Exceptionality Education International
2024, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 205–228

Special Issue
Inclusive Education: Canada's Connection to the World

Who We Are, Where We Come From, and Where We Hope to Go in Educational Inclusivity

Audrey Halpin
Dublin City University

Sheila Bennett
Brock University

Abstract

This is a duoethnography of two teacher-researchers who have spent their lives immersed in architecture for education that is equitably inclusive. Ongoing engagement with people who have experience(d) educational exclusions, and consistent evidence that educational inclusivity benefits everyone, ensure that we remain committed to education being/becoming inclusive of all. Everyone has the right to educational inclusivity; we have found it both possible and effective for all concerned wherever/whenever fully attempted, when/where the hegemonic hold of special-education[1] is dismantled. It is time to focus on inclusivity rights of current and future generations of students, to stop debating whether inclusive rights are right for everyone. We propose that inclusive education can be realized by addressing five basic constructs rather than staying engrossed/mired in complexifying obstructions and costly defence thereof. After 35 years withstanding equivocation, we hope for widespread building of educational inclusivity; moving away from perennial advice/permission seeking from those determined to maintain status quo. As a start, we invite you into the conversation with us from connections with Canada, Ireland, and elsewhere.

[1] Special-education and inclusive-education are often seen/treated as something different to and separate from education. We use hyphenation throughout whenever we are referring to the terms used in this way.

Introduction

We met as graduate-student colleagues in 1988 (Irish and Canadian women exiled belongingly in Ontario) and have been enduring allies across sectors of education spanning countries/continents. Educational inclusivity is where we met—a driving force in our working lives, a bond that unites and divides, something permeating our trusting academic and personal friendship.

Inclusive Education: Canada's Connection to the World called us to examine our longitudinal involvement in inclusive-education, to make sense of intersecting trajectories and of our place(s) in a field that has moved during our working lives, from policy asserting inclusive education as a desirable goal (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1990, 1994) to its establishment as a right (United Nations General Assembly, 2006); prevaricating all the while on its meaning/merit rather than delivering its manifestation. We share here resonances and dissonances from within and between us: a contribution to the landscape of inclusive-education; eternally hopeful movement beyond Groundhog Day (Thomas & Loxley, 2022b) is nigh.

Methodology

Engaged introspection appeals to us in this crone/cailleach (Blackie, 2016) time of our lives because storying experiences (Connor, 2009; Snow et al., 2023) are powerful tools for inclusiveness. We have often spoken of pooling our thoughts, of engaging in meaningful inquiry "in each other's presence" (Burleigh & Burm, 2022). *Exceptionality Education*'s call became a catalyst for starting, for choosing a method toward harvesting the personal for meaning of the inclusive-education phenomenon. A desire to juxtapose (Farquhar & Fitzpatrick, 2016), to reach a deeper understanding of the present by outlining the past, present, and future (Pinar, 1994), led us to duoethnography approach.

Duoethnographic methodology, through which "reconceptualization of the meanings that one gives is re-examined in dialogue with another" (Norris & Sawyer, 2020, p. 397), was selected for fit and flexibility, for clear tenets (Sawyer & Norris, 2012) and for salient characteristics guiding process (Norris & Sawyer, 2020) yet not being prescriptive (Breault, 2016). Duoethnography facilitated us in using ourselves as site(s) of investigation (Mulvihill & Swaminathan, 2022), pursuing inquiry into our respective living/learning, pausing in our intersecting autoethnographies (Breault, 2016, p. 778) so that new knowledge could emerge.

Steps were designed to provide structure for generating and processing a rich dataset and for guarding against unexamined self-indulgence (Breault, 2016). We planned a series of conversations interspersed with individual contemplation and writing (Kang & Jang, 2022). Five questions were composed to stimulate our initial chats:

(1) What brought us into this field?

(2) How did intensive graduate study in Ontario influence us?

(3) What have we learned since 1988 about progress toward education that is inclusive?

(4) How do we perceive the enduring prevarication about meaning/merit of inclusive-education?

(5) What are our hopes/plans for keeping on at moving inclusivity on in education?

Engagement with this process (June–September 2023) generated data that we analyzed iteratively to excavate emergent themes/insights on inclusivity in education: "duoethnography goes through rigorous conversations/distillations over a period of time, with aging periods between the conversations" (Norris & Sawyer, 2020, p. 405). First, conversations in response to each of the questions above were held (via two video calls, each of 90 minutes duration), recorded, and transcribed. We did not prepare responses so that data would emerge from naturalistic, dialogic (Norris & Sawyer, 2020) engagement (Burleigh & Burm, 2022). We then embarked on individual free-writing prompted by the conversations and transcriptions: initial re-storying of the stories (Fitzpatrick & Farquhar, 2018) shared.

Respective written musings were exchanged simultaneously in August 2023, forming the next layer of data. We took time to separately consider all existing data before conducting thematic analysis together (through video conversations) to identify frequent themes across datasets: conflation of separation and inclusion; provision of services versus building inclusivity in education; professionalization and medicalization as disempowering obstacles in education; education versus training for educators; and beliefs, attitudes, and what is valued/precious. These themes became our framework for distilling findings.

The final stage was writing this article; condensing and illustrating the insights at which we had arrived. Having walked/talked the delicate path of unearthing our truths (Farquhar & Fitzpatrick, 2016, p. 244), we share them below. Despite decades of knowing each other in broad alliance on inclusivity, this process brought unexpected layers of vulnerability and consciousness (Sawyer & Norris, 2012). The final write-up has been challenging; we entered more deeply into dialogic exchange for reflexively influencing each other beyond mere polyvocalization (Norris & Sawyer, 2020). Narrowing down vast exchanges and committing to outward print disclosure has stretched our longitudinal trust; interrogating our respective meaning, "warts and all" (Sawyer & Norris, 2012, p. 99). Striving to (re)construct our written words over multiple conversations required navigating discomforts and being discomfited.

At times, we veered off the dialogic, ethnographic path into authoritative discourse (Tlale & Romm, 2019), potentially inert territory (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 344); we have endeavoured to rein this in and check our solipsism (Freeman, 2015) to reach collaborative insights. We travelled from parallel talk to interactive probing of issues encountered (Breault, 2016, p. 782) and struggled to extricate ourselves from merely sharing previous transformative experiences to break new ground and produce fresh insights. Although producing essential truths is not the purpose of ethnographic research (Sawyer & Norris, 2009), we have found it a rigorous method of arriving at some truth. We hope this snapshot of our current positionalities (Norris & Sawyer, 2020), within lifelong liaison on educational inclusivity, might stimulate conversations among those who find discord/ resonance with us.

Findings are presented below in two layers. The first is an overview of who we are (Findings A). The second layer presents the insights that emerged within each of the five

themes identified (Findings B). Both sets of findings are exposed and then discussed in context of other(s') publications.

Findings A – Who We Are And Where We Come From

Audrey. I was born in British Colombia to Irish parents (1965), then grew up and was educated at primary, secondary, and undergraduate-degree levels in Ireland, pursuing a BEd (concurrent) with Gaeilge (Irish-language) in preparation as teacher. Following scores of job applications (during economic recession), I landed a temporary, one-year position replacing a permanent teacher (1986–1987). This first qualified-teacher experience was in a "special-school"[2] for children/young people with intellectual disabilities: a year full of joy, success, apprehension, and deep discovery; igniting an inclusivity fire that would light (and sometimes burn) a varied career in pursuit of equitable education for all children. In September, I worried how I could possibly provide "special-education," having never studied it; by June, I had discovered the simplicity of connecting with my students and extending/experimenting with what I knew about education to bring about learning and progression for them. I had also learned of suffering, shame, and lesser life-chances that segregation causes for some and could see no need for it: if I could teach so many students deemed non-normative, surely they could all be taught in their local-community classes. Summer in Ontario became a home of less employment worry. The following year I began graduate study at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE); noticed accidentally on daily walk to work), University of Toronto, where full-time immersion in inquiry and theorization further fanned flames of inclusive possibility. I met Sheila there, and we became lifelong comrades. After obtaining my first master's (1990) and qualifying for a doctoral program, I instead spent 22 years practising, experimenting, and innovating as a teacher (with an academic-journal habit on the side) in primary, post primary, segregated, and alternative schools in Canada, Dubai, Kuwait, and Ireland before transitioning to university teacher education (2011), hopeful of kindling many new inclusivity fires and possibilities. I find here that new and long-standing teachers embrace and excel at inclusivity very quickly once given the chance. Creating quality education that is inclusive of everyone who seeks it is my raison d'être as teacher and as researcher. I'm grateful to and for Sheila's presence in my journey and excited to begin excavating together our careers (re)searching for inclusivity, to produce some shareable meaning.

Sheila. I was born in 1961 in Newfoundland and grew up with five siblings in a small community that had its own school. The two-room school contained Grades 1–3 in one room and Grades 4–6 in the other. Graduating at Grade 11, I started at university in September 1978, completing my education and special education degrees by August 1982. My final semester was an internship at a residential school for students with behavioural disorders in England. It was that internship that taught me I was good with students, particularly those who would be considered as presenting difficulty in a regular school setting. In September 1982, I was hired as a special education teacher. I worked as a special education teacher in three settings for 7 years. One setting placed me in a leadership role,

[2] We use hyphenation in some instances of "special-school" throughout to demonstrate the way in which these are typically viewed and treated as something separate from "school."'

where I was tasked to design a program to support students with learning disabilities in their home schools, a program that continues to this day. My experiences in this process of design and implementation inspired me to apply for graduate school, so I took a year's leave and joined a master's program at OISE [Ontario Institute for Studies in Education] in Toronto, Canada. It was here that I met Audrey. We shared a passion for education and, in particular, special-education. We shared work sessions; argued, collaborated, and created ideas; and pushed each other ideologically while developing a deep and enduring friendship. Upon completion of my master's degree, I stayed to pursue my doctorate. I completed my doctorate in education while teaching and holding school board positions in Ontario and giving birth to my two children. Upon completion of my doctoral work, I began a faculty position at Brock University, where I remained for 27 years and from which I have just recently retired. I continue to engage in transition work with a clear focus on inclusive practice.

Insights and Other Voices

Sharing past recollections and current roles allowed common and disparate realizations to emerge. Each prompted by the other's story, we remembered more of our own past and elicited similarities; in witnessing/reading each other anew, we identified differences between us.

We both began formal education in very small, neighbourhood schools. Recalling our earliest education engagement brought us to awareness that we had never known anything other than expecting significant variance within each classroom. Small schools continue to be recognized as places of inclusivity in education (Nuñez et al., 2021): "Schools in some more remote areas are already fully inclusive because there are no special schools or classes close enough for students to attend" (National Council for Special Education, 2019, p. 2). We are not suggesting that all schools be small, but there is something to be learned and adopted from the relational, flexible practices that naturally occur within them. Experiencing diversity as ordinary gave us a head start on inclusivity, so we cannot be convinced it is impossible and are often baffled by others claiming so (Imray & Colley, 2017).

In addition to learning this inclusive education foundation during our earliest schooling, we both had had early-career teaching experiences working with young people deemed to have such exceptional "behavioural" differences/ "disturbances" that they were segregated from others (1991–1994). We found out there that building classroom relationships and experiences of learning success (not behaviourism) were essential to prevention of and recovery from such segregation (Cefai & Cooper, 2010). Recurring findings (Mc Keon, 2017; Orsati & Causton-Theoharis, 2013) have indicated that "behaviour" continues to be a barrier preventing inclusive confidence for many educators (Øen & Krumsvik, 2022) and policymakers (e.g. Irish National Teachers Organisation, 2023).

We are well versed/experienced in the limitations that normative thinking has imposed on education/schooling (Liasidou, 2008; Oliver, 1995) and have at times been complicit in its perpetuation through "specialising" in special-education as something different from "education." We have witnessed and participated in tyrannies of normal (Fiedler, 1984) and of earning the right to belong (Kunc, 1992); oppressions constructed and maintained

as barriers to inclusivity by setting up the different for needing "stigmatizing treatment" (Nussbaum, 2005, p. 275) with seemingly good intentions / "benevolent humanitarianism" (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 15). Not comfortable in complacency with the status quo, however, as relentlessly inclusive educators we have experienced shaming/shame, akin to the shame imposed on/ experienced by students considered outside the manageable norm in schools (Ryökkynen et al. 2022) or othered/segregated within (Connor & Ferri, 2005; McGillicuddy & Devine, 2020).

One pivotal difference that became a fulcrum around which the essence of our interactions and (re)writings eventually transpired was our respective conceptualizations of and relationships with the term/world of special-education. Discrepant nuances can be seen above and recur throughout. We have both been focused on the right of every child/person to equal belonging and meaningful education in their local school; one navigating the journey thereto as paved with special-education stepping-stones and the other moving those steps aside, perceiving them to be roadblocks preventing the destination being reached. Discovery of this disparity required us to dig deep and stay the course in this project to find our shared truths and leave intact the authenticity of our journeys.

For all the sophistication and credentialism in which we have participated since the late 1970s and cyclical hope in shifting paradigms (Heshusius, 1989), we credit our early diversity-as-the-norm exposures with fomenting our belief, knowledge, skills, and passion for education that is equitable and inclusive. Like Lena Saleh (2015), we lived inclusion growing up (p. 4) and now, 30 years after the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), we witness that inclusive schools and educational inclusivity are cornerstones for moving toward more equitable, just societies (p. 39). We share belief that it is time to move beyond generic embracing of Salamanca ideals (Graham et al., 2023) to intentional recognition of educational inclusivity as a right established in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD; United Nations General Assembly, 2006), a right further explicated as meaning cessation of all educational segregation (United Nations, 2016). We hope this account of teasing through the hard questions may be future-(in)forming (Gergen, 2015) for accomplishing what has been a professed goal within education as long as we have been around.

Findings B – Themes and Insights

This section presents the main insight eventually distilled within each of the five most frequent themes that emerged. Conversation excerpts follow each presentation of insight to illustrate the quarrying of our respective/shared trajectories. Each insight is then contextualized within others' voices from academic literature and major policy parameters/ events. "We make our voices explicit, wishing not to speak on behalf of others, and to invite readers into the conversation" (MacDonald & Markides, 2019, p. 96). We hope you find something here to entertain/inspire/jar you toward further connections with educational inclusivity.

1. Conflation of Separation and Inclusion

We believe there is a need to stop conflating separation (often denoted "special") with inclusion.

Sheila. As I reflect on my own culpability in the preservation of separation, I am conflicted by my actions; my knowledge at the time; my experiences, intent, aspiration, and measurable practice. For better or worse, my career has always straddled where we are now and where I imagined that we could be. I have been working within multiple systems but perhaps never actually seeing that the premise may be the problem. I keep trying to fix and enhance but, as I continue this journey, I can also see that there is a framework that I always use. The framework is the pragmatic one… Here is where we are, and how can we get to an inclusive space within that?

Audrey. Preventing exclusion in education has become my focus in response to the lack of inclusive progress. I'm contacted almost weekly by families of young people experiencing separation/exclusion(s) in school (often despite/because of "interventions"), so I feel we must begin with the heart of it: anti-exclusion. Complex structures and practices (e.g., singling students out for "support"/"help") that have been built, ostensibly, toward achievement of inclusive-education are its main barrier. If we want education to be inclusive, it's necessary to first take stock of habitual exclusions and to understand/redress when unintentional exclusion has taken place.

Sheila. The term "inclusion" has itself a trajectory of evolution and can simultaneously mean different things at different times and with different users. Even within the limited world of education, the term is conflicted and utilized both as a tool for separation and a justification for multiple practices. Inclusive practice can run the gambit of all students having authentic presence and, on the other end of the spectrum, inclusive practice can be for some being "included for one music class a day," a sort of experiment in demonstrating our largesse as a system. When it fails, we attribute failure externally: "See, it doesn't work; the student is not ready"; it is because the student is not ready, not because the system is not prepared. We continue to try to change the child to make them better so they can fit. When we adopt a framework that all students belong, then our focus changes and thus our practices.

Audrey. I've stopped using the word inclusion because it seems to be used all around me to describe anything and everything but education/standard curriculum that is inclusive of all. In Ireland, we have more segregated classes and schools now than in 2004 when legislation envisioning inclusive education for all students, particularly those with "special educational needs" was published (Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004). Having separate ('special') classes, where some students are placed for most/all the time, is now considered a marker of a school's inclusiveness.

Sheila. Freeing myself of the framework as it currently exists allows me to begin a journey of reframing. Inclusion and separation are opposites. Current systems tolerate a great deal of separated practices. The voices of my teacher candidates speak to the systematic and embedded practices that create this tension of education versus expertise. Their discomfort with separation is palpable in class discussion of rights-based inclusion. Their discomfort is heightened when in teaching practice they are once again exposed to, and at times traumatized by, segregationist practices common in some placements. Their experiences, along with my own reflection over time, tell me that we need to ask bigger questions and cultivate different ways of thinking and practising. How do we make education work with all that we have to offer? How do we do this within a real commitment that starts with inclusion?

Audrey. Being inclusive or education that is inclusive have replaced 'inclusion' for me because "inclusion of X or Y into" seems mostly to imply separate things/approaches needed, to emphasize differences that must be addressed before everyone can be fitted into a core that remains unchanged. Inclusivity as belonging, feeling welcome, and participating (in whatever is ordinarily taking place in education) got lost in the conceptualization of inclusion as separate from education. Whether third-grade maths or 12th-grade/Leaving-Certificate history, there is some way for every person present to be part of education and to benefit therefrom. Much of my time working with (student) teachers, to scaffold them developing confidence, agency, and self-efficacy as inclusive practitioners, is spent creating opportunities to explore and deconstruct fears/impossibility perceptions arising from/fuelled by loud, separate/additional discourses. Being inclusive as educators frees them from feelings of inadequacy caused by ubiquitous, separative commotion and the perceived burden of responsibility for addressing multiple disparities (often termed "severe" or "complex") and alleged demands for sophisticated, separate interventions.

Other Voices

Separation of education and inclusive-education has been a self-reproducing problem. Academic engagement on inclusive-education has centred around definition (Göransson & Nilholm, 2014) with some believing that the absence of agreed definition prevents education becoming inclusive (Francisco et al., 2020). After several decades and detailed overviews (Florian, 1998; Krischler et al., 2019)~~,~~ this complexifying strife for agreed definition seems to be a form of filibustering; equivocation hindering delivery on rights. "Dilemmas" (Norwich, 2022) of rights versus continuation of separate specialness have been perpetuated despite evidence that segregated education is not associated with better outcomes overall (Cologon, 2013; Thomas & Loxley, 2022a) and inclusive education benefits everyone involved (Hehir et al., 2016). "Education" is at least as complex as the concept of inclusivity within, yet we have gotten on with education every day around the world rather than waiting to agree one all-encompassing definition or guarantee that it will suit everybody all the time. "Inclusive" is just an adjective for which there is an abundance of definition, and "education" has worldwide (workable, if not fully agreed) meaning.

Others have given comprehensive analysis of this semanticism and provided excellent working explanations (Schuelka et al., 2019). We have settled on "education that is inclusive," not separate or separative. Reaching everyone to the best of teachers' ability within whatever education is at hand has been a perennial challenge with no guarantees across sectors and ages (Van Manen, 1982). Whatever students' diversities and abilities, there is no essential conflict (Haug, 2017) between place and doing our best with what takes place therein. A starting place of avoiding segregation does not mean interference with quality teaching and learning (Florian & Rouse, 2001).

An offshoot of separating inclusive-education from education (Spandagou, 2021) and the "industry" required to support it (Tomlinson, 2012), is delineation of "inclusive-pedagogy" as a separate concept (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011,), implying "a particular form of education" (Haug, 2017, p. 215) rather than the "just doing it" (Rouse, 2008, p. 12) roots of being inclusive out of which the term emerged.

Inclusive is not separate. Separating students by/for focusing on their differences prevents educational inclusivity becoming/settling as the norm (Meijer & Watkins, 2019). Separate placements/treatments have been frequently called "inclusive-education," sometimes claiming goals of making ready for inclusive lives in the future but, after 35 years of witnessing persistent separateness, we have seen that separation is not a stepping stone; segregating and separate focus has remained the ever-expanding norm (Tomlinson, 2021; Thomas et al., 2023). Widely accepting separation as the route to inclusivity is akin to believing that separating sports-team members for their preparation/training is the best way for them all to later come together on match day.

The latest obfuscation emerging in response to UNCRPD ratifications/ramifications has been "inclusive special education" (Hornby, 2014), an intermittent appropriation of/ sop to inclusive language by erstwhile "special" separatists: "Failing to keep special education as a visible part of public education…. promises a cruel denial of opportunities for young people with disabilities" (Hornby & Kauffman, 2023, p. 142). Educational inclusivity is not yet the norm (Winzer & Mazurek, 2023), although we have witnessed it being created and enjoyed daily by people we meet. Failure of separation(s) to bring about inclusivity has often been claimed as a failure of "inclusion" (Cooper et al., 2020; Imray & Colley, 2017), particularly by those who had cautioned against it (Anastasiou et al., 2015, 2020). The reality is that, to date, inclusive-education has, at best, been but partially attempted (Weuffen et al., 2023); separate and special discourses have prohibited substantive progress.

2. Provision of Services Versus Building Inclusivity in Education

For education that is inclusive to become reality, we need to prioritize making education inclusive. Building inclusivity within education should precede and replace the current over-emphasis on provision of services and "supports."

Audrey. When I started out as teacher in a special-education setting, my job was to teach my students. Some pupils had additional access to psychologists/ health therapists but there was no expectation they would receive extensive therapies instead of curriculum–education during school hours. Sometimes, associated therapists offered advice on students or asked me about their progress in class; all with curriculum–education as the focus. I've never yet encountered a situation where it was impossible to extend education to people in my class unless/until I had information/advice/intervention from health professionals. The very simple, effective starting point of involving all present in education seems to have gotten progressively lost in a flurry of diagnostics and interventions that divert attention away from making education inclusive.

Sheila. Services are "things" that are provided, expected, calculated for cost, and deemed necessary and unnecessary, affordable and unaffordable. Services are an endless conversation in the educational arena. Service provision/discussion draws our focus away from the bigger picture. Always for me, the frustration of this distracting diversion is that we focus on the wrong things first. I have first-hand experiences of working in a system where teachers feel disempowered to program a reading lesson for a student because they are "waiting on an assessment," with teachers who don't incorporate communication systems with non-verbal students because that is not their speciality, and where myriad

other delays and difficulties undermine inclusive practice. As educators, we have skill and expertise. We need to work collaboratively with others who offer insight and knowledge, but this "conversation" and exchange should not hold students to ransom for services. We deem another assessment as more important than working collaboratively on a science project. The assessment may add value, but there is a cost. We can do both the science project and the assessment, but we need to put the students' experience first.

Audrey. Many pupils require services and supports that are not at the core of education, but fixation on these as prerequisites to education commencing is prohibiting inclusivity. Stories abound of schools claiming not to have the services potential students might need and of enrolment conditionality, that elaborate services and resources are an absolute precondition. In Ireland, many parents are now advocating for segregated placements for their children lest they not receive ("assessment"-indicated) supports and services during school hours, rather than education being the first school priority. Prioritizing health interventions, equipment, and services has served as distraction from/ obstacle to the job of bringing about inclusive belonging in education.

Sheila. In one of my iterations as teacher, I was assigned to a self-contained behaviour class. By the end of the first term, all the students were in regular classes for all or part of the day. We built trust and self-reliance; we dealt with problems as they emerged. It was difficult and sometimes stressful work, but there was no "magical" fix; there was though a teacher and the EA who could learn and guide successful practice. The heartbreak of the experience was that these eight students, who were separated from their home schools, demonstrated that they were all fine to be in the "regular class" with just a little support and common sense. I would like to frame this as a success, but it was a failure. These students, when they showed success, were "moved back" to their home school only to be removed again because they had not been fixed. I was the "service," but nothing I did through separation differed from what any teacher could do. Systems that create these specialized places for fixing children are what need fixing.

Audrey. Within education, there is predilection for separate, specialized programmes/ resources rather than ensuring all pupils have access to the same curriculum and suitable ways to achieve within this alongside their peers. I frequently observe pupils being kept apart from their peers by special-education-teachers or special-needs-assistants to receive "support" (for some deficit) rather than being supported to participate equitably with their peers. I see young people completing easier/lesser exercises on their own (so apparently at independence level therein) instead of joining in with work being done by their peers; lest it be too difficult for them it's best not to try. This approach seems to stem from self-perpetuating beliefs that some people need services and "supports" more than they need the education generally on offer.

Sheila. We continue to look for the answers, define the problem, and then create solutions, but our gaze is distorted and our framework misaligned. We are the ones, the educators, who are the centre. We are powerful in creating change. When we choose service provision over building inclusivity, we separate out costs for materials and human services but, in doing so, we separate out costs of dignity, belonging, growth, community. If our focus is on building capacity, supporting educator growth, problem-solving, and creating true inclusivity, the money follows the vision. Working from the central premise of inclusion

allows seeing a different picture of how students are included. They are the centre; we come to them.

Other Voices

Emphasis on measuring then remediating individuals' differences/difficulties in education has remained the default approach to "inclusion" in education throughout our careers (Wilcox et al., 2021), despite its failure to improve educational outcomes. We have experienced perennial emphasis on provision of services (Tomlinson, 2012) for children considered non-normative (Dunn, 1968), especially those with disabilities, rather than concentration on making education inclusive (Thomas, 1997) or building a core education that can accommodate all students (Ferguson, 2008). The pinnacle of this drive for determination and provision of special-services has been the holy grail of the individual educational plan, a process/document that has been a bureaucratic burden (Cooper, 1996) and barrier to educational inclusivity (Sobsey, 2017).

"Concerns" oft cited as possible dangers/harmfulness of inclusive-education (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Sharman, 2015) can in turn cause fear barriers for pupils and their families/advocates (Shevlin & Banks, 2021; Travers, 2023). Claims that inclusivity would deny pupils key supports (Kauffman, 2021) or opportunities to also engage in separate activities (Maher et al., 2023) and assertions that educational inclusivity indicates a reduction in resources (Anastasiou et al., 2015) have thwarted progress. We have witnessed this services/"support" supremacy causing widespread fear. Teachers fear that there will not be time for education and/or that they don't have the expertise pupils require because they are merely "educators" (Sobsey, 2017). Parents/carers fear that children need services and "supports" more than they need education (Banks, 2021; Inclusion Ireland, 2020). Systemic providers fear there will never be enough diagnosticians, therapists, or resources to fulfill the ever-increasing demand (Dáil Éireann, 2022).

Preoccupation with special services/supports began as a way of focusing on individuals not succeeding in "regular" schools and became a self-sustaining profession (Florian, 1998, p. 24); an army of specialists (Tomlinson, 2012). It is a costly, vicious cycle resulting in neither educational inclusivity nor satiety, a frenzy of unfulfillment wherein "this special set of services often blocks people from access to regular services," (Snow, 2012, p. 7). It is time to focus on inclusivity first before deciding any/all embellishments that would increase its effectiveness, time to discontinue the distorted dominance of "supports" and services provision over education; to start instead with constructing quality education that is inclusive (Thomas & Loxley, 2022a).

3. Professionalization and Medicalization as Disempowering Obstacles in Education

Deference to psychological, medical, and other non-education professionals is a barrier to education becoming inclusive; it gives rise to the disempowering misconception that teachers are not best placed to plan for/teach all their pupils and keeps the frantic service-provision carousel in motion.

Sheila. Over the trajectory of my years in teaching and teacher education, there have been progress and setbacks. The possibility of what can be done can be daunting, and in our rush

to move forward we, at times, slip backwards. The availability of remedial programs, improved techniques, the bright shiny thing that will fix a student, is always dangled in front of us. As educators, we succumb to the hype and assign a label or a program or any of a myriad of approaches that will fix. Students don't need "fixing"; to fix is to assume something is broken. That is not to say that specialized, informed techniques are not, at times, effective tools in working with students; it is that those types of tools are secondary to the primary role of taking ownership of the learning of our students.

Audrey. After my first teaching experience, when I learned I could reach everybody if I tried, my next exposure to working with learners deemed "exceptional" was as a graduate student, when my attention was drawn to the odd but entrenched practice of taking the lead from psychologists and tools such as intelligence tests. My supervisor was keen to point out that educators know more than psychologists, or other non-education professionals, about how learning takes place and what children need to learn at the various stages of schooling (Davidson, 1980). While additional information from outside professionals could be helpful, it was no substitute for knowing my pupils and knowing what I intended them to learn.

Sheila. As educational professionals, we sometimes are blocked from seeing that we have strategies, answers, resources within our role. Recently at a school board event, teachers had a chance to talk about inclusive-education successes. One teacher spoke about having a high school student with a behavioural outburst and how they responded. They said that they were sure they made mistakes because behaviour was not their field but then outlined what they had done as a kind and experienced educator. Following the talk, I approached that educator and shared with them that they did everything right. Their knowledge and their experience were sufficient. They appeared surprised as they were convinced that there are experts with answers, and indeed there are, but also there are teachers; we too are experts.

Audrey. I worked in two large second-level schools: Ontario (1994–1997) and Ireland (2006–2009), tasked with "leading" inclusive-education/ practice. At first, many colleagues expressed lack of ability/confidence for teaching the wide diversity of students enrolled, citing numerous reports/recommendations as evidence it was outside their remit. I incorrectly interpreted this as resistance to inclusivity, but I quickly learned. Teachers perceived their duty to be following remedial/rehabilitative recommendations in "professional reports" rather than simply teaching their subject to all students, some of whom had such reports. While pupils' diversity did require some flexibility in amount/type of instructions and adjustments in assessment, almost all teachers were willingly and effectively inclusive once their fears of inadequacy were assuaged. Psychologists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and others can offer useful information to support learners' lives, but deference to this information over education knowledge/skills is a disingenuous obstacle to finding/making the easiest adjustments (often most effective) in context to render education inclusive of those present.

Sheila. I have had the privilege to be involved for a number of years in partnership with a group of researchers who decided to flip the script on how services were delivered in schools. Instead of an expert model, this project took the approach that education started and finished in the classroom and that occupational therapy, and more recently speech and

language support, should be centred in the classroom in partnership with the educator. No students were withdrawn, and occupational therapists were in the classroom through invitation. The practitioners built trust, wait lists were reduced, shared respect and mutual understandings were built, and a new way of looking at service was developed. Significantly, at the very beginning of the project when the occupational therapists gathered for their first debrief meeting following their classroom-based practice, the most significant feedback they provided was that they were shocked at what teachers did and were responsible for. For them, it changed everything and, for us as project leads, we knew we were heading in the right direction.

Audrey. (Student) teachers with whom I work frequently express feeling disempowered and overwhelmed. "How will we ever be able to teach the thousands of different kinds of pupils? It would require magical powers to be able to fulfill all the recommendations for all of them." I spend the first few weeks with teachers building a sense of empowerment, that education of all pupils is within their reach. Dismantling endemic beliefs (of teachers, families, and policymakers) that education of some pupils must be led by non-teacher professionals is an essential precursor to educational inclusivity becoming the norm.

Other Voices

The professionalization we have found disempowering for teachers and obstructive to education becoming inclusive or equitable (Skrtic, 1991) has long been noted and analyzed by others (Brantlinger, 1997), yet the approach has persisted. The deference began as technocratic/administrative (Skrtic, 1991), for example, requiring evidence from non-educator professionals to determine/verify children's educational "needs" (Loxley & Thomas, 1997). But, over time, this obsequiousness has become misconstrued as educational necessity. Teachers, leaders, and families/carers need the opportunity to discover that knowledge assumed superior may not be the most important information for education to proceed (Ainscow, 2020).

Professionalization over time has been closely aligned with medicalization of children's diversities, for example, requiring engagement with "treatment(s)" for education to proceed. This medicalization has disempowered teachers/other educators and has become a force of exclusion (Slee, 2018). Professionalization has in turn crept into the language used in schools and with parents/carers (Bacon & Causton-Theoharis, 2013), compounding the issues with special/separate and services versus education above. A more empowering education-centric approach (where inclusive possibilities for students are explored/devised in context) is needed. Assertive creativity, whereby teachers experiment with and find ways for all students to be part of education, has been described as "adhocratic" (Skrtic, 1991); more recent analysis has suggested teachers being at the heart of research for ways forward in inclusive education (Thomas & Loxley, 2022a).

4. Education Versus Training for Educators

All educators need and deserve education (not merely training) with time and space as opportunities to develop inclusive mindset and practice.

Audrey. While sharing and excavating these past few months, it really struck me that the spaciousness we had as graduate students (to engage with knowledge, research, and people;

to tease through concepts and manifestations and make our own of them) was much more influential than the specific knowledge/skills elements we each focused on. For all our years of sharing the same end goal and the hundreds of items/cases we've disentangled together, I had never grasped that we were experiencing and developing totally different views/conceptualizations of special-education between 1988 and 1990. It's staggering to realize that decades of companionship toward building more inclusive education were not stymied by totally disparate perspectives on "special."

Sheila. Learning facts and techniques is first-level learning; learning to question and enhance is a different and essential level. The result of the combination is informed learning that has a wealth of knowledge with a curiosity and questioning mindset. When I consider how we learn and work in educational environments as educators, I am troubled by the term "training." Having grown up in the era of teacher training, I am still surprised at the usage decades later. Training as a concept suggests a set of learnable procedures and skills that can be done with a sort of automaticity. It is finite, whereas learning is infinite.

Audrey. Although I also emerged from graduate school with a toolkit of special-education trainings, I had largely rejected this "expertise" as useful. My main takeaway was an approach of relationships with people and with research to be applied in context. I had "learned" that every person/student has ability; that reaching persons and their abilities in education was of much more importance than forensic examination of their deficits. Occasionally since 1990, my knowledge of/ training in cognitive psychology, measurement, and comparative statistics has been useful (mainly in a knowledge-as-power capacity for participating in multidisciplinary deliberations) but, without broader education which equipped me to interrogate their underlying diagnostic-prescriptive beliefs, such "trainings" would have been no advantage to inclusivity.

Sheila. During my years in graduate school, I was delighted with the expertise presented, a road to travel down where all the answers existed. A chance to solve the mysteries of special-education. The information, the jargon, the insider language, the numbers were exhilarating. We were part of a core group of graduate students, immersed in multiple opportunities for learning. Alongside the standard learning, assignments, exams, projects, essays were rigorous debates, conflicting ideas clashing, perspectives held and adjusted, growth, challenge, reflection, change, all in an environment of trust and support. Idealistic as it sounds, the learning that took place helped to set a trajectory that guided me in all educational endeavours. It was the "book" learning certainly, but it was also the counterbalance of debate, discussion, failure, success, challenge, and support from my fellow learners that rounded out the full experience.

Audrey. These conversations have reminded me how much I cherish the vision to educate and not merely train us as the well from which it was possible to develop agency, inquiry-stance, and confidence for finding/creating new pathways that were/remain necessary for evolution of more inclusive education. Despite ongoing pressures for "training," it can be more barrier to than enhancer of inclusivity in classrooms. While there is value in being "trained" (in e.g., UD/L, differentiation, categories of diversity), training can only serve to bring about educational inclusiveness within a broader understanding of inclusivity. I am consistently amazed by the inclusive responses/quality learning that (student) teachers create across contexts after only a few months' time and space for education in inclusivity rather than training.

Sheila. Over 4 decades, I have transformed my thinking with knowledge and experience, and I resist the notion of being trained. Training has an implicit start and finish, whereas education is constant. Training implies that there is a correct answer, procedure that should fix what ails. When we rely on training alone, the solution we try is seen as potentially successful or unsuccessful. In that mindset, when the student does not respond in the predicted way, then seemingly the fault is within the student. When we dichotomize our actions in schools, we make a scenario of right and wrong. It is ineffective and limited. To be educated is to be curious, to feel the need to seek out answers, to be informed. When we train individuals, we suggest that there is an answer, a solution, a fix. This approach shuts down the educator rather than motivating them. It makes surety where there should be curiosity.

Other Voices

International perspectives on teacher education for inclusive-education—what it should contain and varied views on whether expansive education for inclusivity or detailed training should be prioritized—can be seen across the academic literature and in dedicated collections (Forlin, 2010, 2012). Our research and experiences concur with the importance of teacher education providing space and opportunity so that the norms of separation and special-education (Blanton et al., 2018) can be reconceptualized for equitable practice. Infusion of inclusive thinking is needed in teacher education, so that teacher candidates have the chance to process exclusionary practices and beliefs they encounter in the world so they can instead provide for pupils' rights (Beneke et al., 2020).

"How to" promises (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020) in teacher training have not served to bring about widespread education that is inclusive (Thomas & Loxley, 2022b); to counter such exigencies, teacher education that instead fosters and encourages curiosity (Mäkinen, 2013) is recommended. Teachers have been demonstrating creatively inclusive practices as long as we have been in the field (Stainback & Stainback, 1985), so education that provides teachers with stimuli to create inclusivity is essential (Symeonidou, 2022).

5. Beliefs, Attitudes, and What Is Valued/Precious

Beliefs and attitudes about inclusive education are foundational to its manifestation. If education is to be inclusive, then building inclusive beliefs and attitudes is essential; our own have evolved over time, and it is our experience that others readily develop these given the chance.

Sheila. It is supportable to postulate that educators come with an inclusive mindset. From a philosophical and aspirational vantage point, few could argue with the premise of inclusion, but the system as it exists teaches them that they are wrong. This student is showing behaviour difficulties; we need a specialist to assess, to get a recommendation, to move them somewhere else until they are fixed. Don't worry, you can teach the remaining students. What if we as a system moved in and said, "You (We) can do this? What help do you need to learn the skills, and assist this student? How do we grow your practice and build confidence?"

Audrey. When I first transitioned from school teaching to university teaching, a colleague asked me what was most important for developing inclusive teachers. I immediately

responded that it was their attitudes and beliefs. This certitude (borne out of experience and having kept track of research literature over the years) met with a derisory "If only it were that simple." Being new and diffident, I experienced self-doubt, which was quickly remedied by revisiting journals (academic and personal). That brief interaction was introduction to recurring interrogation of my inclusive beliefs and attitudes over the last 12 years, especially from leaders (policymakers, organization officers, and teacher educators) charged with bringing educational inclusivity about. Disagreement with the concept of inclusivity as a right is rare, but doubts about that being possible or suitable for everyone are daily occurrences.

Sheila. While I have seen and continue to see educational professionals who are advocates for inclusion and are willing to change practice, I believe that I am at a place where I can say with some confidence that many of the success stories have more to do with whom I was talking to instead of what I was saying. The tools, suggestions, resources, "training sessions" most often succeeded when the spark already existed. Anecdotally, I have over the years shared many conversations with teachers who indicated strongly that they were already uncomfortable and frustrated with separation and that their true teaching self was inclusive. It has been startlingly clear that many teachers who are, at heart, inclusivists are indoctrinated into a system that dismantles these beliefs.

Audrey. My beliefs and attitudes for educational-inclusivity rights became deeply rooted in graduate school through engagement with you, other colleagues, supervisors, literature choices, and the "diverse" individuals I worked with intensively and inquisitively for several months. I emerged with deep convictions for person-centredness and the easiness of inclusivity. The devastating impact of educational exclusion(s), shared with me by people who had experienced them, and the sheer simplicity of what they had needed instead effectively ensured that I became radicalized for inclusivity! In our conversations, I have come to appreciate the absolutism I portray, how that exacerbates fears/worries many have about letting go of diagnostic prescriptiveness and good intentions/ interventions. I'm contemplating more deferential navigation, but constant reminders of ongoing exclusionary harm keep me convinced that softening the beliefs and attitudes is contraindicated.

Sheila. In many existing systems, teachers are told through word, school practices, specialist intervention of a particular but all too common type that they are incompetent at teaching. That they are only good at this part of teaching, the part where students do not prove to be difficult in learning, behaviour, emotional regulation, peer relations, toileting, plus anything deemed to be outside the realm of perfect learners. One could beg the question, If every student came to school perfect, why do we even need teachers? Teachers are at the centre of the educational endeavour. When we parse out their role to a narrow strip, we do them and the students they teach a grave injustice.

Audrey. Inclusive beliefs and attitudes come naturally to (student)teachers, and exploratory experiences with diverse pupils allow them to act on these. Others, who at first fear inclusive-education would deprive pupils of quality education, are reassured when they witness both joy and progress ensuing its implementation. The biggest barriers to widespread inclusivity in education seem to be belief by those at the helm of the special-education empire that it must continue and the impact their power has on the beliefs and attitudes of

others, due to the credibility that "special" has maintained and sustained. This "special" credence ensures its proponents are at the table with (implementation-level) policymakers so, although high-level policies enshrine/reaffirm inclusivity as a right, doubts/opposition continue to self-perpetuate on the ground.

Other Voices

Beliefs about inclusive rights have been at the core of most literature in the field. Positive beliefs and attitudes (Avramidis et al., 2000) have been associated with inclusive-education (Florian, 2008) and inclusive teaching (Jordan et al., 2009). Meanwhile negative attitudes about inclusive education persist as a major barrier to its realization (Saloviita, 2020); opposing beliefs have been sustained vociferously (Wiley et al., 2019). Beliefs and attitudes affect realization of rights and of inclusivity **(**Cologon, 2022; Kauffman & Hornby, 2020). Teachers' beliefs about and attitudes toward inclusive-education, especially their self-belief about being effectively inclusive (Savolainen et al., 2022) are key to education becoming inclusive; such beliefs are malleable (Metsala & Harkins, 2020), reinforcing the potential of teacher education therein. Values of teachers and of all involved with education remain important for the development of education that is inclusive (Thomas & Glenny, 2002).

Wrapping Up

In building this duoethnography, we have reconnected with evidence over time that educational inclusivity benefits everyone (Heumann, 1999; Kefallinou et al., 2020) and with recurring worldwide indications (Schiemer, 2017) that led to it being established as a right in UNCRPD (United Nations General Assembly, 2006). Our experiences and vision are in/for education that is inclusive of all people (Messiou, 2017), not just those with "special educational needs," although this population and their rights have been our focus here.

In summary, we hope that current and future generations of pupils will not have to suffer the covert and overt exclusion that has persisted in/from education during our working lives. To expedite the realization of inclusive rights and successes in education, we offer the recommendations: an end to the use of separation; an inclusivity-first approach; cessation of deference to non-education professions; expansive education in inclusiveness for teachers, and opportunities for everyone involved with education to explore their beliefs and the impact they can have on education becoming equitably inclusive. We hope these five steps for inclusivity provide fuel for others' thinking and action toward realizing educational-inclusivity rights in Canada, in Ireland, and worldwide.

References

Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting inclusion and equity in education: Lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, *6*(1), 7–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.1729587

Anastasiou, D., Felder, M., Correia, L. A. D. M., Shemanov, A., Zweers, I., & Ahrbeck, B. (2020). The impact of article 24 of the CRPD on special and inclusive education in Germany, Portugal, the Russian Federation, and the Netherlands. In J. M. Kauffman (Ed.), *On Educational Inclusion* (pp. 216–248). Routledge.

Anastasiou, D., Kauffman, J. M., & Di Nuovo, S. (2015). Inclusive education in Italy: Description and reflections on full inclusion. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 30*(4), 429–443. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2015.1060075

Avramidis, E., Bayliss, P., & Burden, R. (2000). A survey into mainstream teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school in one local education authority. *Educational Psychology, 20*(2), 191–211. https://doi.org/10.1080/713663717

Bacon, J. K., & Causton-Theoharis, J. (2013). 'It should be teamwork': A critical investigation of school practices and parent advocacy in special education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 17*(7), 682–699. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2012.708060

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination* (M. Holquist, Ed.; M. Holquist & C. Emerson, Trans.). University of Texas Press.

Banks, J. (2021). A winning formula? Funding inclusive education in Ireland. In J. Golden, J. Lambrecht, & T. Loreman (Eds.), *Resourcing inclusive education* (pp. 7–19). Emerald Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1108bene/S1479-363620210000015003

Beneke, M. R., Skrtic, T. M., Guan, C., Hyland, S., An, Z. G., Alzahrani, T., Amilivia, J., & Love, H. R. (2020). The mediating role of exclusionary school organizations in pre-service teachers' constructions of inclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 24*(13), 1372–1388. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1530309

Blackie, S. (2016). *If women rose rooted: A life-changing journey to authenticity and belonging*. September Publishing.

Blanton, L. P., Pugach, M. C., & Boveda, M. (2018). Interrogating the intersections between general and special education in the history of teacher education reform. *Journal of Teacher Education, 69*(4), 354–366. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118778539

Brantlinger, E. (1997). Using ideology: Cases of nonrecognition of the politics of research and practice in special education. *Review of Educational Research*, 67(4), 425–459. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543067004425

Breault, R. A. (2016). Emerging issues in duoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 29*(6), 777–794. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2016.1162866

Burleigh, D., & Burm, S. (2022). Doing duoethnography: Addressing essential methodological questions. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 21*. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221140876

Cefai, C., & Cooper, P. (2010). Students without voices: The unheard accounts of secondary school students with social, emotional and behaviour difficulties. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 25*(2), 183–198. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856251003658702

Cologon, K. (2013). *Inclusion in education: Towards equality for students with disability* [Issues paper]. Children with Disability Australia. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2013-10/apo-nid36129.pdf

Cologon, K. (2022). Is inclusive education really for everyone? Family stories of children and young people labelled with 'severe and multiple' or 'profound' 'disabilities.' *Research Papers in Education, 37*(3), 395–417. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2020.1849372

Connor, D. J. (2009). Breaking containment – The power of narrative knowing: Countering silences within traditional special education research. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 13*(5), 449–470. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110701789126

Connor, D. J., & Ferri, B. A. (2005). Integration and inclusion—A troubling nexus: Race, disability, and special education. *The Journal of African American History, 90*(1–2), 107–127. https://doi.org/10.1086/JAAHv90n1-2p107

Cooper, J. T., Scott, T. M., & Whitney, T. (2020). A science of instruction and its implications for students with disabilities. In J. M. Kauffman (Ed.), *On educational inclusion: Meanings, history, issues and international perspectives.* Routledge. https://doi-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/10.4324/9780429344039

Cooper, P. (1996). Are individual education plans a waste of paper? *British Journal of Special Education*, *23*(3), 115–119. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8578.1996.tb00960.x

Dáil Éireann. (2022, October 25). National Educational Psychological Service [Debate]. Houses of the Oireachtas (Ireland). https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2022-10-25/422/

Davidson, I. F. (1980). *Going beyond early identification* (ED187450). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED187450.pdf

Dunn, L. M. (1968). Special education for the mildly retarded—Is much of it justifiable? *Exceptional Children*, *35*(1), 5–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/001440296803500101

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (Act No. 30/2004). Government of Ireland. https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/30/enacted/en/html

Farquhar, S., & Fitzpatrick, E. (2016). Unearthing truths in duoethnographic method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *16*(3), 238–250. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-072015-0061

Ferguson, D. L. (2008). International trends in inclusive education: The continuing challenge to teach each one and everyone. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *23*(2), 109–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856250801946236

Fiedler, L.A. (1984). The tyranny of the normal. *The Hastings Center Report*, *14*(2), 40–42. https://doi.org/10.2307/3561884

Fitzpatrick, E., & Farquhar, S. (2018). Service and leadership in the university: Duoethnography as transformation. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, *7*(3), 345–360. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-08-2017-0037

Florian, L. (1998). Inclusive practice: What, why and how? In C. Tilstone, L. Florian, & R. Rose (Eds.), *Promoting inclusive practice* (pp. 13–26). Routledge.

Florian, L. (2008). INCLUSION: Special or inclusive education: Future trends. *British Journal of Special Education*, *35*(4), 202–208. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8578.2008.00402.x

Florian, L., & Black-Hawkins, K. (2011). Exploring inclusive pedagogy. *British Educational Research Journal*, *37*(5), 813–828. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2010.501096

Florian, L., & Rouse, M. (2001). Inclusive practice in English secondary schools: Lessons learned. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *31*(3), 399–412. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640120086648

Forlin, C. (Ed.). (2010). *Teacher education for inclusion: Changing paradigms and innovative approaches.* Routledge.

Forlin, C. (Ed.). (2012). *Future directions for inclusive teacher education: An international perspective*. Routledge.

Francisco, M. P. B., Hartman, M., & Wang, Y. (2020). Inclusion and special education. *Education Sciences*, *10*(9), Article 238. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10090238

Freeman, J. (2015). Trying not to lie... and failing: Autoethnography, memory, malleability. *The Qualitative Report*, *20*(6), 918–929. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2015.2170

Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. (1994). Inclusive schools movement and the radicalisation of special education reform. *Exceptional Children*, *60*(4), 294–309. https://doi.org/10.1177/001440299406000402

Gergen, K. J. (2015). From mirroring to world-making: Research as future forming. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *45*(3), 287–310. https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12075

Göransson, K., & Nilholm, C. (2014). Conceptual diversities and empirical shortcomings – A critical analysis of research on inclusive education. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 29*(3), 265–280. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2014.933545

Graham, L. J., Medhurst, M., Malaquias, C., Tancredi, H., De Bruin, C., Gillett-Swan, J., Poed, S., Spandagou, I., Carrington, C., & Cologon, K. (2023). Beyond Salamanca: A citation analysis of the CRPD/GC4 relative to the Salamanca Statement in inclusive and special education research. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *27*(2), 123–145. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1831627

Haug, P. (2017). Understanding inclusive education: Ideals and reality. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research, 19*(3), 206–217. https://doi.org/10.1080/15017419.2016.1224778

Hehir, T., Grindal, T., Freeman, B., Lamoreau, R., Borquaye, Y., & Burke, S. (2016). A summary of the evidence on inclusive education (ED596134). ERIC. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED596134

Heshusius, L. (1989). The Newtonian mechanistic paradigm, special education, and contours of alternatives: An overview. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 22(7), 403–415. https://doi.org/10.1177/002221948902200702

Heumann, J. E. (1999). Inclusion: The challenge, the opportunity. In T. P. Lombardi, Ed., *Inclusion: Policy and Practice*, (pp. 5–18). Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Hornby, G. (2014). *Inclusive special education: Evidence-Based practices for children with special needs and disabilities.* Springer.

Hornby, G., & Kauffman, J. M. (2023). Special education's zombies and their consequences. *Support for Learning*, *38*(3), 135–145. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12451

Imray, P., & Colley, A. (2017). *Inclusion is dead: Long live inclusion*. Taylor & Francis.

Inclusion Ireland. (2020). *Submission to the National Council for Special Education on inclusive education*. https://inclusionireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ncse-submission-final.pdf

Irish National Teachers' Organisation. (2023*). INTO submission response to EPSEN review 2023*. https://www.into.ie/app/uploads/2023/03/EPSEN-submission24-March-2023-doc-file.pdf

Jordan, A., Schwartz, E., & McGhie-Richmond, D. (2009). Preparing teachers for inclusive classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(4), 535–542. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.02.010

Kang, S. J., & Jang, E. Y. (2022). *Dialogue within* and *dialogue between*: A duoethnography of two researchers in the field of North Korean refugee education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2022.2035438

Kauffman, J. M. (2021). The promises and limitations of educational tiers for special and inclusive education. *Education Sciences*, *11*(7), Article 323. https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/11/7/323

Kauffman, J. M., & Hornby, G. (2020). Inclusive vision versus special education reality. *Education Sciences*, *10*(9), Article 258.

Kefallinou, A., Symeonidou, S., & Meijer, C. J. W. (2020). Understanding the value of inclusive education and its implementation: A review of the literature. *Prospects*, *49*(3–4), 135–152. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09500-2

Krischler, M., Powell, J. J. W., & Pit-Ten Cate, I. M. (2019). What is meant by inclusion? On the effects of different definitions on attitudes toward inclusive education. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *34*(5), 632–648. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2019.1580837

Kunc, N. (1992). The need to belong: Rediscovering Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In R. A. Villa, J. S. Thousand, W. Stainback, & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Restructuring for caring and effective education: An administrative guide to creating heterogeneous schools* (pp. 25–39). Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Liasidou, A. (2008). Critical discourse analysis and inclusive educational policies: The power to exclude. *Journal of Education Policy*, *23*(5), 483–500. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930802148933

Loxley, A., & Thomas, G. (1997). From inclusive policy to the exclusive real world: An international review. *Disability & Society*, *12*(2), 273–292. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599727371

MacDonald, J., & Markides, J. (2019). Duoethnography for reconciliation: Learning through conversations. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *65*(2), 94–109. https://doi.org/10.11575/ajer.v65i2.56407

Maher, A. J., McVeigh, J., Thomson, A., & Knight, J. (2023). Exclusion, inclusion and belonging in mainstream and disability sport: Jack's story. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *15*(1), 123–138. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2022.2111457

Mäkinen, M. (2013). Becoming engaged in inclusive practices: Narrative reflections on teaching as descriptors of teachers' work engagement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *35*, 51–61. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.05.005

McGillicuddy, D., & Devine, D. (2020). 'You feel ashamed that you are not in the higher group'—Children's psychosocial response to ability grouping in primary school. *British Educational Research Journal*, *46*(3), 553–573. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3595

Mc Keon, D. (2017). Emotional and behavioural difficulties: The effects of structures, ethos and understandings on provision in Irish post-primary schools. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *32*(2), 221–237. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2016.1216636

Meijer, C. J. W., & Watkins, A. (2019). Financing special needs and inclusive education – from Salamanca to the present. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *23*(7–8), 705–721. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1623330

Messiou, K. (2017). Research in the field of inclusive education: Time for a rethink? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *21*(2), 146–159. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2016.1223184

Metsala, J. L., & Harkins, M. J. (2020). An examination of preservice teachers' self-efficacy and beliefs about inclusive education. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, *43*(2), 178–192. https://doi.org/10.1177/0888406419873060

Mitchell, D., & Sutherland, D. (2020). *What really works in special and inclusive education: Using evidence-based teaching strategies* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Mulvihill, T., & Swaminathan, R. (2022). Critical duoethnography: A social justice research methodology for educational researchers. In R. Throne (Ed.), *Social justice research methods for doctoral research* (pp. 47–67). IGI Global.

National Council for Special Education. (2019). *Policy advice on special schools and classes: An inclusive education for an inclusive society?* [Progress report]. https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Progress-Report-Policy-Advice-on-Special-Schools-Classes-website-upload.pdf

Norris, J. J., & Sawyer, R. D. (2020). Duoethnography: A polytheoretical approach to (re)storing, (re)storying the meanings that one gives. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.; pp. 397–423). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190847388.013.1

Norwich, B. (2022). Research about inclusive education: Are the scope, reach and limits empirical and methodological and/or conceptual and evaluative? *Frontiers in Education*, *7*, Article 937929). https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.937929

Nuñez, C. G., Peña, M., González, B., Ascorra, P., & Hain, A. (2021). Rural schools have always been inclusive: the meanings rural teachers construct about inclusion in Chile. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1968521

Nussbaum, M. (2005). Inscribing the face: shame, stigma, and punishment. *NOMOS*, *46*, 259–202. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24220152.

Øen, K., & Krumsvik, R. J. (2022). Teachers' attitudes to inclusion regarding challenging behaviour. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 37*(3), 417–431. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2021.1885178

Oliver, M. (1995). Does special education have a role to play in the twenty-first century? *REACH: Journal of Special Needs Education in Ireland*, *8*(2), 67–76. https://www.reachjournal.ie /index.php/reach/article/view/396/367

Orsati, F. T., & Causton-Theoharis, J. (2013). Challenging control: Inclusive teachers' and teaching assistants' discourse on students with challenging behaviour. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 17*(5), 507–525. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2012.689016

Pinar, W. F. (1994). The method of "Currere." (1975). *Counterpoints, 2*, 19–27. http://www.jstor.org /stable/42975620

Rouse, M. (2008). Developing inclusive practice: A role for teachers and teacher education? *Education in the North, 16*(1), Article 1. https://www.abdn.ac.uk/education/research/eitn/journal/archive /2/46/

Ryökkynen, S., Maunu, A., Pirttimaa, R., & Kontu, E. (2022). From the shade into the sun: Exploring pride and shame in students with special needs in Finnish VET. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 37*(4), 648–662. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2021.1940006

Saleh, L. (2015). Taking up the mantle of good hope. In F. Kiuppis & R. S. Hausstätter (Eds.), *Inclusive education twenty years after Salamanca* (pp. 23–39). Peter Lang.

Saloviita, T. (2020). Attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education in Finland, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 64*(2), 270–282. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2018.1541819

Savolainen, H., Malinen, O.-P., & Schwab, S. (2022). Teacher efficacy predicts teachers' attitudes towards inclusion – A longitudinal cross-lagged analysis. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 26*(9), 958–972. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1752826

Sawyer, R. D., & Norris, J. (2009). Duoethnography: Articulations/(re)creation of meaning in the making. In W. Gershon (Ed.), *The collaborative turn* (pp. 127–140). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789087909604_008

Sawyer, R. D., & Norris, J. (2012). *Duoethnography: Understanding qualitative research*. Oxford University Press.

Schiemer, M. (2017). *Education for children with disabilities in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Developing a sense of belonging*. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-60768-9_11

Schuelka, M. J., Johnstone, C. J., Thomas, G., & Artiles, A. J. (2019). Introduction: Scholarship for diversity and inclusion in education in the 21st century. In M. J. Schuelka, C. J. Johnstone, G. Thomas, & A. J. E. Artiles (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of inclusion and diversity in education* (pp. xxxi–xliii). SAGE.

Sharman, R. (2015, June 28). *Can inclusive education do more harm than good?* The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/can-inclusive-education-do-more-harm-than-good-43183

Shevlin, M., & Banks, J. (2021). Inclusion at a crossroads: Dismantling Ireland's system of special education. *Education Sciences, 11*(4), Article 161. https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/11/4/161

Skrtic, T. (1991). The special education paradox: Equity as the way to excellence. *Harvard Educational Review, 61*(2), 148–207. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.61.2.0q702751580h0617

Slee, R. (2018). Defining the scope of inclusive education: Think piece prepared for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report: Inclusion and education. https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12799/5977

Snow, C., Gabay, V., Brownlee, T. D., & Thomas, T. (2023). Fostering an inclusive organization through the power of storytelling. In J. Barnes, M. J. Stevens, B. Z. Ekelund, & K Perham-Lippman (Eds.), *Inclusive leadership: Equity and belonging in our communities* (pp. 155–165). Emerald Publishing.

Snow, J. (2012). Creating what I know about community. Inclusion Network. https://inclusion.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CREATING-WHAT-I-KNOW-About-Community-Judith-Snow.pdf

Sobsey, D. (2017). Rethinking individual education plans: Searching for a better way. In K. Scorgie & D. Sobsey (Eds.), *Working with families for inclusive education* (pp. 203–207). Emerald Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-363620170000010020

Spandagou, I. (2021). Inclusive education is another country; Developments, obstacles and resistance to inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1965805

Stainback, S., & Stainback, W. (1985). *Integration of students with severe handicaps into regular schools* (ED255509). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED255009.pdf

Symeonidou, S. (2022). Teacher education for inclusion and anti-oppressive curriculum development: Innovative approaches informed by disability arts and narratives. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *26*(7), 659–673. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1711819

Thomas, G. (1997). Inclusive schools for an inclusive society. *British Journal of Special Education*, *24*(3), 103–107. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8527.00024

Thomas, G., Dobson, G., & Loxley, A. (2023). The increasing use of private special schools: A policy gap for inclusive education. *British Educational Research Journal, 49*(6), 1357–1371. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3901

Thomas, G., & Glenny, G. (2002). Thinking about inclusion. Whose reason? What evidence? *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 6*(4), 345–369. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110210143707

Thomas, G., & Loxley, A. (2022a). *Deconstructing special education and constructing inclusion* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.

Thomas, G., & Loxley, A. (2022b). Groundhog day for inclusive education. *Support for Learning, 37*(2), 225–243. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12406

Tlale, L. D. N., & Romm, N. R. A. (2019). Duoethnographic storying around involvements in, and extension of the meanings of, engaged qualitative research. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *20*(1), Article 7. https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-20.1.3085

Tomlinson, S. (2012). The irresistible rise of the SEN industry. *Oxford Review of Education*, *38*(3), 267–286. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2012.692055

Tomlinson, S. (2021). A sociology of special and inclusive education: Insights from the UK, US, Germany, and Finland. In A. Köpfer, J. J. W. Powell, R. Zahnd (Eds.), *International handbook of inclusive education* (pp. 59–73). https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1f70kvj.6

Travers, J. (2023). Special class provision in Ireland: Where we have come from and where we might go. *Education Sciences*, *13*(9), Article 859. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13090859

United Nations (2016). General comment no. 4 on the right to inclusive education. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no-4-article-24-right-inclusive

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (1990). *World declaration on education for all and framework for action to meet basic learning needs*. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000127583

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (1994). *The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education.* (ED.94/WS/18). World Conference on Special Needs Education. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000098427

United Nations General Assembly. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities. https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html

Van Manen, M. (1982). Phenomenological pedagogy. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *12*(3), 283–299. https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.1982.11075844

Weuffen, S., Burke, J., Goriss-Hunter, A., Plunkett, M., & Emmett, S. (2023). Working towards a sustainable, responsive, inclusive, and diverse global education future. In Weuffen, S., Burke, J., Plunkett, M., Goriss-Hunter, A., Emmett, S. (Eds.), *Inclusion, equity, diversity, and social justice in education: A critical exploration of the sustainable development goals* (pp. 277–286). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-5008-7_19

Wilcox, G., Fernandez Conde, C., & Kowbel, A. (2021). Using evidence-based practice and data-based decision making in inclusive education. *Education Sciences*, *11*(3), Article 129. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11030129

Wiley, A. L., Anastasiou, D., & Kauffman, J. M. (2019, February 25). No, special education does not treat disability like a disease and is not 'obsessed' with forcing students to conform. *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/02/25/no-special-education-does-not-treat-disability-like-disease-is-not-obsessed-with-forcing-students-conform/

Winzer, M., & Mazurek, K. (2023). Global dialogues on inclusive education: A retrospective and comparative analysis of the *Salamanca Statement*, Article 24, and *General Comment# 4*. In J. Zajda, N. Davidovitch, & S. Majhanovich (Eds.), *Discourses of globalisation, multiculturalism and cultural identity* (pp. 163–179). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92608-3_9

Authors' Note

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Audrey Halpin, School of Human Development, DCU Institute of Education, St. Patrick Campus, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, Ireland. Email: audrey.halpin@dcu.ie