Creating and Maintaining Inclusive Space

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Inclusive space?
Some key questions

- What might be meant by ‘inclusive space’?
- Who is denied access to, and participation in, inclusive space(s)?
- Why does it happen?
- What might be done to create and maintain inclusive space?
Aspects of inclusive space

- Physical
- Social and emotional
- Attitudes, expectations and aspirations
- Security and safety
- Learning and achievement
- Pedagogical
- Transformational
- Professional
- Having fun
The broader context

- The role of schooling in achieving private and public human, economic and social development goals:
  - Social cohesion and inclusion
  - Security and safety
  - Prosperity
  - Subjective well-being

- In the context of:
  - International competitiveness
  - Knowledge economy
  - Globalisation, migration and mobility
  - New patterns of (un)employment
  - Increased diversity
  - A widening gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’
  - Threats to teacher professionalism
About Inclusion

- Many countries use a broad definition of inclusion and it’s not only about pupils with ASN
- Many countries acknowledge barriers to participation exist within their educational systems.
- Potential barriers include policies and practices on:
  - curriculum
  - teaching methods
  - teacher preparation, professional development and roles
  - assessment and examinations
  - how schools are judged
  - how difference and diversity are defined and categorised
  - how children are helped
  - physical accessibility of buildings
  - how schools are organised
  - attitudes to risk
Inclusion is about all children with a particular focus on children at risk of exclusion.

Inclusion involves a complex series of interactions between individuals, groups and the environment.

Inclusive education is a dynamic field that is changing in light of new priorities and policies, as well as new insights into schooling and pedagogy.

Is it an ideology that has outpaced its practice?
Why focus on inclusion?

- Many countries have groups of children who are excluded and/or underachieve
- This leads to long term economic and social consequences for all of us
- The economic and social returns from education are complex….but:
  - There are clear links between poor educational outcomes, poverty and additional support needs
  - Tackling underachievement and exclusion is the right thing to do, it makes sound economic and social sense
  - This is an international struggle
Who is most likely to be excluded or underachieve?

In Scotland it’s associated with:

- ASN (especially behaviour),
- class
- poverty
- ethnicity
- language
- gender
- mobility
- ‘looked after children’
Where do we stand?

- The highest achieving pupils in the UK compare with the best in the world
- Scotland does better than England on some indicators
  ....BUT
England has a plan

“In education, where I am happy to confess I’d like us to implement a cultural revolution just like the one they had in China..... like Chairman Mao, we’ve embarked on a Long March to reform our education system.”

Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education (England)

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/8227535/Michael-Gove-my-revolution-for-culture-in-classroom.html
During the cultural revolution

- Uneducated people took over the leadership of China's educational system.
- Universities were closed to the public for 10 years.
- High schools closed for 6 years.
- Elementary and middle schools closed for 3 years.
- Libraries were sealed and books were burned.
- Many hundreds of teachers were killed.

http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/malcolm_moore/100069981/a-dunces-hat-for-michael-gove/
But

- Scotland has one of the longest tails of underachievement in the developed world
- And the largest number of 15-21 year olds who are not in education or training
Gap between average pupils and low achievers S4: trend over ten years

Figure 4.7 Gap between the average pupil and the low achiever in S4, 1996 to 2006

Source: SE unpublished tables
Mean student achievement for top and bottom 20% across comparator nations

Figure 3.9 Mean student achievement in best and worst classrooms: comparator nations and Scotland

Source: EERD, 2007
Possible causes

- An emphasis on sorting, sifting and predicting
- School structures
  - Streaming, banding and setting
- School cultures and reward systems
- Aspirations and expectations
- Lack of clarity about responsibility
- Some ‘special education’ practices
- Attempts to close the gap have focused on the bottom 20%
- Some ‘remedies’ lead to an ‘opportunity gap’
Causes: continued

- Competing policy initiatives
  - How are schools judged?
  - Whose achievement is valued most?
  - What kinds of achievement are valued?

- Attitudes, beliefs and stigma
  - “Us and them” .......worthy and unworthy children

- But where do these notions come from?
  - The need to classify, categorise and pathologise children
  - Embedded beliefs about human differences
  - Social determinism and bio determinism
  - Reinforced by the media...’feral’ kids etc
  - ?
One of the culprits?
Some consequences of these beliefs

- Intergenerational low aspirations
  - When translated into school level expectations
- Used to justify streaming, setting, and FAILURE
- Leads to negative social, emotional and behavioural outcomes
- The achievement gap leads to an educational debt across generations for certain groups
  - Think of the ways in which the annual trade gap leads to the national debt across the years
It’s not all bad news

- Real progress in many schools, BUT problems remain
- Inclusion does NOT necessarily have a negative impact on the achievement of others
- Some schools are inclusive AND high achieving
- Getting it right for children who find learning difficult, brings benefits for all
- Schools which add the greatest ’value’ often serve the most disadvantaged communities
- Teachers make a difference and they don’t have to be perfect
What’s required?
An alternative to bell curve thinking that rejects ability labeling

The concept of transformability

(1) Shifting focus away from differences between learners to learning of all children

- Creating learning opportunities for everyone, so all participate in classroom life;
- Extending what is ordinarily available for all learners (a rich learning community) rather than teaching and learning strategies suitable for most alongside something ‘additional’ or ‘different’ for some who experience difficulties;
- Focusing on what is to be taught (and how) rather than who is to learn it.
- Recognising the learning that children bring into school
Believing all children will make progress, learn and achieve;

Focusing teaching and learning on what children can do rather than what they cannot

Grouping children to support everyone’s learning rather than relying on ability grouping

Using formative assessment to support learning
(3) Seeing difficulties in learning as challenges for teachers, (not deficits in learners), encouraging development of new ways of working

- Seeking and trying out new ways of working to support learning of all children;

- Working with and through other adults that respect the dignity of learners as full members of the community of the classrooms;

- Being committed to continuing professional development as a way of developing more inclusive practices.
What are effective inclusive schools doing?

- Reviewing and clarifying roles
- Sharing expertise
- Believing that all children can learn
- Defining achievement broadly
- Teaching basic skills across the curriculum
- Recognising that learning takes place outside school
- Trusting children
- Taking risks
- Getting involved in collaborative research
  - ‘Evidence informed teaching’
- Working on the 3R’s
  - Relationships
  - Respect
  - Responsibility
What are they doing?

- Connecting pupils and families to the school
  - Creative arts
  - Extra curricular activities
  - Learning outdoors
  - Peer tutoring
  - Homework clubs
  - Learning mentors
  - Community connections

- Raising aspirations and expectations

- Redefining additional support…the current definition:
  
  ‘provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children……’
Redefining additional support: creating inclusive space

- Enhancing what is ‘generally available’ by using the principles of universal design
- Not waiting for ‘failure’
- Developing inclusive pedagogy and systems of assessment
- Recognising that learning is a social act
- Developing skills for working with other adults
  - Other teachers and classroom assistants
  - Voluntary sector and other professionals
  - Parents
A framework for exploring participation

- Participation and access (being there)
- Participation and diversity (recognition and acceptance)
- Participation and collaboration (learning and working together)
- Participation and achievement (recognising and celebrating progress)

Participation and ACCESS

- **Being there**
  - Joining the school
  - Staying in the school
  - Access to spaces and places
  - Access to the curriculum
  - Access to extra-curricular activities

- Who is given access? Who is denied access and by whom?

- What are the policies, practices and interactions that promote access?

- Why within the cultures, values and beliefs of the school is greater access afforded to some individuals/groups?
Participation and COLLABORATION

- **Learning together**
  - Learning alongside other students
  - Supporting students to learn together
  - Members of staff working together
  - Staff and students learning together
  - Schools and other institutions working together

- Who learns together? Who does not learn together?

- What are the policies, practices and interactions that promote collaboration?

- Why within the cultures, values and beliefs of the school do some individuals/ groups learn together?
Participation and DIVERSITY

- **Recognition and acceptance**
  - Recognition and acceptance of students, by staff
  - Recognition and acceptance of staff, by staff
  - Recognition and acceptance of students, by students
  - Recognition and acceptance of staff, by students

- Who is recognised and accepted as a person and by whom?
- What are the policies, practices and interactions that promote recognition and acceptance?
- Why within the cultures, values and beliefs of the school are some individuals/ groups recognised and accepted?
Participation and ACHIEVEMENT

- Recognising and celebrating progress
  - Valuing everyone’s achievements
  - Personal progress is valued
  - Defining achievements broadly
  - Not only using norm referenced, standardised tests
  - Using the principles of ‘Assessment for Learning’
Some questions about teacher education and creating inclusive space

- What do *all* teachers need to know and be able to do?
- What stops them from doing it when they know what to do?
- What are the tensions between what they learn in the university and what they learn in schools?
- How might these tensions be resolved?
- What can be done about it?
Knowing

Doing

Believing

(Rouse, 2008)
National Framework for Inclusion

### Site

#### Student Teachers

- Understand the role of the teacher in providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment.
- Promote social justice and equality.
- Understand the importance of inclusive education practices.
- Develop strategies to support diverse learning needs.
- Understand the role of parents and carers in a child's education.

#### SFR

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- Develop strategies to support diverse learning needs.
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#### Advanced Professionals

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### Values and Beliefs

- Social justice is at the heart of educational practice.
- Inclusion is essential for all learners.
- Diversity and difference are strengths.
- Effective learning environments foster positive relationships.
- Success is achieved through collaborative efforts.

### Professional Knowledge and Understanding

- Understanding the impact of social justice and inclusion on learning outcomes.
- Understanding the role of legislation and policies in promoting social justice.
- Understanding the importance of inclusive education practices.
- Understanding the role of parents and carers in a child's education.

### Professional Skills and Abilities

- Developing strategies to support diverse learning needs.
- Promoting social justice and equality.
- Understanding the role of inclusive education practices.
- Understanding the role of parents and carers in a child's education.

### Principles and Contexts

- Human rights
- Social justice
- Inclusion
- Social justice measures
- Legislation/policy/initiatives
- Learning and teaching issues

### Additional Resources

- Exploring the role of the SFR in promoting social justice.
- Developing strategies to support diverse learning needs.
- Understanding the importance of inclusive education practices.
- Understanding the role of parents and carers in a child's education.

### References

- Scottish Teacher Education Committee.
- University of Glasgow.
- University of Stirling.
- University of Aberdeen.
- University of the West of Scotland.
Leonard Cohen’s warning to perfectionists

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in
Creating and maintaining inclusive space: what is required?

- A sense of belonging
- A sense of everybody, not most and some
- A sense of urgency
- A sense of responsibility
- A sense of commitment
- A sense of optimism and transformability
- A sense of achievement
- A sense of collaboration and partnership
- A sense of humour