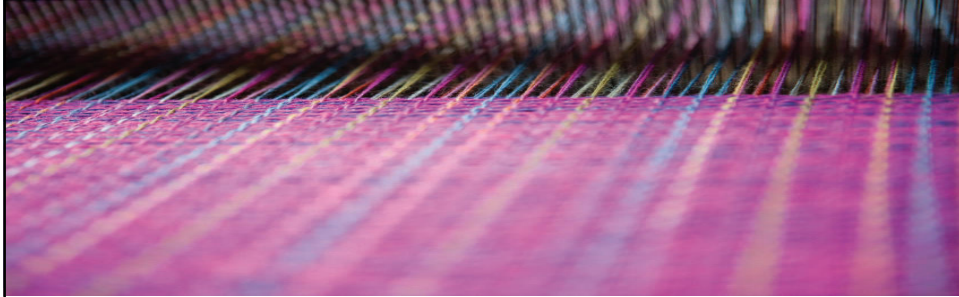# Leadership for Inclusive Education

Gerry Mac Ruairc

School of Education,

University College Dublin


The Journey Towards inclusion

- A move for **segregation** to **integration** to **inclusion** – within SEN

- International developments strongly supported this model of schooling
  - World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien,1990),
  - Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (Salmanca,1994)
  - Dakar Framework for Action (Dakar, 2000).

From segregation

To the melting pot of integration ...
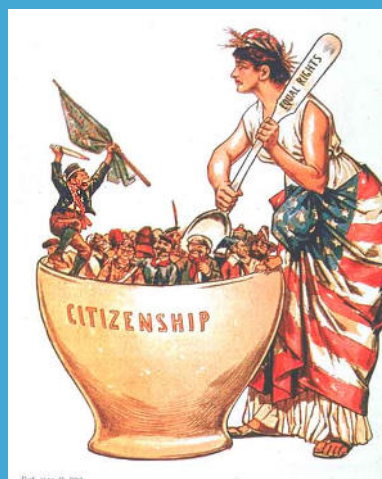
...to the mixed salad of inclusion

A broader idea/ construct

From 2005 onwards, the concept of inclusive education was broadened to include the diversity of learners. Now defined as:

A process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves **changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision** which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (UNESCO, 2005).

Other definitions

Inclusive schooling is concerned with the educational experiences and outcomes for all children. Since present forms of schooling routinely deny human rights and exclude students on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender disability sexuality class – **inclusive education is a project of reconceptualization and radical reconstruction** (Slee, 2010)

Inclusion

- Contested- as a vision for education and within practice

- Lack of an agreed language and grammar of inclusion (Slee, 2001; Graham 2009; Allen 2010)

- This increases the risk for political misappropriation and a diversity of views/practices on what it means to include.

- CALLING IT 'INCLUSION'

Some issues to consider

- Formulated as a vision =Ensure participation of all

- Some say that it can never be fully realised. Always under construction.
  - Some agreement that by necessity inclusion has a limit within pedagogical practice - but when/ where do/can we draw the line?

  HOWEVER

- Any space for the 'other' limits inclusion.

A way forward ?

Explore what school do with difference

Problematise forms of exclusion

Difference

- Working with and valuing difference - recognition and respect

- Taking a critical approach to difference of all sorts; ethnic, gender, disability, sexuality, indigenous culture etc. both in terms of representation in texts and curricula but also in terms of how included in all aspects of schools

- Working towards the creation of a global citizen within a sense of the diversity of the world (Lingard, 2007)

- To create 'a culture of respect for the history, the language and the culture of the peoples represented in the classroom' (Rose, 1995, p. 414

Exclusion

- Exclusion embedded in the system – in the rituals, practices and outcomes that frame, to different extents, all our education systems
- A view here that schools can do it alone - if we think this we fail to take account of the extent to which schools are part of an overall state apparatus that functions to reproduce patterns of privilege in society.
- Sometimes debates relating to inclusion are underpinned by a benign view of power and the manner in which power is used to shape and appropriate forms of educational capital to suit the needs of dominant social groups. Debates about inclusion will always have to be positioned in this reality
- May be attributable to the SEN origins where often the pathological gaze reduced social issues to personal troubles - Individualize failure – we have been here before.
- Essentialising people – their lives, potential, hopes and possibilities

Problematise exclusion

- Minimise the marginalising process and exclusionary practices/ regimes in order to create the space for inclusion (Hansen 2012)

- Limits to inclusion are grounded in theories of stigma, normality and divergence (Hansen, 2012) and mediated by a whole arsenal of marginalisation processes in schools

- 'Exclusion and segregation are key elements in protecting an education system which does not sufficiently cater for individual differences' (Evans and Lunt 2005, p. 52).

- The exclusion and 'othering of young people through the forms and processes of education is endemic (Slee 2001 p 172)

The privileging of the centre/norm

- Particular application to schools

- Schools good at defining, delimiting and reproducing the norm

- A more critical analysis needed on what these norms are, where they come from, whose interests do they serve and who they marginalise

- A key task of schooling has focused on the normalising of difference by stabilising the 'other' in an environment that provides a buffer to enable schools to remain the same

Graham and Slee (2008)

- Through the normalisation of culturally specific performances particular ways of being are naturalised.

- The imperative for maintaining the centre is derived from this view that humanity needs a centre, that it needs a cohesive system.

- However the reality is that this cohesive 'centre' has privileged and continues to privilege particular social groups

---

In Practice

- Systems do not engage in this type of analysis
- A   s and
  p   nic
  m   ups.
- F
- W   es
  ta   t has to
  b   k of
  p   acy etc
  (reet,
  1
- A   ity
  w
  p   d
  s   ay)
  (Smagorinsky, 2001).

- Fundamental inequalities for a number of groups identifiable in school systems

- Gender
- Sexuality/Heterosexism
- Race and ethnicity
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Intersectionality

Gender

Gender still segregates and, despite widespread developments in the field, some fundamental traditional views in relation to gender and patterns of participation in education prevail either tacitly in terms of teachers assumptions or explicitly in terms of particular forms of practice that continue to exist in schools

(Smyth et al 2011; Lodge and Lynch, 2003)

Sexuality

- The silent one
- Hegemonic heterosexism
- Disturbing studies indicate significant exclusionary practices with respect to students who present as LGBT
- Much greater risk of self harm, suicide, underachievement, serious mental health issues, early school leaving (Bryan et al 2009- Irish study)

Race and ethnicity

- Race remains the greatest determinant of life chances in the US

- In Ireland some interesting models of practice in relation to race and ethnicity
  - Often the *4 f model* of inclusion family, food, fashion and festivals (Ryan) does little to address the fundamental exclusionary thrust of issues such as school curricula, cultural norms and expectations
  - Models of governance in schools
  - Intersection of religion, race and sexuality

Special Educational Needs

- Significant issues remaining – very problematic

- All too often special means exclusionary (Mittler, 2008) and needs signals dependency (Corbett, 1996).

- SEN now uses the contemporary discourse of inclusion but often this is more often encompasses ' cosmetic amendments to practices ….deploying old assumptions about disability based upon quais-medical pathologies of defectiveness' (Slee 2001 p. 167-168)

- Focus in SEN on fixing the child, - diagnosis and remediation – making defective kids fit the system

Intersectionality

- The idea of multiple areas of difference or the intersectionality of gender, race, class, ethnicity etc. (Anthias, 2008) remain under explored to say the least.

- Often a single axis framework (Crenshaw 1994) operates in schools especially in relation to SEN

- It may well be the reading problems of the working class boy with a diagnoses of dyslexia may be culturally located with the result that the boy may not see any purpose or meaning in reading. All the phonics and programmes to fix the child may well fail if they are not addressing the root cause of the problem.

What Leadership is needed for Inclusive Education

- Deal with **education as a political process** – especially about cultural politics –allows it into the space where teachers as cultural workers can be problematised

- A focus on **teaching and learning** and on school experiences for students Leadership much broader type of pedagogical leadership required than many of the narrow, technicist models of instructional leadership out there at present (Gore 1993; Luke and Gore 1992) **More inclusive schooling – more inclusive pedagogies**

- A much broader view of outcomes

- **A space for social justice** – Fraser (1997) and politics of redistribution and recognition – schooling as a positional good and a good in and of itself

- Creates **additional imperatives for more democratic forms of leadership**, schools structures and systems, models of governances etc.
- The **identity negotiation/ construction** side of education and pedagogy (Trifonas 2003)
- Requires schools to take on board the dual function of deep **connectedness with the local** as well as a **deparochialisation** which requires pedagogies to reach beyond the local
- A globalized world read from a politics of difference not fear and mistrust
- **Foil to the reductive imperatives derived of the neo liberal way** and new models of accountability

---

At the core

- Pedagogy of the same. Reductive policy on pedagogy. A strong basis from which to challenge the idea that teachers and their practices are a variable for policy and leadership manipulation (Lingard 2007)
- Reached into the pedagogic core of teachers work – negative impact of performativity on the soul of the teacher (Ball 2006; 2013)

- This is where inclusive education is formed- at the soul of the teacher is where the battle for inclusive education will be won.
- The task of leadership to get to the soul/ the heart of the matter
- Change the questions we are asking
- Creating a space for the greater integration of a range of very powerful but deeply transformative perspectives e.g. socio cultural approaches, critical race theory, critical literacy, feminist pedagogies into educational discourse

Challenges for leadership by this

- Trying to hold cohesiveness and difference
- Neo liberal reforms, high stakes accountability and performance culture
  - Resurgence of -streaming banding setting etc
  - End justifies the means
  - The standards agenda (some evidence that not fully in opposition ?? Ainscow et al 2006

- The existing structure of the system – inclusion within a highly stratified/ segregated system- very exclusionary norms – hegemonic processes etc

- Policy shifts etc – rule of the game change,
  - intensification of standards agenda backlash against inclusion (Warnock, 2005)

And finally and maybe most importantly …

- The benignly perceived but powerfully exclusionary notion of 'tradition'. Often at the core of the job description !