical disability studies have value to teachers. This is because, concepts such as the *identification dilemma* and *othering*, make contradictions visible in ways that can inform teacher action. Theoretical constructions can enable teachers to engage in the challenges of inclusive practice without blaming themselves for all of its challenges and complexities with positive consequences for self-efficacy.

It is argued here that effective teacher education for SEND and inclusion is likely to include opportunities for critical-theoretical work. This work can be scaffolded by curriculum *content* in the form of critical disability studies. It can also be supported with practical *tools* that teachers can deploy in reflexive action. In what follows, the tools *critical reflexive practice* and *transgression* will be explored to demonstrate how teacher education can shaped to support intellectual labour around inclusive practice design for CYP with SEND.

Critical reflexion

It has been argued that reflexion elevates reflection to a new critical level to support awareness of social and political factors that impact on the enablement or restriction of inclusive teaching and learning. Critical reflexion also involves work on the self. However, it is work on the self that focusses not only on the evaluation of practice effectiveness and impact, but also on the private and professional sphere (Moore, 2004). Giddens (1991, p5) describes this as the 'sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised biographical narrative.'

The aim is to ensure that perceptions of the present are challenged rather than confirmed. The intended outcome is that the present comes to be better understood in ways that might make the future more rewarding (Mitchell and Weber, 1996). This is relevant to inclusion because, the dominant, normative and asymmetrical discourses of disability may lead teachers (and the systems they work within) to *other* CYP with SEND in ways that marginalise them or impact negatively on expectations. Such othering may be outside conscious awareness. The purpose of critical reflexion is to make such matters visible in the present so that new ways of thinking and being can be developed in the future.

This idea of invisibility and visibility can be represented in an Ethiopian proverb, 'fish discover water last' which can be narrated as follows. A bird flies over his fish friends, and as a polite conversation starter shouts down, 'how's the water?' to which the fish reply, 'what's water?' The story represents the way in which phenomena that are ordinary, routine, embedded and ubiquitous, become unknowable. Bruner (1996, p147) describes this in the following terms

> We live in a sea of stories and like the fish (according to the proverb) who will be the last to discover water, we have our own difficulties grasping what it is like to swim in our own stories. It is not that we lack competence in creating our narrative accounts of reality – far from it. We are, if anything, too expert. Our problem, rather, is achieving consciousness of what we so easily do automatically, the ancient problem of la *prise de conscienc*e [becoming aware].

Critical disability studies as curriculum content in teacher education, can help make disability discourse visible and workable on, and can be combined with self-reflexion to deepen awareness. Moore (o2004, p153) offers some practical strategies for supporting students with reflexive work. Teacher educators can use the following questions as the basis for planning

discussions, tasks and activities that are supportive to reflexive work at the level of self and system.

> Why am I responding and reacting in certain ways to certain events and what might be the connection between these responses and reactions and my previous and current life experiences including those of family, school and learning?

> What light can be cast on the picture of my practice in this part of the picture, with reference to things that are happening in the bigger picture – including both my personal history/biography and considerations of the larger socio-economic conditions and relations of power within which teachers' educative practice is located?

Moore (2004) provides convincing evidence of the value of reflexive work, finding that as teachers become more critical of self and system, they also become more confident. Given that self-efficacy is a predictor of inclusive practice and epistemologies for SEND (Jordan et al., 2009), reflexive tools emerge as relevant to effective inclusive teacher education for SEND. This is because they help teachers to process their own successes and failures in a broader context that avoids self-pathologisation. Another tool that can be used to sustain engagement with the complex project of inclusion emerge from philosophy, in the particular form of ethical work and transgression. These tools were posited by Foucault (1977) and applied to educational inclusion for SEND by Allen (2008) and are explored in what follows.

Biopower, Ethics and the practice of transgression

The concept of transgression as pragmatic resistance has been proposed by Foucault (1977). The relevance of *transgression* to teacher education for SEND can be understood when synthesised with Foucault's construct, *biopolitics.* Foucault (1978) used this idea to explain how normalizing strategies, in the form of medical, administrative, and juridical apparatuses, enact regulation and correction which operates on the minds and bodies of persons who were

considered deviant. Biopolitics can explain how the contemporary disabled subject came to exist, as a human entity that is coded, classified and constructed as abnormal. Disability is constructed as deviant through a vast regulating apparatus including special education, rehabilitation regimes, remedial programmes, and prosthesis (Tremain, 2005). Biopolitics can describe how the child with 'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities' has been constructed through systems of power and knowledge that include assessment with the purpose of distinguishing normal from abnormal, and then continually held under surveillance through a complex network of oversight (Allan, 1999). In this tight and systemic network of power and oppression, what agency can teachers claim? Foucault offers a method for achieving some agency in this context, termed transgression (Foucault, 1997, p11). As a project involving intellectual and ethical work, this strategy offers preservice and experienced teachers a strategy for moving forward with inclusion in constrained circumstances.

Foucault regarded ethical practice as having four dimensions (Smart, 1985). Firstly, the individual identifies that part of the self, the moral self, that must be the focus of work, that is the *ethical substance*. In the case of inclusion, the ethical substance to be worked on might be courage to innovate. Secondly, the individual must become aware of how this part of the self is currently active in day-to-day life. For example, in what sites and relationships is this moral substance most solid and most indefinite? This helps the individual to see where the focus of the work should be. Thirdly, the activities through which the moral substance is to be made more concrete are identified. For an inclusive teacher, this might be in a focus on relationships beyond the classroom, or in building bridges to the community. Finally, the individual, identifies and then work towards the eventual goal (or *Telos*) of the ethical work, through a 'losing-finding of the self' (Blacker, 1998, p363) in day to day life.

One vehicle for the 'losing-finding of the self' (Blacker, op.cit.) lies in the practice of *transgression*. Foucault took the pragmatic view that it was challenging for an individual (or

even a collective) to shift the power structures of society. However, sustained, and subtle work in the form of ethical work and transgression, could create spaces in which individuals could be act in ways that are more congruent with their values systems and goals. Such work would also bring benefits to the freedom of others, for beneficent outcomes for others are part of its principle. In essence, transgression is a form of subversive resistance involving the crossing of boundaries. It was characterised by Foucault (1997.) as being playful rather than aggressive, and not about domination or victory. Transgression is not the pursuit of absolute freedom, but a process for finding moments of freedom in a complex system of constraints, some fleeting and some profound.

It is useful to explore a practical example of transgression as a way of illustrating its application to inclusive practice. A limiting discourse operating at the level of lesson planning is the *majority first* discourse (Trussler and Robinson, 2015). Here, it is traditional (and sometimes expected in competence frameworks) for teachers to plan lessons with the majority of   learners in mind and then plan for additional support or challenge in response to the full range of abilities in the class. Of course, additional support is usually assumed to be necessary for CYP with SEND. The problem with this model is that it cannot challenge the status quo   because, whilst the majority are being catered for as a forethought, the minority become the   focus for an afterthought. There is little need for the kind of larger scale transformations of pedagogy that might enable equitable learning for all (Hart et al., 2004). To transgress the majority first discourse, teachers can operate a different starting point for planning. In a   creative and playful way this could ask, 'what teaching and learning approach will work for everyone?' or 'what teaching approach will work for this individual?' in place of 'what will work for most children?' In this subtly subversive way, a new way of doing things is enabled and innovation becomes more likely. This example

demonstrates how transgression is a form of subtle resistance and obstinacy supportive to finding new ways of being and working that are potentially more inclusive.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that teacher education for SEND and inclusion will be made more effective when practical work is combined with theoretical work. Theoretical work should offfer opportunities for critical thinking and challenge. This is to mirror the conceptual ambiguities that surround the meaning of inclusion and disability. Of particular value to this theoretical content are frameworks that make visible, multiple conceptual   positions on the relevance of impairment to inclusive planning. The example shared was the   interpositional framework for the unique/general differences position (Lewis and Norwich, 2005). This framework helps teachers to resist binary positions on impairment as either *all relevant* or *not at all relevant,* since levels of relevance depend on the environment and the unique, personal profile of pupils. It was argued that inclusive teachers will need to adopt a hybrid framing of concepts such as the general/unique differences position in order to design least restrictive responses. This is because, in the same way that pupils are unique, classrooms and schools are unique. and these are positioned within broader social and political contexts. All of these factors interact to construct freedoms and constraints for inclusive practice which need to be accessible to teacher agency.

The chapter also explored the international recognition of Learner Centred Education (LCE) as a marker of quality education for all. It observed that teachers around the world have had to enact LCE in combination with more teacher centred approaches in pragmatic ways. This is in response to their contexts and demonstrates the manner in which hybrid (rather than binary) models of inclusive teaching are made actionable in context. In a similar way, preparing teachers to be activists for inclusion at the systemic level (as well as in their own

classrooms or schools) is an important task for teacher education, but is most realistically conceived as a resistance/compliance hybrid. This is because capacities for resistance vary across countries and are, at least in part, a consequence of the status of teachers within a nation. For this reason, this chapter has proposed reflexive practice and transgression as useful tools for critical work on the self. It has also been claimed that were these are included in teacher education, they can increase confidence and self-efficacy for inclusive practice. In conclusion, effective teacher education for SEND inclusion should be critical-theoretical in design to enable teachers to navigate the complexity of practice and find agency in their own contexts. Reductionist, prescriptive and rule-book oriented teacher education can do little to change the status quo or support teachers as activists for more equitable education for pupils with SEND.

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