

Discourses of inclusion

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Chapter 1: Framing the research	
Introduction	1
Official versions of inclusion	1
Aims and research questions	4
Structure of the thesis	
Chapter 2: Realist ontology and research	13
Introduction	13
Brief selective personal history	14
Realist ontology	17
Modernity and post-modernity	23
Tensions	26
Special educational needs discourse and practice: a brief critique	28
Research and knowledge	30
Chapter 3: Discourse and practice	33
Introduction	33
Discourse	33
The statement and discursive formations	40
Power	42
Discipline	43
Panoptic culture?	48
Subjectification	49
Constructing identities	50
Governmentality	52
Context	53
Schools and market discourse	54
Chapter 4: Fieldwork	58
Introduction	58
Methods and data collection	58
Research project brief	61
The Actors	63
Data Set 1: Online discussion postings	64
Data set 2: Drawings and discussion	67
The use of drawings in educational research	67
Doing the drawings	70
Ethics and interpretive context	72
Analysis	74
Assumptions	78

Chapter 5: A reading	80
Introduction	80
Structure of the reading	82
i. Policy as practice	84
Circles of inclusion	85
Yes / But	88
Hesitancy	90
ii. Othering and Special Educational Needs	91
‘These children’	92
(Neo-traditional) special educational needs	93
Needs	94
Named difference	96
The Code	98
Structures and space	100
Audit and performance	105
Discussion	108
Expertise	110
Identity	111
The norm	112
iii. Self (esteem)	114
Risk and safety	114
Self-esteem and happiness	115
Growth	118
Discussion	119
Therapeutic culture	120
A technology of the self?	122
Entrepreneurial identities?	123
Individualism	125
Summary	126
Chapter 6: Reflections	129
Disruption	129
Self-doubt	130
Ethics (re-visited)	134
Critical consciousness	135
Postscript	142
Bibliography	143

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Abstract

Inclusion has become a taken for granted practice of schooling in the UK and it is presented as a fundamental good within a progressive narrative. This study draws on poststructuralist theories and uses discourse analysis as a research approach to interrogate and critique inclusion, to find out what the assumptions are behind it. A main aim was to consider how the contemporary discourse(s) of inclusion, as a body of knowledge, is constructed and constituted in education, and to critically explore its potential effects. This study addresses the question: whose interests are served by the way inclusion is talked about and represented in education in the present context?

A range of practitioners who work in education were invited to provide their interpretation of inclusion, either via a drawing and discussion of the drawing, or through an online discussion forum. Their responses formed inter-textual data sets that were then analysed and the discourses that emerged are presented in a reading.

Inclusion is read as a contemporary discourse and practice that is characterised by sub-discourses that are constructed within a powerful 'othering' framework. The grids of specification (Foucault, 1972) within its discourse, that are related to re-iterations of special educational needs and a focus on self-esteem, potentially 'other' and exclude. It is suggested that inclusion in the present context is aligned with neo-liberalism, with a focus on the self, self-government and the development of entrepreneurial identities Masschelein and Simons (2002). In this respect, inclusion, as a discourse and practice, appears to serve the neo-liberal interests of the state.

CHAPTER 1: FRAMING THE RESEARCH

Introduction

This discourse-based research takes inclusion as its primary object of study. It is concerned with how the discourse of inclusion presents its version to the social world. In terms of paradigm, it is difficult to neatly compartmentalise this study, but it may be considered to be critical research that draws on ideas within poststructuralist theory. In this opening chapter, the rationale, purpose and structure of the study are presented and some of the main themes and theoretical ideas that informed it are introduced.

Official versions of inclusion

Inclusion is now an accepted part of schooling in the UK. It may be seen as a concept that infers that nobody is excluded. It is frequently construed and presented as a fundamental good within a progressive narrative. Who could be opposed to or argue with it?

Inclusion officially emerged as a 'recognisable' concept and social practice in the 1990s. Following the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), that pressed for international moves towards inclusion based on rights and entitlement for all children, the UK Labour government appeared to commit itself to inclusive schooling through a stream of policies and official reform (e.g. DfEE, 1997; DfES, 2001; DfES, 2003a; DfES, 2005; DfES, 2007). Inclusive reform has a history and remains predominant in the present UK government's educational policy agenda, and it is worth briefly considering the regularity and pace of these reforms.

In 1997, the newly elected UK Labour government set up the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) as an inter-governmental organising body to advise on policy. According to the SEU website, this organisation's brief is 'preventing social exclusion, making sure mainstream services deliver for everyone and reintegrating people who have fallen through the net'. What 'the net' might be

remains open to question. The main concern in my study is with discourses that circulate in schools and not political organisations; but it is worth noting the SEU language and discourse. The way inclusion / exclusion is framed and presented within this official body is worthy of a study in itself.

The first significant UK policies that emphasised inclusion in education were New Labour's Green Paper *Excellence for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs* (DfEE, 1997) and the subsequent *Programme of Action* (DfEE, 1998), marking the first time any British government had seemingly committed itself to creating an inclusive education system. A revised curriculum, Curriculum 2000 (DfEE, 1999) was subsequently formulated upon three core inclusion-oriented principles: setting suitable learning challenges, responding to pupils' diverse needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of children.

The beginning of the twenty-first century saw a further thrust towards inclusion with a raft of governmental policies, initiatives and legislation. For example, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (HMSO, 2001); the Every Child Matters agenda, (DfES, 2003a); and the Strategy for SEN: Removing Barriers to Achievement, (DfES, 2004), all placed inclusion on the political agenda and embedded various understandings of it in public consciousness (Armstrong, 2005). Sheehy *et al.*, (2004, p.137) suggest that, at first glance, it may appear on the surface that the 'battle' for inclusive policy has been won.

More recently, Inclusion Development Programme (DfES, 2007) materials were disseminated to schools. The 'key aims' are to improve the outcomes for pupils and to narrow the gaps between the lowest and highest achievers; to promote early recognition and intervention; to increase the confidence of all practitioners and to support schools and settings to be more effective at strategic approaches to support and intervention. Within this remit, inclusion is presented as a strategy that is linked to achievement, confidence and intervention.

Researchers in the field, (e.g. Armstrong, 2005; Lawson *et al.*, 2006), have observed that, despite its predominance and the propagated notion of inclusion as a fundamental good, the ideas and messages within inclusive policy appear to remain quite nebulous and vague. For example:

Touchstones for effective inclusion include key ideas about the presence, participation and achievement of children with diverse needs, within mainstream schools and settings (DfES, 2005, p.9).

Perhaps as a consequence of vagueness in policy, inclusion remains a generalised, disputable concept that is wide open to interpretation. Slee (2001b, p.169) observes that educators and researchers engage in conversations about it 'irrespective of the fact they may be talking across deep epistemological ravines' and the term appears to mean different things to different people who have various investments, or vested interests, in how it is constructed and interpreted. There are various 'competing discourses' through which meaning and understandings differ (Graham and Slee, 2008, p.277).

Within the research field there is a spectrum of opinion on what inclusion ought to mean. The Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE), for example, argues for the abolition of segregated schooling and regards full inclusion as a human right. Informed by some of the arguments put forward by the CSIE, *The Index for Inclusion* (Booth *et al.*, 2000) is, according to its co-author, arguably the most detailed explanation available about what an inclusive school 'looks like' (Ainscow, 2007). Researchers have talked about 'different inclusions' (Dyson, 2001) and others argue that, within a rights-based framework, there is still a place for special school systems. The inclusion debate goes on.

Aims and research questions

This study does not seek essential truths about inclusion nor is it concerned with debating or analysing definitions or meanings. It does not focus on practicalities or aim to advance 'best practice' in the classroom environment, nor does it ask whether inclusion 'works'. It is unlikely to add to a substantial body of work that looks at how present educational practices may progressively strive to become more inclusive or 'effective'. Research that sets out to do these things, aside from possibly confirming and privileging policy-makers' realities, potentially reinforces a certain way of thinking and practice in education; preserves a certainty in advancement and maintains the status quo. Instead, this study set out to problematise and to critique the popularised notion of inclusion and its discourses.

Graham and Slee (2008) suggest that originally inclusion was offered as a protest and a call for radical change to the fabric of schooling. Throughout the last decade or so, inclusion, once seen as a new orthodoxy (Allan, 1999) or a buzzword in education, has arguably become a gradual part of the taken for granted, self-evident and normative practices of schooling. Although it is a social construction that has given rise to strong debates that contest its meaning, it has nevertheless become a kind of truth in the present context, and is sometimes presented as some 'thing' that can be enacted and that is natural or inevitable. There is also a tendency for research and researchers to take inclusion for granted, to present it as if it has always been; without consideration that it is contingent upon the socio-political processes that constructed it.

Slee (2003, p.210) laments that inclusive education has become 'generalized and diffused, domesticated and tamed' and that, because the 'language of inclusive schooling has been generalised as an organizing theory across a number of different constituencies', its conceptual clarity and rights-based political intent has lost acuity and force. There have been similar suggestions that inclusion has been evacuated of meaning (Benjamin, 2002a) and become reduced to a slogan, or cliché (Thomas and Loxley, 2001) that is merely

'obligatory in the discourse of right thinking people' (Thomas and O'Hanlon, 2003, p.vii).

Common sense, taken for granted, self-evident values and practices can become readily absorbed and remain unquestioned. One of the aims and purposes of this study was to take the seemingly self-evident, 'commonsensical' object of inclusion and to tentatively interrogate it; to unpack and critique it; to find out what the assumptions were behind it and, moreover, to *question* it as both a potentially normalizing, hegemonic discourse and as a universalizing concept. In order to do this, the most appropriate research approach appeared to be a discourse-based one.

Discourse research has a commitment to challenging common sense knowledge and 'disrupting easy assumptions about the organisation of social life and social meanings' (Tonkiss, 1998, p.245). In my study, discourse is not just synonymous with spoken or written speech. Whilst discourses are realised through texts, they are much broader than texts and include the broader social and cultural structure and practices that surround them. They have a character and are evocative of certain meanings and understandings. Discourse or discourses are viewed in this study as practices that embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute individuality, or subjectivity, and power relations and they have effects. Power and knowledge are actively (re)produced in discourse (Billington, 2006). An aim of this study was to consider how the contemporary (common sense) discourse(s) of inclusion, as a body of knowledge, is constructed and constituted in education, and to critically explore its potential effects. In addressing this aim, attention was given to the production of knowledge, for example, in terms of the kinds of knowledge(s) that are privileged in discourses that circulate around inclusion, and also to the kind of knowledge that research in the field of inclusion and special needs produces and has produced in the past.

According to Edley (2001), one of the main aims of a critical form of discourse-based research is to analyse processes of normalisation and to enquire about whose interests are best served by different discursive

formulations. With this in mind, a key question that drove my enquiry was: whose interests are served by the way inclusion is talked about and represented in education in the present context? Other particular sub-questions that fed into this main question were:

- ❖ How is the contemporary discourse of inclusion constructed or configured? (What are its characteristics?)
- ❖ What do discursive configurations evoke?
- ❖ What might be the potential discursive effects?

I aimed to interrogate 'discursive formations', that I understand as a frame for the different and potentially conflicting discourses that operate in the same terrain, as they relate to the social construction of inclusion. This research focuses in particular, on the operation and effects of discourse; it is concerned with *how* meanings of inclusion, or truth-effects, come about and how they are created, acquired, legitimised and re-produced.

I attempted to address my research questions by capturing, in various ways, discourses and meanings circulating around inclusion and by looking for characteristics, regularities and patterns, within it. The above questions have been re-worked and re-worded numerous times as this study evolved and changed direction. The process of data analysis and reading fed back into the way the original research questions were framed and they were significantly modified as the area of interest widened and changed. These changes occurred in tandem with my own shifting and morphing epistemological and ontological positioning. These shifts have had a significant influence on the writing of this study and they are accounted for and described in further detail in Chapter 2 and Chapter 6.

Structure of the thesis

This introductory chapter aims to frame this study and to set the scene by introducing the main themes, research questions and area of interest. The opening of the next chapter presents an account of my shifting perspective and some brief personal history to show how and why this research came

about. This enquiry and research questions emerged partially through my personal and professional experiences in the field of inclusive education and a short auto-ethnographic account presents these experiences against an emerging inclusion policy context.

Chapter 2 presents an account of my changing understandings and ontological positioning and the conflict and dilemmas that this created. As stated earlier, these changes influenced the subsequent design, purpose and intent of this study. In brief, my present positioning may be regarded as aligned with research that tends to challenge understandings of education as a form of science and that disrupts or refutes 'truth', or truth effects. Such a positioning cannot offer definitive accounts and offers, instead, a version or interpretation that is inevitably partial. If there is no truth, we cannot ask if something is true or false, nor can we look for 'real' or definitive meanings. We cannot say, for example, that inclusion or discourses of inclusion definitively mean 'this' or 'that'. Instead, in adopting an approach that questions notions of truth and cause /effect, the focus is on contingencies and on *how* the effects of truth are created through language, discourse and practice (Alvesson, 2002). A brief critique of postmodernism and poststructuralism as a method of political enquiry is presented in Chapter 2 and some of the tensions surrounding it are discussed.

I work as a lecturer on professional development programmes in inclusive education at a university in the northwest of England. In my interactions with teachers and support staff, I have found that the word 'inclusion' is often used synonymously with 'integration' and with the phrase 'special educational needs' (Dunne, 2008). Special educational needs appears to be a long range cultural practice that has continuity. In the past, researchers in the field (e.g. Slee, 2001a; Thomas and Loxley, 2001) have argued that inclusion and 'special educational needs' are different. In the final section of Chapter 2, I expand upon this argument and present a brief critique of special educational needs discourse and practice before examining the potential effects of 'traditional' special educational knowledge(s) that emerge from research. It was hoped that my study would add to a growing body of work that might be

seen as research that counteracts or challenges traditionalist or foundationalist understandings of inclusion.

This study may be termed critical research in its overall approach, but it also draws tentatively on and applies some of the ideas in poststructuralist theories and, in particular, on aspects of the work of Michel Foucault, to explore theoretical aspects of 'discourse as practice' (Foucault, 1972, p.46). It adopts a model of oppression as discursive effect (Youdell, 2006a) and takes a poststructuralist approach to language and discourse to gain understanding of the discursive, cultural and structural processes that we are subjected to. Researchers (e.g. Slee and Allan, 2001; Graham and Slee, 2005) have urged educational researchers and those who work in the area of inclusion to reflect upon the discourses in which we operate and to explicate the discourses of inclusion, and this is what I set out to do through this study.

The notion of discourse and theories surrounding it are discussed at length in Chapter 3. Language is frequently treated as a mirror-like reflection upon reality, as a way of making sense of the world and as a transparent medium for the transport of meaning: often without concern for its effects (Alvesson, 2000, p.66). In a conventional sense, language is seen to represent reality. Postmodernism and post-structuralism would dispute this. Instead of language being used to illuminate 'something', language itself is illuminated and deconstructed. The 'discourses', as bodies of knowledge, that are referred to, and that I aimed to locate, may be pinned down but they may also be interrogated and opened up. According to MacLure (2003, p.9), a discourse-based educational research project sets itself the work of taking that which offers itself as commonsensical, obvious, natural, given or unquestionable (such as the notion of inclusion), and tries to 'unravel it a bit – to open it up'.

The process of opening up a discourse may be seen as a form of deconstruction. Deconstruction allows us to make sense of, or to recognise, the ways in which human beings are shaped and moulded, via the power of discourse, in given social and cultural backgrounds (Goodley, 2004). The

concern is with the relationship of language to other social processes and with how language works within power relations (Taylor, 2004). Tonkiss (1998, p.247) observes that there is a growing social awareness of the way language works 'to divide up, stereotype and categorise groups and individuals' and that there is a greater sensitivity to the power of discourse to shape peoples attitudes and identities.

Aspects of Michel Foucault's work that are relevant to my study, for example, his notion of discourse as practice and forms of disciplinary power, are presented in Chapter 3. Foucault's analysis helps to recognise how the meanings and practices in which we 'come to be' are highly regulated by systems of norms, as discourse, 'which precedes social subjects and whose intelligibility they permit' (De Lissovoy, 2008, p.92). In my study, the term discourse is used in a Foucauldian sense as a practice that is produced historically in a specific socio-cultural context. It is structured by assumptions and knowledge(s) and produces power. According to Ball (1990, p.3), every education system is 'a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriateness of discourse with the knowledge and power they bring with them'. In the latter part of Chapter 3, I consider the contemporary socio-political context in which the discourses of inclusion operate. The context of my study is interpreted as a neo-liberal one. Neo-liberal forms of government place greater responsibility on the individual, individual enterprise and personal freedom rather than on the state or the collective (Rose, 1999a), and it is suggested that such a context is not necessarily conducive to inclusion.

Other work and literature that has taken a theoretically driven research approach to consider discourse and inclusion and that has influenced and helped frame this study, is considered throughout the course of this thesis. I have not included a discreet 'Literature Review' chapter because literature and previous work is embedded throughout the thesis. Studies that have taken a Foucauldian or poststructuralist approach to critique the notion of inclusion, or facets of it, are of particular interest (e.g. Allan, 1999, 2004; Graham, 2006; Youdell, 2006) and are selected to show that, despite it being

embraced as a social 'good' within a progressive narrative, 'inclusion' may create and construct invisible hierarchies and insidious exclusions.

Chapter 4 presents the methods used to address my research questions. Discourse analysis is more of an approach than a prescribed method (Wetherell, 2001). It is used in a fairly loose way in my study to challenge common sense knowledge and disrupt easy assumptions about the organisation of social life and social meanings. Goodley (2004), suggests that researchers interested in discourse may turn to their own practices, assemblages of knowledge, documents and experiences of given social and cultural locations in which subjectivities or identities are constructed. I turned to my own practice, as it seemed fertile ground for enquiry into discourse and inclusion.

The method focus for this study was on visual, textual and discursive representations. Through various means, I attempted to 'locate' contemporary discourses to find out what characterized them. The data collection methods may be regarded as formal and informal. The formalised (more 'empirical') data collection involved three different data 'sets' of varied textual genre: visual, spoken and written. In summary, people working in education were invited to provide their views on what inclusion meant to them and how they interpreted it. They did this either via a drawing, through discussion, or via an online (virtual) discussion forum. This blend of research methods generated a wealth of inter-textual data that I regarded as representative of contemporary discourse in action. The less formal data collection involved note-taking reflections upon language use through daily social encounters with educators that occurred 'outside' the research situation. The limitations and challenges presented by the methods and other issues relating to methodology are discussed in Chapter 4.

The latter part of Chapter 4 describes how the data was analysed. I aimed to explore why, at a given time, out of all the possible things that could be said (about inclusion), only certain things were said (Ball, 1990). In analysing the data, I paid attention to what and how things were said about inclusion. I

aimed to locate the discourses that circulate around inclusion and to deconstruct the constitutive and regulatory effects of them. Analysis was approached with an understanding that statements within discourses do not so much describe as *produce* understandings, knowledge(s) and subject positions.

It is important to stress from the outset that it was the discourse(s) of inclusion that were under scrutiny in this study and not the agents of the discourse or the character of the persons who engaged in it. My understanding of discourse is that it precedes individuals and we are caught up in it. My concern was with the invisible forces of domination that are inherent in institutions and with the discourses and practice that shape our lives and not with individual opinion. The intention was not to scrutinise particular 'voices'. I was not interested in an individual's attitude or opinion of inclusion, or in how and why these may have come about. I was interested in the discourse of inclusion itself and in the social and discursive construction of it.

Shifts and changes in societal trends may become visible in new discursive formations. Without revealing too much at this stage, both 'recognisable' and newly emergent discourses of inclusion appeared to emerge from the data and these are presented in an interpretation, or reading, in Chapter 5. My reading of the data forms the bulk or backbone of this thesis. Chapter 5 is a three-part chapter and I present particular discourses, exemplified through excerpts taken from my data, and consider their knowledge(s), potential implications and effects.

There was a connection between emergent discourses and particular rhetoric found in inclusive policy. Discourse appeared to accord with aspects of policy inherent in *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003). My reading also, to some extent, confirms the fear that 'rather than resolving the special education problems of the late twentieth century, the inclusion debate will reproduce them in the twenty-first century' (Skrlic, 1995, p.234). Indeed, my study suggests that perceived difference continues to be marked out and that the 'included child' has become a common term that is synonymous with the 'SEN

child'. Newly emergent, potentially hegemonic or dominant discourses, for example those relating to 'self', that are presented in my reading suggest that they may be rupturing and transforming existing inclusive discourses and practices and may also potentially be creating and constructing new and subtle forms of exclusion.

Chapter 6 opens with some reflections. I reflect upon the limitations of my study; on the research process itself and on what I think that engaging in this research may have taught me. I show how this research has had an effect on my practice, my views on teaching and on my interaction with students.

This study may appear to be overly critical, bleak and pessimistic, but there are possibilities to think otherwise. It concludes with some tentative suggestions about how we may reflect upon the discourses in which we operate and how we might help to construct counter-hegemonic discourses that disturb and disrupt accepted ways of being and acting. It ends on a more optimistic, philosophical and potentially evangelical note, by urging the reader and critical observer to conceive of other ways of being together 'in a world', rather than 'an environment' (Masschelein and Simons, 2002).

CHAPTER 2: REALIST ONTOLOGY AND RESEARCH

Introduction

As indicated in the previous chapter, the process of change has been a significant feature of my study, so much so that it seemed the project would never reach completion. My original intention was to research narratives and to explore or delve into meanings and experiences around inclusion. There are still some elements of my original proposal within my study; for example, it involves, to some extent, the views and interpretations of educators who are, in the main, teachers and teaching assistants; but the overall approach is quite different. Over time, I came to view my research from a different angle or perspective.

Influenced by ideas within poststructuralist theory, my research changed significantly. Research questions became 'how' and 'why' as opposed to 'what' questions. The most significant overall shifts have been from the subject to the object of inclusion; from a focus on meanings and what they 'are' to discourse and how it works, and from seeing meaning as relatively fixed to understanding it as fluid, disputable and open to wide interpretation.

In the first part of this chapter, I provide a brief personal and professional history as my experiences have helped to shape my study. I then go on to describe some of the changes and transformations that have occurred; account for my ontological and epistemological positioning and explain how and why this research came about. In the second half of this chapter, I consider the term 'special educational needs' and provide a brief critique of 'special educational needs' itself, and of the kinds of knowledge that research in this area has previously tended to produce and that inevitably informed my own practice in the past.

Brief selective personal history

How did I come to write a research project about discourses of inclusion? A brief personal and professional biography may help to address this question and to situate my perspective. In doing so, I am aware that discourse-based research is primarily concerned with reflexivity and 'is not much concerned with autobiographical reflexivity' (Rose, 2001, p.141). In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault stated:

Do not ask me who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. (Foucault, 1972, p.17).

It may seem inappropriate to include biographical information in a study that draws on poststructuralist theorising and uses discourse analysis as a research approach, because the focus is on discourse itself and not on, for example, personal attitudes, viewpoints or experience. However, this enquiry emerged partially through my personal experiences, interest and professional immersion in the field of inclusive education and it is as much an enquiry into, and reflection upon, my own values, practice and shifting view of knowledge and the world as it is about the discourses and practice of inclusion.

Both my professional and personal life experiences have influenced and nurtured my interest, ever-evolving perspective and interpretation of what has come to be known as 'inclusion', along with theoretical insights gained through research and study in this area. In presenting a partial and selective biography, I am aware that my personal history has been shaped by, and subjected to, the invisible workings of power and discourse and that events and happenings are contingent upon them.

My initiation into the field of special education (sometimes seen as a precursor to 'inclusion') began in 1981 when, in order to qualify to teach as a secondary school English teacher, I wrote a dissertation entitled 'The Integration of Handicapped Children into Ordinary Schools'. My personal interest in this area arose from the experiences of a family member, my uncle, who at the age of five, on attending his first day at a local newly built special school in 1950, was deemed to be 'in-educable' by the school authorities due to the perceived severity of his physical and cognitive impairments and was sent home. Consequently, he did not experience any formal education, apart from his first day.

In the present educational context, the terms 'integration', 'handicapped' and 'ordinary school' might be regarded as pejorative and demeaning, but in 1981 such terminology was acceptable. This is perhaps illustrative of how language and terminology may change over time but the meanings embedded in language can stay the same. I wrote my dissertation at a time when special needs education was at the cusp of policy change. The Warnock Report Special Educational Needs (DES, 1978) had recommended that the existing eleven categories of learning needs defined in the 1944 Education Act, which included 'handicapped' and 'educationally sub-normal', be replaced by the term 'special educational needs', with an accompanying emphasis on provision, rather than 'treatment', of need (Fulcher, 1989). The subsequent 1981 Education Act signified a policy shift in relation to children's learning and entitlement, embodied some of the major recommendations laid out in the Warnock Report, and focused on integration, access and the practicalities of mainstream placements for pupils categorised as special educational needs. The 1981 Act defined educational provision in terms of resources, rather than other provision, such as pedagogy or curriculum, and, according to Corbett (1996), this deflected attention away from any need to change attitudes or school practices. Fulcher (1989, p.156) suggests that, through the 1981 Act, 'the actual procedures which constitute educational practices surrounding disability became highly regulated', and bureaucratisation became a policy solution that remains in evidence today.

From 1981 onwards, I worked as an English Co-ordinator in the mainstream and then in the special school sector for some years before becoming a lecturer at a university in the north west of England where I teach on 'professional development' programmes in the area of inclusive education. Given this professional background, I trust that I am not a teacher trainer who has simply 're-branded' herself by transferring discourses and practices surrounding 'special educational needs' across to the field of inclusion (Slee, 2001a)!

Throughout my earlier teaching experiences in the special school sector I experienced a sense of unease and found myself questioning the existence of the special school system. The schools in which I taught provided for children labelled as having 'moderate learning difficulties'. This term did not appear to have any clear meaning. Having had experience in both mainstream and special schools, I could not perceive why segregation was necessary. I could, to some extent, concord with Barton's (1997) observation that segregated schooling can breed fear, suspicion and alienation. Engaging in a masters degree in Inclusive Education in 1998 subsequently provided some theoretical and historical frames of reference and insight into how and why special schools existed.

Over time, I became politically aligned with advocates of full inclusion and found full inclusionists' arguments, based on issues relating to entitlement and human rights, persuasive and convincing. I came to understand inclusion as an ethical and political project (Allan, 1999; 2005) that was about identity and difference. I may at one time have regarded it as a politically determined 'emancipatory' project. I have since come to see that the seemingly altruistic term 'emancipation' is problematic and this is more fully explained later in this chapter.

Until quite recently, I have taken what may be considered a more humanistic or pragmatic approach to research and have tended towards critical and political theorizing that may be termed realist. However, wider reading in the area of discourse and philosophy, (e.g. Allan, 2004; Graham, 2005a and b,

2006, 2007; Maclure, 2003; Masschelein, 2001; Tremain, 2005) and critical engagement with quite complex ideas in some of Foucault's major works (1972; 1977), led me to reflect upon and question my views, philosophical orientation and positioning, so that at times I felt like a Deleuzian foreigner in my own language.

Realist ontology

Realists do not fear the results of their study.

(Anon.)

I have worked on professional development programmes for teaching assistants and teachers, in the area of inclusive education, for the past seven years or so. In the more recent past, I experienced an increasing frustration in both my own thinking (or what seemed like a confident authority) about inclusion, and in my approach to research and practice. I began to question my own realist feelings of 'certainty' about what inclusion was or what it ought to be.

I had taught for some time within a social model of disability framework (Oliver, 1996) that has tended to dominate much recent political theorising in inclusive education and / or disability research, and is seen as a challenge and an alternative to medical models. The social model attempts to counter a medical model of disability that infers deficit or lack. It has been predominant in the UK since the late 1970s and it distinguishes between disability and impairment, arguing that while impairment is a physical state; disability is imposed on top of the impairment. In effect, people are disabled by society (Oliver, 1996). Within my teaching, I encouraged a questioning of medical models of disability and a critique of the notion of special educational needs. As stated earlier, I saw inclusion as an emancipatory project, associated with particular values such as voice, rights, recognition and respect.

Over time, I felt an increasing unease and discomfort with my approach to teaching. In attempting to address this unease, I regularly reviewed the

courses on which I taught and made some considerable adjustments to modules. For example, I reviewed inclusive education module aims and content and critically examined reading lists and student-recommended texts. Written texts and inscriptions expose particular ideas and certain ways of looking at those ideas; at the same time, alternative views are omitted. Rice (2005) contends that:

The rhetoric, the exclusions, the confusing representations, the authority of 'science' presented by 'experts' in a professional field, carried through the cultural authority of textbooks, are likely to go unchallenged by newcomers to education. (Rice, 2005, p.425).

When reviewing texts I looked for both the ideological groundings of the texts as well as for content that was included and excluded. I was confounded by the language in contemporary texts and struck by the surprisingly high number of newly published titles that continued to talk in terms of 'diagnosis' and 'identifying' needs (e.g. Lewis and Norwich, 2004; Norwich and Narcie, 2005). The use of 'treatment' language that is carried over from medical discourse is, according to Tomlinson (1996, p.179), a 'powerful tool for professionals'. I withdrew texts that constructed inclusion within a traditional special educational needs framework or privileged the language of special needs; those that potentially reinforced conventional special educational needs knowledge(s), thinking and practice and those that offered instrumental 'how-to' guides (e.g. Brown, 1998; Birkett and Barnes, 2004; Westwood, 2003). Reading material was supplemented to provide alternative and contrasting perspectives that I believed might help to develop students' 'critical consciousness' (Rice, 2005, p.426). I prioritised texts that focused on the notion of difference and how difference is socially constructed (e.g. Allan, 1999; Thomas and Loxley, 2001).

Despite making changes, my approach to practice felt increasingly limited and overly simplistic. I felt a desire to move away from the sometimes seemingly polarised medical/social models that influenced and to some extent characterised my teaching and binary thinking. There was an accompanying sense of being locked into assumptions and meanings and lodged into 'how-

to' practicalities. Perhaps this frustration and sense of closure was compounded by a perceived expectation that accredited teacher professional development courses ought to provide inclusive 'solutions' and 'effective strategies' that could be neatly packaged, taken away and 'applied' in the classroom.

Despite experiencing a perceived increase in autonomy in my practice over the years, I reflected upon my approaches to teaching and learning and recognised that although I was continually making changes and seemingly progressing or 'moving forward', I was caught within a progressive narrative in my understanding of inclusion. I was at times perhaps becoming stale and sometimes taking the easy option of unquestioningly delivering official scripts in my teaching, and this was unsettling. By official scripts, I mean those propagated by messages in governmental policies, edits and initiatives about what inclusion is, or what it ought to be (e.g. DfEE, 1997; DfES, 2001; OFSTED, 2001; DfES, 2005). I was also perhaps fearful of questioning or deviating from official scripts as this might in some way jeopardise students' chances of academic success. Lecturers, under institutionalised forms of surveillance, are not usually advised to diversify from a set structure or from pre-defined fixed learning outcomes as this might risk learner achievement and performance.

I also felt an accompanying sense of unease by what I was hearing in discourses around inclusion in schools and in the higher education classes in which I taught. Some of the ways in which children were talked about and represented, in the name of inclusion, created, for me, a silent concern. Something was 'not quite right' but I did not quite know what it was or how to begin to address these concerns.

It transpired that what was needed were tools, theoretical tools, for understanding and changing practice (Todd, 2006). Social constructivism, and poststructuralist thinking in particular, provided plausible theoretical tools from

which to frame further analysis and interpretation of inclusive education issues and events and helped me to move beyond the literal in my thinking and practice.

The shifts and changes that I experienced appeared to be contingent on, amongst other things, the research process itself and on engagement with ideas encountered in reading and discussion. The aforementioned wider reading (e.g. Tremain, 2005) and engagement with ideas outside the confines of the discipline of education had an effect upon my way of thinking and seeing, and initiated a gradual shift from a realist to a more poststructuralist understanding of the world.

During the research process, there have been what I came to regard as critical points or epiphany moments that occurred in minor events that fractured my humanist or realist perspective. One such moment occurred when, as part of my early doctorate studies, I attended a session about philosophy; an area that was relatively new to me. Following the session, I had a discussion with the tutor about a proposed assignment that I intended to do, with the brief 'lifelong learning and participation'. The tutor asked if I thought that participation was a 'good thing' and my realist self replied with a degree of haste and certainty that it was a good thing. The tutor handed me a list of readings (that included Masschelein and Quaghebeur, 2005) and suggested that I may possibly change my mind, or perhaps would not be so certain, once I had read them. (Masschelein and Quaghebeur refer to Foucault's notion of governmentality, or the conduct of conduct, to graphically illustrate how participation, when viewed as a mode of government and form of power, may govern individuals in particular ways).

The brief discussion with the tutor was a little unsettling and disturbing. Realist-type questions swarmed around my head: How could wider participation in learning, within the lifelong learning agenda, be a 'bad thing'? Why would we wish to 'criticise' it? Was I 'wrong' or mistaken to think that it was a good thing?

There is a crack in everything: that is how the light gets in
(Leonard Cohen)

The reading led to other readings and my subsequent seemingly obsessive engagement with poststructuralist ideas and theories initiated something that is difficult to articulate or put into words, but it seemed to have a fracturing effect on my perspective and the way I viewed the world. Through reading, I began to question my own understandings and to see things differently. I became immersed in what I regarded as new and exciting ideas. I became more sceptical, cautious and less secure or comfortable about my own perceived values and assumptions. I began to question the simplistic notion of 'values' itself. I felt that I had been disrupted, or shaken out of my epistemological tree (Slee, 1997) as cracks began to appear in my realist ontology.

This changing perspective was reflected in my subsequent assignment on participation and lifelong learning. Prior to the encounter with the tutor and engagement with the readings, my assignment would have been a 'celebratory' piece of work; possibly 'evidenced' by narratives of experience of success. With a different eye and critical, theoretical understanding, I attempted to grapple with, and tentatively unravel, some of the hidden power mechanisms that surround simplistic notions of 'participation'. My subsequent assignment differed significantly from its original intent; it was not particularly 'better' or 'worse' (see Masschelein and Quaghebeur, 2005), it was just different.

I became more aware of what I regarded as my realist or modernist thinking and began to question it and my approaches to research and practice. Tremain (2002, p.32) describes realist ontology as 'where real objects exist in nature apart from any contingent signifying practice'. MacLure (2003, p.171) suggests there is a need to abandon the purported clarity and assurance of 'plain view' that underpins a realist ontology, for what it obscures; that is, 'the ambivalence, irony, simulation and trickery that are part of self-hood and social life'. The political point behind this is that the transparent virtues of

clarity righteousness, visibility and simplicity are not necessarily in the interests of those on the margins of power and prestige, and 'seemingly simple, self-evident values have sustained the political and linguistic subordination of marginalized groups and peoples' (ibid.).

Signifying practices and ideas within poststructuralist theories began to enliven and interest me and to shake me out of what had seemingly become an ideological slumber (MacLure, 2003) in my thinking about inclusion. Viewing the world differently, from a poststructuralist perspective, enabled a certain inexplicable release or liberation and greater recognition of my own sometimes polarised, linear and essentialist ways of thinking and practice that carried its own dangers. Ball (1995, p.267) claims that the point about theory is not that it is simply critical; theory in educational research ought 'to engage in struggle, to reveal and undermine what is most invisible and insidious in prevailing practices'.

My curiosity and interest in everyday language use and discourse, along with the personal unease with both my own practice and contemporary cultural representations of the notion of inclusion, as described above, sowed the seeds for my study. As indicated earlier, the nature of my study has evolved and changed. My initial research questions were something like 'what is inclusion? How can schools become more inclusive? What are people's experiences of inclusion?' These have since been re-worked and re-framed, with my changing understandings and have become quite different questions, with a shift from the 'what' to the 'how', and to a focus on discourse. I began to ask how is inclusion *produced* and how is the discourse of inclusion constituted? Whose interests are served by it? In the next section of this chapter I attempt to more fully explain and possibly justify why a postmodernist or poststructuralist approach was adopted in my study.

Modernity and post-modernity

Poststructuralist work forms a critique of ontology and epistemology in empirical or more scientific approaches to social science (Alvesson, 2002). It has the potential to challenge or destabilise dominant paradigms and theories. Prevailing models of educational research and practice potentially comprise of what Lyotard (1984) has called grand narratives; that is, stories about human progress and scientific development that both describe and *prescribe* what will count as individual and institutional development.

At the heart of modernity is the culture of the enlightenment, founded on foundationalist ideas and assumptions such as the centred, rational individual, science as 'truth' and a belief in linear social progress and mastery. Grand, totalising or meta-narratives that subscribe to a particular 'logic' are characteristic of modernism. Derrida refers to 'logo-centrism' to describe the totalising impulse which 'reduces heterogeneity to homogeneity, difference to an economy of the same, the contingent to the determinate, and the flux to the stable and the given' (Usher, 2000, p.163).

Corbett (1996, p.15) contends that the voice of enlightened modernity with which we celebrate progress, is a voice of 'power, status and a confident authority' that restricts thinking. Corker and Shakespeare maintain that:

in spite of the ideology of scientific enlightenment and progress, and the public celebration of a culture of self-redemption and emancipatory hope, large numbers of people remain oppressed within modernism, particularly those who are perceived not to meet the modernist ideal of the rational independent subject. (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002, p. 2).

Earlier, I signified that I have, in the past, aligned myself with research that may be termed emancipatory. I came to recognize that there are hidden power dynamics in such an approach and a theory or research paradigm that has an emancipatory desire to be 'right' can contain a will to power and therefore a will to a particular truth. An emancipatory discourse, as it becomes established as mainstream, can itself become a 'totalizing' or imperialist one.

According to Youdell (2006a, p.41), poststructuralist theory is not a rejection of critical theory 'it is an additional set of conceptual analytical and political tools that might be taken up in order to generate particular types of understanding and pursue particular avenues for change'. It retains but *re-situates* what may be termed rights-based 'emancipatory' work, it does not necessarily discredit or destroy it.

Within a poststructuralist understanding of power, the social model of disability that I had taught to, is de-stabilized and questioned. The social model is, according to Tremain (2005, p.9) 'a paradigmatic example of a juridical conception of power' that fails to take into account other notions of power. Corker (1999, p.627) suggests that the social model of disability is 'hampered by a modernist conceptual framework'. I suspect that this is what was constraining my understandings and troubling my approach to pedagogy and practice. There remains a sense in which this emancipatory paradigm reinforces existing political and social standpoints and knowledge(s) and recreates the relationship between elitist discourses of theory making and disability as a form of social oppression (Corker, 1999).

Poststructuralist and postmodernist approaches to research may be regarded as an antidote to the potential totalising dangers within modernism. They call into question the foundationalist assumptions of modernistic thought and challenge meta-narratives, universals and essentialist ways of thinking that can create certain truths about the world. Aspects of poststructuralist theorizing can provide useful guidance on ethics and on how we engage with others (Allan, 2004), and insight that takes us beyond the literal. It can draw attention to the social nature of the world 'out there' that is generally taken for granted and challenge what is presented as commonsense. Ball (1995, p.266) observes that such theorizing can help to de-familiarize present practices and categories to 'make them seem less self-evident and necessary'.

A poststructuralist approach can teach us to remain open and to question or refuse the certainty that certain contemporary educational theories and their epistemic foundations appear to promise. It allows us to recognise that what

looks to be 'natural', true or unquestionable; what appears to be right and moral and beyond reproach, and what seems to be inevitable, can be seen and experienced differently. According to St. Pierre (2004) poststructuralism demands that we examine our own complicity in the maintenance of social injustice.

An approach that rejects notions of fixed particular truths urges us to think, to opt for questions rather than answers, and to critique and seek possibilities and experiment, rather than crave control. As McWhorter (2005, p.xvi) observes, whatever presses for closure and absolute assurance 'presses for an end to vitality... or a kind of death' and 'if we leave things unexamined and undisturbed, we diminish our lives and the life around us'.

Poststructuralist theory can encourage practitioners to see professional practice, as all social life, as constructed, and to deconstruct it in order to reflect on how to develop more enabling practices (Todd, 2006). As Todd (2006) suggests, we can think of society as a text that can be read like a book, and, what we look for in order to read society, are the constructed ideas—the themes, discourses and narratives—that are all around us that come to be given the status of truths. These truths construct norms around which people are incited to shape or constitute their lives—they specify people's lives. My study may be seen as an exploration of how knowledge about inclusion acquires authority or a sense of embodying the 'truth' about it, through discourse.

Rather than arguing for universal 'truths', or meta-narratives, that work to explain the way the world 'is' for everyone, the concept of discourse is more widely utilized in postmodernist and poststructuralist theories. From a poststructuralist perspective, foundational and developmental theories that have been used to study the child, education, the curriculum and so on, may be viewed as discourses or as taken-for-granted 'truths' that 'systematically form the objects about which they speak' (Foucault, 1972, p.49). Poststructuralist theories and approaches encourage a critique of dominant discourses and theories of human development, social agency and structure

that have been used in the past to seemingly develop and 'advance' educational practice.

In order for me to unmask pervading 'truths' behind discourses, they needed to be located. As indicated in the previous chapter, the process of identifying discourses and of reading life as texts may be seen as a form of deconstruction. Although I was not attempting to 'formally' or procedurally deconstruct texts in my study, I drew upon the poststructuralist notion of deconstruction as an approach and as a way of critically reading and interpreting texts (life). For me, this was an ethical undertaking. According to Parker (1999, cited in Todd, 2006) deconstruction is a process of critical reading and an unravelling of terms, loaded terms and tensions between terms that construct how we read our place in culture and in our families, and in our relationships, and how we think about who we are and what it might be possible for us to be.

Tensions

Poststructuralist research is tentative and wary of assumptions. It does not make claims to truth and may be seen to be incomplete, nihilistic and speculative. Graham (2005), a poststructuralist, highlights the problem of how a researcher might remain open to poststructuralist undecidability without being accused of un-systematised speculation. In addressing this, Graham (2005) suggests that a researcher can take caution to be *explicit* about what they are doing and why they are doing it, without trying to dictate what is to be done.

In the field of disability studies, versions of the social model of disability theory stress the agency of disabled people in achieving liberation, but within poststructuralism, human 'agency' and 'liberation' are questioned. There are concerns that poststructuralist thinking may fracture or weaken the political struggle behind inclusion as a political project. Oliver (1999, p.190), for example, is highly sceptical and views such an approach as a 'sociological drift to irrelevance'. Yet, as Slee and Allan (2001, p.176) signify, devoid of

deconstruction, 'inclusive education postures as an element within the modernist project of schooling' and it 'stands as little more than an epithet for assimilation'; an assimilation that is 'a form of cultural genocide that denies the legitimacy of difference and which also falls on its own academic sword' (Slee and Allan, 2001, p.186).

There are other tensions in using poststructuralist-oriented research approaches, particularly in the current climate that appears to privilege 'scientific', evidence-based paradigms that measure and produce facts and figures. As one UK Government minister once put it at the turn of this century: 'we are not interested in worthless correlations based on small samples from which it is impossible to draw generalisable conclusions' (Blunkett, 2000, p.20). Educational research that tends to be favoured is of the kind that offers generalisations and wider application (Hillage *et al.*, 1998) and poststructuralist research does not necessarily aim to do this. It does not talk in terms of samples, correlations and generalisations.

The research emphasis in the UK at present appears to be on a particular kind of instrumentalism, with a narrowly conceived accent on improvement in pupil attainment which is defined in rigid terms and 'driven by an imperative for unproblematic measurement of outcomes' (Prosser and Loxley, 2007, p.56). A postmodernist approach can enable an 'opening up' and an embracement of uncertainty or the incomplete, and can provide a welcome antidote to this present climate that is seemingly driven by certainty and closure, where everything is taken as given and reduced to a competency or standard (Allan, 2004).

I have so far attempted to show how and why this study came about and to illustrate how and why the original focus changed. In the latter part of this chapter, I present a brief critique of the discourse and practice of special educational needs. As indicated, in the past I have been very much part of these discourses and practices and found them to be potentially damaging and exclusionary in their effects.

Special educational needs discourse and practice: a brief critique

As stated in Chapter 1, within my own practice, I have found that 'inclusion' and 'special educational needs' frequently appear as if they are synonymous and are used inter-changeably in talk and text. There appears to be a continued, often competing and uneasy alliance between discourses of inclusion and traditional, embedded discourses and practices of 'special educational needs' (Slee, 2001a and b). Despite ongoing efforts to disassociate it from special educational needs, inclusion is still very much presented as a special needs issue across educational institutions and remains the language of much recent educational policy in England (e.g. DfES, 2004; DfES, 2007). This continued association has been an ongoing concern for researchers (e.g. Slee, 2001 a and b; Thomas and Loxley, 2001). Vlachou (2004, p.9) stresses the need to break the 'ghettoization' of inclusion as a special education issue. Slee (2001a, p.116) suggests that inclusive education is about all students and it 'asks direct questions, such as Who's in? and Who's out?'. Slee and Allan (2001, p.177) argue that 'inclusive education represents a 'fundamental paradigm shift', meaning that traditional special education knowledge(s) cannot be reconciled with inclusion. I return to the issue of special education and knowledge(s) at the end of this chapter.

Why might special educational needs - its languages and practices - be seen so negatively? Why might a system that has expanded throughout the past three decades and is seemingly thriving, be subject to so much criticism? The discourses and practice of special educational needs has become pervasive in education. It seems to remain a relatively unquestioned notion that has become a taken-for-granted signifier. However, the special educational needs system, or 'industry' (Tomlinson, 1996), as it operates in either special or mainstream schools is, according to its creator, one that is 'beset with confusion' (Warnock, 2005, p. 20).

There is a substantial body of work that questions discourses and practices of special educational needs. Thomas and Loxley's, (2001) theoretical exploration and Jenny Corbett's (1996) book *Bad Mouthing* present

persuasive arguments about the power of language and the potentially damaging effects of special education. Thomas and Loxley (2001) claim that special educational needs discourse *constructs* difference and that special education generates a particular reality that has to be lived up to. They suggest that practitioners, however unwittingly, seek ways of conforming to it and confirming it. I recognise that I have done this within my own practice in the past.

Gillian Fulcher (1989) was one of the earliest writers to apply a theory of discourse to the language of special needs and her work has had some influence on the construction of my study. Fulcher (1989) enabled me to recognise that the way in which children are spoken about in schools has effects. Fulcher (1989) signifies that discourses have uses rather than inherent meanings and they serve particular interests. She locates several discourses; medical; charity; rights; lay and corporate, that she suggests construct identities and experiences and it is worth briefly considering them.

A medical discourse defines individuals by their perceived deficits, rather than by external factors. Medical discourse, through its diagnostic language of 'body, patient, help, need, cure, rehabilitation, and its politics that the doctor knows best' (Fulcher, 1989, p. 27), has been seen to dominate special educational practices in the past. Within a charity discourse, people become tragic figures in need of help. Individuals become defined either as objects of pity or sources of inspiration. A rights discourse is characterized by 'self reliance, independence, and consumer wants rather than needs' (Fulcher, 1989, p.30). A lay discourse is informed by medical and charity discourses, as well as fear and prejudice. Corporate discourse is concerned with 'managing disability' (ibid. p.26). These discourses, although distinct in some ways, interact with one another and, although Fulcher was writing in the 1980's, they remain recognizable in the current context.

Corbett (1996) suggests that the notion of being 'special' and having 'needs' can nurture special identities and distort or deny a sense of self. The discourses and practices of special educational needs can signify a deep

epistemological attachment to the view that needs are the result of a child's individual deficit or impaired pathology (e.g. Brantlinger, 1997). Individuals who are pathologized are not only confronted by their own difference, but are simultaneously oppressed by a particular *knowledge* of their difference (Billington, 2000).

Research and knowledge

According to Slee (2001b, p.168), special educational needs remains the 'official knowledge of difference' in schools, partly as a result of science-oriented, psycho-medical research paradigms and the particular kinds of knowledge produced by them. Thomas and Glenny (2002) argue that the result of positivist research into the field of special education is that we have too much of the wrong kind of knowledge, a pathologised or essentialist knowledge, and too little understanding.

Research ethics involves an examination of the kind of knowledge(s) that research creates and reproduces and a concern for the ways in which closure in thinking may be harmful (Allan, 1999). Medicalised and within-child deficit-oriented research, as well as firmly fixing the diagnostic and objectifying gaze upon the researched, can be reductionist and promote singular meanings and closure in thinking. At the very least, it can focus on the inside and fail to engage with the wider social, cultural and political processes at work in society that shape identities and create and reproduce conceptualisations of otherness. Research 'on' children and on their 'needs' may help to sustain the 'myth of progress' and reinforce the notion that disability is intrinsic to the child (Allan, 1999).

According to Allan (1999, p.14), research on inclusion requires 'significant epistemological shifts in order to challenge the foundationalist basis of special education knowledge'. Allan (2008, p.46) also suggests that the continuing domination of research in inclusion by the special education paradigm appears 'impossible to shake off'. Fortunately, there are now more research paradigms and different approaches to the study of inclusion that shake the

epistemological tree of traditional knowledge production (Slee, 1997) and research in the area of inclusive education is now multidimensional and is challenging the status quo (Barton, 2004). It was hoped that my study would in some small way add to this growing body of work.

In this chapter, I aimed to provide a brief personal history to show how my experiences, changing ontology and unease with my own practice have helped to shape and inform my study. I described just some of the powerful changes and transformations that have occurred in relation to ways of seeing and understanding the world and I later return to reflect upon these changes in the final chapter.

In helping to situate my study, I provided a brief critique of discourses relating to 'special educational needs' and suggested that traditional special educational needs research can produce a particular kind of knowledge that, rather than assist the project of inclusion as a political project, potentially reproduces forms of exclusion.

The focus of my study is on inclusion and its discourses. To re-cap, I aimed to explore how contemporary discourses are constructed to help address the research question: whose interests are served by the way inclusion is talked about and represented in education in the present context? I was not anticipating that there would be a fast and easy answer to this question. I was anticipating and assuming that the discourse of inclusion might in some way be connected or related to long-standing discourses and practices of special educational needs and the potential (ethical) dilemma that this assumption presented is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.

It was anticipated that by explicating its discourses, my study might contribute to the growing body of work that takes a poststructuralist approach to inclusion (e.g. Allan, 2008; Graham, 2007; Graham and Slee, 2008) and that counteracts traditionalist or scientific-oriented approaches, in the struggle for

social justices. In the next chapter, I present the notion of discourse as I understand it. I select aspects of the work of Foucault that have helped to construct a theoretical framework for my study and then go on to consider the context in which contemporary discourses of inclusion operate.

CHAPTER 3: DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

Introduction

This chapter, as the title suggests, is about discourse and practice. It is organised into three sections that come under the headings of 'Discourse', 'Discipline' and 'Context'. The first section, 'Discourse', opens with a consideration of some of the many different ways in which the term can be used, and I present the notion of discourse as it is understood in my study. Aspects of Foucault's work that have helped in the construction of a theoretical and methodological framework for my study are then presented. I consider the relationship between discourse, power and knowledge and in the second section, 'Discipline', I highlight Foucault's notion of power as a form of discipline and discuss its relevance to education and schooling. I relate disciplinary techniques to the school context to show how Foucault's ideas on disciplinary power, normalisation and surveillance have relevance to practices relating to schooling, particularly in the domain of special educational needs. I then consider the relationship between discourse, as power-knowledge, and identity. In the final section of this chapter, I consider the context that is characterised as a neo-liberal one.

Discourse

Discourse and discourse analysis is a multi-faceted and diverse area and it is difficult to speak of discourse or discourse analysis as a single unitary entity of study (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004). The term 'discourse' is used in different ways for different purposes in diverse fields of social enquiry, including socio-linguistics, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, cultural studies and social and cognitive psychology. There are differences in emphasis, between and within the fields of enquiry, in how discourse is used and understood; just as there are some similarities between them. There is also the emergent discipline of 'discourse studies' itself; a relatively new field which is interdisciplinary in its approach.

Mills (1997) suggests that within the complex disciplinary and theoretical range of meaning, it is difficult to track down the meanings of discourse and that the disciplinary context in which the term occurs is more important in trying to determine which meanings are being brought into play. It is the constraints that bind disciplinary structures that determine the meaning of the term. Bacchi (2005) suggests that although the term has become ubiquitous, with considerable confusion about intended meanings, it is inconsistent to search for a 'correct' definition of discourse because the whole idea of discourse is that definitions play an important part in delineating knowledge.

Wetherell *et al.*'s (2001) volume of work on discourse is diverse and demonstrates just a part of the range of uses, understandings and enquiry to which discourse has given rise. They present studies that exemplify styles of discourse research or discourse analytics that are most relevant to the social sciences. Their volume distinguishes between and illustrates the various (and by no means inexhaustible) forms and aspects of discourse research, such as conversation analysis and ethno-methodology; interactional socio-linguistics; ethnography; discursive psychology; critical linguistics; critical discourse analysis, and Bakhtinian and Foucauldian research. Wetherell (2001) signifies that these selected domains and other 'traditions' or approaches to discourse within the social sciences include epistemological claims, concepts and clearly marked out theoretical domains, as well as distinctive understandings and uses of 'discourse'. Each domain of enquiry has its preferred research topic and sphere of operation and some are easier to separate than others. The distinction between, for example, critical work in socio-linguistics, interactional socio-linguistics and the ethnography of communication are 'difficult to disentangle'; whereas the differences between conversation analysis and Foucauldian research are 'more obvious' (Wetherell, 2001, p.6). Wetherell (2001) suggests that the commonality or starting point of reference that underlies the use of discourse in various disciplines, and in and across fields of study, is that the study of discourse (at a fundamental level) is the study of language in use and meaning making.

Mills (1997) signifies that the term discourse originated in the 1960's from the field of language studies and linguistics and initially referred to whole units of speech (conversations) and the speech community in which these units were communicated. Within linguistics, discourse is usually used to refer to language and linguistic structures above the level of the sentence and describes language in use (both textual and spoken). The interest of socio-linguistic analysts is language in use, discourse structures and meanings, and indicates a sensitivity to interpretive and conceptual schemas (Bacchi, 2005). Examples of this kind of social and interpretive understanding and use of 'discourse' would be Potter and Wetherell's (1987) explorations that aimed to unearth inconsistency, variability and contradiction in talk or Billig's (1996) study that illuminated the argumentative qualities of rhetoric.

Gee (2005) distinguishes between 'big d' and 'little D' discourses. 'Little d' discourses are those that are socio-linguistic or 'language-in-use' discourses and are used, for example, in conversation analysis. Gee (2005) explains that:

When "little d" discourse (language-in-use) is melded integrally with nonlanguage "stuff" to enact specific identities and activities, then, I say that "big D" Discourses are involved. We are all members of many, a great many, different Discourses, Discourses which often influence each other in positive and negative ways, and which sometimes breed with each other to create new hybrids. (Gee, 2005, p.7)

Gee (2005) regards 'big D' discourse as social practices, mental entities, material realities and as a 'form of life'. Zeeman (2002) also suggests that constructionist researchers study discourses as if they were living entities. Those interested in discourse from a critical and political perspective (e.g. Fairclough, 1989; Van Dijk, 1997) would also agree that discourse is different to, or extends beyond, 'little d' discourse or technical descriptions of textual analysis and language in use. Fairclough (1989, p.22), for example, clearly defines his terms as a critical discourse analyst and regards discourse as language use that is 'a social practice that is socially determined'. The term 'discourse' is used here to refer to the whole process of social interaction of which language and text is just a part. For critical discourse analysts, discourses are political as much as social phenomena: 'whenever people

speak, listen, write, read or act, they do so in ways that are determined socially and have social impacts' (Fairclough, 1989, p.23). Discourse, beyond linguistics and language in use, becomes 'language use relative to social, political and cultural formations. It is language reflecting the social order and shaping individual's interaction with society' (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999, p. 7).

Critical discourse analysis is, according to Johnstone (2002), rooted in neo-Marxist and critical cultural theory. It tends to consider language and discourse as a social practice in relation to power and ideology, and power is largely presented as a juridical force of domination. It also, according to Wetherell (2001), tends to separate, and look at the relations between, discursive and material practices, and takes a materialist or realist position. In critical discourse analysis, (a broad 'field' within itself), subjects (or individuals) are represented as discourse users or as agents of discourse (Bacchi, 2005). Potter and Wetherell (1990) suggest that discourse is a situated practice and in analysing discourse the task is to study both how people use discourse and how discourse uses people.

Despite the association of critical discourse analysis with poststructuralist influences, there are some differences between a critical approach to discourse and what may be termed a more Foucauldian understanding of discourse. To borrow Potter and Wetherell's (1990) terms, the latter would be more likely to consider how discourse uses people rather than how people use discourse. From within a Foucauldian conception of discourse, as discussed in the next section of this chapter, power is not necessarily a juridical force of domination and is presented differently. Rather than thinking of individuals as oppressed by power relations, they are 'the prime effects of power' (Foucault, 1980, p.98). A researcher who takes a Foucauldian approach to discourse is also more likely to view reality as discursively constructed and discourses as systems of thought that are contingent upon, as well as informing, material practices. It is this understanding of discourse, and of language and discourse as being constitutive as opposed to being

referential, that I draw upon and it is the version or approach that broadly features in my study.

We don't speak the discourse, the discourse speaks us.

Ball (1990)

Although discourse is largely invisible it is powerful. Luke (1995) suggests that we are imprinted by, or watermarked, by discourse from an early age. Discourses carry particular rationalities. They map out what can be said and understood and inform our thinking about how we should be and how we should act in the world. We are open to a range of discourses and draw upon 'recognisable' discourses that allow the opportunity for making sense of our selves and the world. Once a discourse becomes 'normal' and 'natural', it is difficult to think and act outside it (St. Pierre, 2000, p.485). Different discourses present their particular versions of the social world and may be seen as practices that fit particular societies needs (Goodley, 2004). Alluding to Foucault's notion of discourse, Hall (1997) writes that:

discourses are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society. (Hall, 1997, p.6).

In addition to the above, I found Youdell's (2006a) description of discourses to be particularly apt in relation to my exploration of inclusion as a commonsense practice. Informed by Foucault's notion of discourse, Youdell (2006a, p.36) suggests that they are bodies of ideas that produce and regulate the world in their own terms, 'rendering some things common sense and other things nonsensical'. They operate laterally across local institutional sites and, as I discuss later in this chapter, they have a constructive function in forming and shaping human identities and actions. Within Foucauldian theorising, discourse is presented as a realm in which institutions, norms,

forms of subjectivity or individuality and social practices are constituted and 'made to appear natural' (Tonkiss, 1998, p.247) or commonsensical. Fairclough (1989) alludes to the similarities between Foucault's work on 'discourse' and the Gramscian concept of hegemony.

Luke (1995) suggests that Foucault's theorization of the constitutive and disciplinary properties of discursive practices within relations of power is a demonstration of the postmodern concern with *how* language works to not only produce meaning, but also to produce particular kinds of objects and subjects, upon whom, and through which, particular relations of power are realized. I am working from the understanding that neither language, nor power relations that operate in school, are transparent or benign; they have hidden (disciplinary) effects.

I regarded drawing upon Foucault and his ideas as a risk. Why 'risk' referring to Foucault? As Allan (1999) points out, Foucault has been seen as a fast and loose historian and a pessimist. However, his 'box of tools', or books, lectures, interviews and ideas therein, can help to understand invisible forces of control and restraint that are part of the taken for granted discourses and practices that are all around us. Foucault writes that:

The real political task...is to criticise the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticise them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked. (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1991, p.6).

A Foucauldian approach can represent a welcome and refreshing departure from technicist-empiricist accounts of inclusion that have 'tended to dominate the research field' (Allan, 1999, p.28) and have created their own forms of political violence. Allan (2008, p.86) suggests that Foucault's work overturned understandings of modern phenomena: 'driving home the realization that where we might think we have greater freedom, we are, in reality, more tightly constrained than ever before'. Progressive narratives surrounding inclusion may suggest that things are moving forward and are better or freer than before, but Foucault allows us to see that this is not necessarily so. I agree

with Cannella (1999, p.37) who suggests that Foucault's work has provided 'multiple sights' from which to view the impersonal and invisible forces that play roles in the construction of who we are and how our life alternatives are defined.

Scheurich and Bell McKenzie (2005, p.842) are 'somewhat grumpy, surly and dissatisfied' about how Foucault 'has most frequently been read' and, more particularly, 'used' in education. They suggest that:

Probably the most popular use, or abuse, is to cherry pick one concept such as 'panopticon' or 'disciplinary society' and then use that one concept within a more traditional critical framework, even though there are epistemological contradictions. (Scheurich and Bell McKenzie, 2005, p.859).

By referring to Foucault I am not in any way making a claim that I am a 'Foucauldian scholar' or 'expert', and in this respect my contribution may fuel Scheurich and Bell McKenzie's ire. Rather, I have chosen to select (or cherry pick?) and present some of his ideas that helped in the construction of a theoretical framework for my study.

In the next section of this chapter I present some aspects of Foucault's work that have influenced, but not determined, the way that I approached discourse and practice. Concepts such as discursive formations, enunciations, statements, and discursive practices that feature in his earlier archaeological work (Scheurich and Bell McKenzie, 2005) are particularly relevant to my study.

In his archaeological work, Foucault focused on the limits of discourse (Bingham, 2002) and referred to them as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972, p.49). In his later genealogies, Foucault focused on an analysis of power relations and their (disciplinary) technologies. He was concerned with the way that certain forms of discourse 'become invested by power' (Bingham, 2002, p.360). Genealogical analysis considers the ways that discursive practices become

employed by various 'regimes' of power, and how established discourses get subjected to investment and control (ibid. p.361). Again, some of the ideas within this phase of Foucault's work can offer 'multiple' and helpful sights (sic) from which to view discourses and practices of inclusion.

The statement and discursive formations

I am interested in language and how it is used and the relationship of language to other social processes and to practice. In my study, I focus on things said about inclusion and, in particular, on *statements* made about it. Groups of statements provide a language for talking about something, but they also provide a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about something. Foucault describes 'the statement' not as a linguistic unit but as 'a function' (1972, p.98) that is recognisable and secures power relations. The statement as function can be theorised as a discursive junction box in which words and things intersect and become invested with particular relations of power (Graham, 2005). The statement 'enables rules or forms to become manifest' (Foucault, 1972, p.99). In his archaeological work and in theorising the tactics related to the production of psychiatric 'truth' and the development of a power-knowledge specific to the human sciences (Graham, 2005), Foucault looks to describe statements and to:

describe the enunciative function of which they are bearers, to analyse the conditions in which this function operates, to cover the different domains that this function presupposes and the way in which those domains are articulated. (Foucault, 1972, p.86-87).

In so doing, Foucault notes that 'psychiatric discourse finds a way of limiting its domain, of defining what it is talking about, of giving it the status of an object – and therefore of making it manifest, nameable and describable' (ibid. p.46). The statement is a function of dividing practices and may be understood as a thing that is said that privileges a particular way of seeing and that codifies certain practices (Graham, 2005).

Although there are an infinite number of ways to formulate statements, the statements that are produced within a specific area or domain of discourse although they may be worded differently can be similar and repetitive. Some statements are never uttered and would never be accepted or recognized as meaningful. The historical 'rules' of the particular domain of discourse restrict or delimit what is possible to say.

For Foucault, discourses inhabit a realm or discursive formation. A discursive formation is the way meanings are connected together in a particular discourse. Discursive formations are described as systems of dispersion, in that they consist of the relations between parts of a discourse:

...whenever one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functions, transformation) we will say for the sake of convenience that we are dealing with a discursive formation. (Foucault, 1972, p.38).

The rules of formation are conditions of existence in a given discursive division (ibid. p.38). The regularity of statements both in general form and in dispersion, come to represent the discursive field. This discursive field can be traced or linked to a field of power-knowledge and to practice. In my study, I aimed to 'map the surface of emergence' (Foucault, 1972, p.41) of discourse and locate statements, discursive regularities and fields of formation (around inclusion) and to explore the knowledge(s) that are privileged through these fields or formations and how they can speak things into existence (Graham, 2005).

Discourses are not necessarily fixed but are more fluid or mobile and opportunistic. They draw upon existing discourses about an issue, whilst utilizing, interacting with, and being mediated by other dominant discourses, 'to produce potent and new ways of conceptualising an issue' (Carabine, 2001, p.269). Discontinuities and dis-junctures can occur that can re-frame a discourse and rupture a knowledge system. Rupture is possible only on the basis of the discourse rules that are already in operation and is a rearrangement of the episteme, where new rules of discursive formations co-exist with existing ones. In my study, I sought to locate discourses that I felt

represented dis-junctures or ruptures in existing 'recognisable' discourses that surround inclusion and to relate any perceived dis-junctures to the contemporary context. I now turn to consider Foucault's notion of disciplinary power to show how this has relevance to my study.

Power

As indicated earlier, from a Foucauldian perspective, discourse is connected to power. I have so far alluded to discourse in relation to knowledge(s) and to power, but the notion of power that is presented is quite distinct and perhaps requires further explanation. Foucault makes a distinction between a sovereign type of power, which is held and exercised, and a power that is circulatory and functions like a piece of machinery. Foucault states that:

power is not something that is acquired, seized or shared...power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations. (Foucault, 1978, p.94).

The power that is described is the kind that *produces*; 'it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth' (Foucault, 1977, p.194). Foucault's reconfiguration or reformation of power also entails a reformulation of the way in which the subject (or individual) is understood (Youdell, 2006a and b) and this is further discussed later in this section of this chapter. For Foucault, power and knowledge are inextricably linked and bound together:

Power and knowledge directly imply one another...there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault, 1977, p.27).

The joinings of power-knowledge are called 'technologies' (Rabinow, 1991, 17). Knowledge in this respect becomes a matter of how particular things come to be seen as 'true'. The effects of the power-knowledge complex are relayed through different discourses: 'it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together' (Foucault, 1978, p.100). Discourse is, in a sense, a vehicle for power-knowledge:

in a society...there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. (Foucault, 1980a, p.93).

As stated earlier, discourses can be understood as an amalgam of material practices and forms of (power) knowledge that are linked together and this is how I interpreted them in my study. They carry, create or configure knowledge(s), or a knowledge system, that is related to a particular historical period in time (Foucault, 1972). Just as power and knowledge are discursive, so is truth. Truth is bound up with power and with struggle:

Truth is a thing of the world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true. (Foucault, 1980, p.131).

Truth, connected to power-knowledge, 'is produced according to the prevailing discursive regimes of different societies' (MacLure, 2003, p.178). Foucault was interested in ways in which social and cultural locations fed upon discourses that masquerade as 'truths' (Goodley, 2004, p.114) and this is of particular interest in my study as I attempted to locate the discursive commonsense 'truths' of inclusion.

Discipline

In *Discipline and Punish* (1977) Foucault traces how modern forms of punishment and correction subtly focus on the reform of the soul as opposed to the physical punishment of the body. The focus switches from judgements on behaviour to judgements on very being; from what people do to what they *are*. The penal system and punishment became a 'strange scientifico-juridical complex' (Foucault, 1977, p.19) that is not just a judgement of guilt but an 'assessment of normality and a technical prescription for a possible normalisation' (ibid. p.20-21) which applies throughout society, not just to criminals.

One effect of the new penal regime was not to punish criminals but rather 'to normalise the larger population in terms of correct behaviour' (Sheurich and McKenzie, 2005, p.845). Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*:

is intended as a correlative history of the modern soul and of a new power to judge; a genealogy of the present scientifico-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications and rules. (Foucault, 1977, p.23).

One of the primary objects of discipline 'is to fix; it is an anti-nomadic technique' (ibid. p.218). It is worth noting that in his analysis of discipline, Foucault was referring to discipline in both senses of the word: as a form of correction and as an area of study or as a body of knowledge. He claimed that 'The Enlightenment, which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines' (Foucault, 1977, p.222). Disciplines:

...characterise, classify, specialise; they distribute along a scale, around a norm, hierarchise individuals in relation to one another and, if necessary, disqualify and invalidate. (Foucault, 1997, p.223).

According to Foucault, scientific 'disciplines' govern our thinking and:

...are defined by groups of objects, methods...the interplay of rules and definitions, of techniques and tools: all these constitute a sort of anonymous system...without there being any question of their meaning or their validity being derived from whoever happened to invent them. (Foucault, 1972, p.222).

The disciplines are a form of rationality or way we make meaning of the social world and every day lives. Disciplines (as rationalities) and their techniques exert their effects 'by making us objects to know, control and regulate' (Millei, 2005, p.132). As I later show in my reading of my data, the discipline that appears to be privileged in relation to inclusion, and that makes us objects to know, control and regulate, is psychology.

Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?
(Foucault, 1977, p.228)

Foucault offers the concept of 'disciplinary power': 'the chief function of which is to train' (Foucault, 1977, p.170). Disciplinary technologies and techniques, linked to power-knowledge, are understood to constitute and circulate through discourses and discursive practices that constitute social life (Youdell, 2006b) and they are developed in institutional regimes, such as the school. Schools can be understood as disciplinary institutions 'in which the discursive practices that constitute social life are permeated by the localised effects of disciplinary power' (ibid.). Foucault (1977, p.176) suggested, 'a relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is at the heart of the practice of teaching and is inherent to it'.

Disciplinary power needs particular mechanisms to enable it to function effectively. According to Foucault:

the success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination (Foucault, 1977, p.170).

I now turn to briefly consider how hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and the examination, as mechanisms of surveillance, relate to education and schooling.

Hierarchical observation is a form of surveillance that distributes individuals in a continuous field and is a means of making it possible 'for a single gaze to see everything constantly' (Foucault, 1977, p. 173). On surveillance, Foucault writes:

A relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency. (Foucault, 1977, p.176).

The effectiveness of this form of supervision is guaranteed because it functions 'permanently and largely in silence' (ibid. p.177). As Allan's (1999) work shows, provision for children categorised as special educational needs has elements of this kind of surveillance. Although all children in schools are arguably subject to surveillance, for the 'special needs child' (who is under great scrutiny) 'the gaze reaches further' (Allan, 1999, p.20).

The norm, normalization and normalizing judgement are particularly relevant to my study on discourses of inclusion. Researchers have suggested that inclusion in the present context is about assimilation into a norm (e.g. Graham and Slee, 2008). By normalization Foucault means a system of finely graduated and measurable intervals in which individuals can be distributed around a norm; 'a norm which both organizes and is the result of this controlled distribution' (Rabinow, 1991, p.20). Normalization establishes the measure by which all are judged and deemed to conform or not. It is a means through which power-knowledge is deployed. It is a dynamic of knowledge, practised and dispersed around various centres of practice and expertise.

According to Graham (2006, p.7), 'normality is a man-made grid of intelligibility' that attributes value to culturally specific performances and in doing so, 'privileges particular ways of being at the expense of others'. Normalizing judgments, which individualize and 'mark' people, 'make it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another' (Foucault, 1977, p.184).

Foucault (1977, p.184) suggests that 'the normal is established as a principle of coercion in teaching'. Teachers assess, monitor and diagnose abilities and behaviours according to a set of normative assumptions. Individuals are controlled through the power of the norm and this disciplinary power is effective because it is relatively invisible and unquestioned.

Normative order is an essential component of what Foucault termed, in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, (1978, p.140) 'bio-power'. Bio-power is associated with the art of government and came into effect in the nineteenth century. For

the first time in history, scientific categories rather than juridical ones became the object of 'sustained political attention and intervention' (Rabinow, 1991, p.17). Bio-power takes as its object life itself (Tremain, 2005) and it involves a set of measurements and the use of statistics. It effects distributions and ordering around a norm. People are individualised and distributed according to statistical averages. Foucault argued that, in recent times, practices of division, classification and ordering around a norm have become the primary means by which to 'individualise people who come to be understood scientifically and who even come to understand themselves in this mode' (Tremain, 2002, p.6).

Normalizing judgements are used to justify correction and coercion in teaching and promote standardization and homogeneity. Individuals can be measured in terms of their distance from the norm and once the extent of their deviance from the norm is established, 'disciplinary techniques can be used to homogenize, normalize, and exclusion can be justified as a means to these ends' (Allan, 2008, p.8). As Allan (1999, p.21) observes, 'children with special needs are defined in relation to normality by their very label'. They are marked out and individualized. An essential component of technologies of normalisation is the key role they play in the systematic creation, classification, and control of 'anomalies' in the social body (Rabinow, 1991, p.21). Anomalies can be corrected through other associated technologies. It could be argued that the practice of special educational needs survives on identifying, rooting out and correcting perceived anomalies in school populations.

Graham (2006, p.7) observes that although predicated as natural and 'true', the rule of the norm is statistically derived, negating the diversity to be found within nature and the naturalness of diversity. The norm is a man-made concept or law, and not a rule of nature and there is no definitive model of normal because there is no singular manifestation of either normal or abnormal (ibid). I later return to the concept of the norm in my reading in Chapter 5, where I reveal how contemporary discourses of inclusion classify and categorise, according to an invisible, silent norm.

The examination combines hierarchical observation and normalising judgements and 'establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them' (Foucault, 1977, p.184). The examination involves documentation and 'documentary techniques' that turn individuals into a case (ibid. p.191). A case is:

...the individual as he may be described, judged, measured, compared with others, in his very individuality and ...trained or corrected, classified, normalised, excluded, etc., (Foucault, 1997, p.191).

Foucault suggests that the chronicle of man, man's life story or bibliography, 'is no longer a monument for future memory, but a document for possible use' (ibid). The child categorised as special needs is marked out as a special 'case' and a plethora of documentation in the form of Individual Education Plans, Statements of Need and so on, can be attached to them. The child becomes a case and is subject to continuous monitoring, observation and surveillance.

Panoptic culture?

Foucault selects Jeremy Bentham's structure of a panopticon as the paradigm of a 'disciplinary technology' (Rabinow, 1991, p.18). This prison structure has a tower in the centre surrounded by a ring-shaped or circular building where people could be observed and surveilled; silently, constantly and effectively. It enabled older versions of the prison, with its fortress-like structures and locks to be replaced. The prisoners did not know when they were being surveilled and in effect they surveilled themselves. The inmates were caught up in a power situation in which they were the bearers. The guards were also caught up in surveillance; everyone was caught, those who exercise the power and those who were subjected to it (Foucault, 1977).

The panoptican structure 'functions as a kind of laboratory of power' (ibid. p.204) and can be understood as a 'way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men' (ibid. p.205). Foucault refers to the 'panopticism of everyday life' (ibid. p.223) where:

We are neither in the amphitheatre, nor on the stage, but in the panoptic machine, invested by its effects of power, which we bring to ourselves since we are part of its mechanism. (Foucault, 1977, p.223).

The internal training that this system of surveillance requires is an objectifying practice that forges compliant and docile bodies 'that may be subjected, used transformed and improved' (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1991, p.17). The panopticon encapsulates what might be understood as a disciplinary society, with forms of surveillance and self-surveillance. Foucault suggests that:

Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed, the panoptic schema may be used. (Foucault, 1997, p.205).

The panopticon is a particular organisation of space and human beings, a visual order that clarifies the mechanisms of power that are being deployed (Rabinow, 1991). In schools, pupils are positioned and located in hierarchical ways. Spatial distributions are concerned with enclosure and partitioning and 'the ranking or classification of bodies' (Youdell, 2006b, p.36). While the precise architecture of the panopticon may be absent from the school, the disciplinary technologies of 'hierarchical observation, classification, examination, normalisation, surveillance and self-surveillance are evident' (Youdell, 2006b, p.59). As I later demonstrate in my reading, schools are a location of power/knowledge in all three of its manifestations: discipline, normalization, and subjectification.

Subjectification

As stated earlier, Foucault's reconfiguration of power entails a reformulation of the way in which the individual, or the subject, is understood (Youdell, 2006b).

Within poststructuralist thinking in general, subjects are constituted in and through a host of cultural discourses and practices. The embodied, essential self is deconstructed, replaced or de-centred and attention is given to the ways in which the view of an essential self is itself a reflection of dominant discourses of modernity and of how society tells us how we ought to be. For Foucault, the subject is displaced from a position of privilege. It is the discourse, not the subject who speaks it, that produces knowledge. Subjects may produce particular texts, but they are operating within the limits of the episteme, the discursive formation, the regime of truth, of a particular period and culture (Hall, 1997).

Foucault placed emphasis on the power of discourse and claimed that the subject or individual is produced within, and by, discourse (Hall, 1997). The subject submits, or subjects itself to, its rules and conventions; to its power/knowledge and becomes the bearer of the kind of knowledge that discourse produces.

Foucault refers to Althusser's (1971) notion of subjection to suggest that the person is at once rendered a subject and subjected to relations of power through discourse; in Foucault's terms the 'subject is subjectivated' (Youdell, 2006b, p.41). Foucault explains that:

there are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscious self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to. (Foucault, 1982 , p.212).

Foucault's work suggests that the person is 'made subject by and subject to' discursive relations of disciplinary power (Youdell, 2006b, p.42).

Constructing identities

Discourse also plays an important role in the processes that go towards 'making up' people as new categories and classifications of people, and new

ways for people to be, are brought into being (Hacking, 1986, p.223). Foucault focused on how historical configurations of discourse constructed new kinds of human subjects. For example, it was only the intersection of discourses of sexuality with other medical and legal discourses and institutions of the late nineteenth century that produced the socially recognisable identity of the homosexual (Hacking, 1986).

The ascendance of statistics in the nineteenth century, related to bio-power, was influential in creating classifications for previously unknown 'types' of people. These classifications then affected the possibilities for personhood for those targeted by, and enumerated according to, such categories (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004).

Hall (1997) explains that the subjects that discourse is seen to produce are figures who personify the particular forms of knowledge that the discourse produces. These subjects have the attributes we would expect as they are defined by the discourse. The discourse produces a place or position for the subject. For example, certain figures such as the madman, the hysterical woman, the homosexual are 'recognisable' subject categories that are specific to particular discursive regimes and historical periods.

Within this framework of understanding, discourses contain and produce, subject positions and individuals identify with, or recognise, those positions that the discourse constructs. In my study, I am interested in how school cultures (and discourses) accept and construct taken for granted categories and subject positions. Subject formation and positioning is relevant to my study and I later show that within schools, pupils are objectified and positioned through certain seemingly benign discourses and taken for granted practices in the name of inclusion.

Earlier, I alluded to the idea that discursive statements speak things into existence. Althusser (1971) wrote about ideological state apparatus and the way that ideology creates or constructs 'subjects' by drawing people into particular positions or identities. He argued that subjectivity is an ideological

effect. The way that people feel about themselves and the world around them is in part a by-product of a particular ideological or discursive regime. Althusser referred to the process of subjectification, which entails people being both produced by and subjected to ideology. Althusser also used the term interpellation to refer to the process of being called or hailed by a particular discourse as particular kinds of individuals (Edley, 2001). People's talk may be an affect of the discourses they are interpellated by, rather than an expression of their subjectivity.

Governmentality

Much of what has been reviewed above, for example, discourse, discipline, normalization and subjectification could also be viewed in terms of what Foucault calls 'governmentality'. This refers to 'the contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self' (Foucault, in Simons, 1995, p.36). Governmentality refers to the connection between power as the regulation of others and a relationship with oneself; one governs ones own conduct while government guides the conduct of others. Government is the conduct of conduct (Foucault, in Simons, 1995, p.36). Government is thus acting on the self-government or 'conduct' of people. This self-government is not natural but is being shaped, through technologies of the self. (Simons and Masschelein, 2006). Simons and Masschelein explain that:

It is not through brute force that people are being incorporated within the modern state. Instead, throughout a rather particular form of self-government and at the level of our very subjectivity, people are being included in the governmental state. Within the modern state freedom, as a particular practice of self-government, is being governmentalised. (Simons and Masschelein, 2006, p.5).

School practices and procedures may be seen as disciplinary 'technologies' that do not represent the reality of education but *create* or produce the reality of education. Through discourses and technologies, people come to understand them selves in a certain way and as a result the conduct of people is being conducted (Masschelein and Simons, 2006).

As I show towards the latter part of Chapter 5, the notions of governmentality and technologies of the self resonate with, or perhaps even make greater 'sense' of, the discourses that emerged from my study. I explain why, for those working in education, discourses of inclusion may be better recognised, informed and understood in terms of the conduct of conduct or governmentality.

Context

Discourse-based research needs to take into account the context in which the discourse operates. The present context may be characterised as a neo-liberal one. The rise of neo-liberalism and its infusion in educational policy in the west has been well documented (e.g. Youdell, 2004; Ball, 2007).

Liberal forms of government were characterised by state control of the welfare of its population. A neo-liberal form of government relinquishes some of its control and reduces its intervention. It is not as directly responsible for the general health, well-being and freedom of its population as more liberal forms of government. Neo-liberalism introduces an idea of freedom that places greater responsibility on individuals. The government is obliged to create the conditions and access to enable everyone to contribute in an 'enabling state' (Rose, 1999a, p.142). Under neo-liberalism, the state has less direct power and a highly qualified, flexible workforce is seen as security in a competitive global market. There is a focus on raising people skills, qualifications and credentials to compete in a global economy and an emphasis on widening participation in lifelong learning. Everyone is encouraged to participate and become qualified, and flexibility for earning and learning (and becoming qualified) becomes key (Dunne *et al.*, 2008b).

Bragg (2007, p.345) observes that 'neo-liberal regimes' have rolled back the boundaries of the welfare state, 'not to remove power but to entrench it further, at the level of the individual'. It becomes the duty of an individual, rather than the state, to be sufficiently flexible to maximize the opportunities available. Bridges and Jonathan (2003, p.134) identify neo-liberal values and

characteristics as 'individualism, self-reliance and enterprise'. Individuals are encouraged to become entrepreneurs of the self. 'Being', here, is 'being entrepreneurial' and is being in a fixed and pre-given 'environment' for which specific competencies are required (Masschelein, 2006). As I later show, my reading of my research data suggests that entrepreneurialism, characterised by a focus on the self, is a newly emergent discourse of 'inclusion'.

Under neo-liberal discourse, enterprise becomes the condition for individual freedom and self-actualization and also guarantees economic growth and social welfare. Alluding to governmentality and to the conduct of conduct, Burchell, (1997, p.29) suggests that the notion of enterprise 'now permeates all forms of conduct; from the conduct of organisations hitherto seen as non-economic, to the conduct of government, to the conduct of individuals themselves'. The shift from liberalism to neo-liberalism marks a shift in subject position for the individual; from one who acts out of self interest and is relatively detached from the state to one who, although still acting in self-interest, is *created* by the state and is 'continually encouraged to be perpetually responsive' (Olssen, 2003, p.199).

As stated earlier, in the present (neo-liberal) context, inclusion is presented within a progressive narrative almost as a moral obligation or compulsion. Following a study on discourse and inclusion, Bragg (2007) suggests that school managers imagine that there is a pre-existing pupil will to participate. The message appears to be that if we want to maximise self-governance then we must be included and take up opportunities that are there to participate and to be included, not to do so becomes our own responsibility. The implication for those who perhaps do not wish to be included or who resist is that they will lack autonomy and personal freedom.

Schools and market discourse

How has neo-liberalism affected schools? A market-led, neo-liberal educational context involves direct funding to schools, a widening of 'consumer' choice, greater choice of 'service provider' for customers and the

provision of information to inform parental choice, such as league tables and reports which signify the relative merits of a school (Bridges and Jonathan, 2003). Notions of excellence, effectiveness, raising standards and accountability that have arguable become part of the everyday discourse of schooling are characteristic of neo-liberalism.

Advocates of a market culture in education (e.g. Tooley, 1994) see it as creating healthy competition that is conducive to the development of self-reliance and enterprise. Ball (1990, p.18), referring to Kenway (1987), suggests that the market regime of education is a 'discourse of derision'. Within this 'discursive regime', the words spoken by professionals have been displaced by 'abstract mechanisms and technologies of truth and rationality, parental choice, the market, efficiency and management' (ibid.). Prosser and Loxley (2007) relate the current educational context to Foucault's notion of calculus and suggest that:

Foucault's (1997) notion of calculus is apposite, as it captures precisely the almost monomaniacal rush to reduce all facets of schooling to quantification in order to foster regulation and control through mechanisms of comparability and accountability. (Prosser and Loxley, 2007, p.56).

The context in which inclusion operates is propelled by notions of school effectiveness that, according to Lingard *et al.*, (2003), is symbiotic with the elements of the broader culture of what Lyotard (1984) termed 'performativity'; to capture the ways in which nothing is taken to be real unless it can be measured and accounted for. As I indicate in Chapter 5, it seems that nothing escapes being measured and commodified. As the government seeks to optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of the economic and social system, the 'performance' of individuals and schools becomes highly significant.

The context, characterised as an audit and performance culture had significance for my study and it was something that I needed to take into

account. To what extent might the neo-liberal context and the notion of performativity affect discourses on inclusion?

The pressure on schools to raise pupil-teacher-school performance and at the same time become more inclusive communities has been seen as problematic. According to Carlson (2005), the discourse of inclusion itself is now associated with capitalism and with the 'quantification of quality', where quality is reduced to a quantifiable indicator. The quest for indicators and outcomes within the corporate ideology of quality assurance in education is endemic and has extended to inclusion. The notion of 'student voice', for example, that was perhaps at one time valorized as being a radical or liberal research approach to address inequities in education now appears to be fully compatible with government and management objectives and has been introduced as part of school improvement strategies (Bragg, 2007).

According to Benjamin (2002a), inclusion has been co-opted into the standards agenda and Dyson *et al.*, (2003) suggest that the former is not outside or alternative to the standards agenda, but operates within it. They show how teachers had internalised the standards agenda and saw the principle task of the school as being to raise attainment in areas that were narrowly defined by national priorities. Hall *et al.*, (2004) maintain that the concept of performativity has permeated the notion of teacher professionalism and has become part of teacher's identities and their perceptions of what makes a 'good' teacher and that pupils and teachers are 'SATurated' by assessment. Meeting targets becomes 'just as natural and routine as taking the morning register' (Thomas and Loxley, 2001, p. 103).

Benjamin's (2002b) study into the micro-politics of inclusion in a UK classroom illustrates the significance of power relations within school and also the effects of discourses of 'school effectiveness' within the standards agenda. She suggests that the location of 'valuing diversity' within neo-liberalism allows its users to think they are re-conceptualising difference, when they may actually be constructing a binary based on Gillian Fulcher's (1989) charity/tragedy model of disability referred to in Chapter 2.

Educational practices appear to operate within a regime of accountability, that is seemingly rational and ordered, but according to Allan (2004), in practice it is inefficient, ineffective and socially unjust. Carlson (2005) suggests that inherently *political* questions get reduced to technical, managerial questions that are answered with reference to numbers. Measurable 'indicators' can commodify and reduce inclusion to a contrived cultural performance by practitioners (Allan, 2006). The scripted 'performance' required by practitioners can create an imperative for fabrication and become a mechanistic performance of particular values, without having to commit them into practice:

the standards and accountability culture creates closures but also catches everyone ...in a performance, forced to enact a version of inclusion which is merely about tolerance and management of difference and which leads to a constant reiteration of exclusion. (Allan, 2006, p.126).

In this chapter I aimed to present aspects of Foucault's theorising and concepts that have influenced some (but not all) of the thinking behind my study. I highlighted the nature of the (neo-liberal) context in which inclusion, as discourse and practice, operates. In the next chapter, I present the research methods that were used to gather data that, following analysis, may be seen as representing contemporary discourses of inclusion.

CHAPTER 4: FIELDWORK

Introduction

In my study I attempted to 'locate' contemporary discourses surrounding inclusion to find out what characterized them. As it will be seen, the methods used to help me to do this are not particularly systematised but are relatively loose. In this chapter, I describe how I approached the methods used and the data gathering process that informed the study and how they helped to address my underpinning research question: 'whose interests are served by the way that inclusion is talked about?'

Discourse based research tends to be more theoretically than methodologically driven (Wetherell, 2001). Data needed for analysis and how material is collected is important but perhaps less so than the theoretical framework used and the questions asked. One of the strengths or appeals of discourse analysis is not the mass accumulation of specific data but the construction of an analytic framework, systemic tools to increase understanding of social systems and practices and the use of more open-ended methodologies that reflect a de-centred world.

Methods and data collection

Methods for data collection ought to suit or sit easily with the particular theoretical paradigm and with the overall research purpose. Researchers are advised to approach methods in a way that is congruent with their epistemological and ontological positioning and which enables the original research question(s) to be addressed (Goodley, 2004).

If my study was looking at meanings or experiences of inclusion, if it was asking 'what' questions, such as what does inclusion mean or what are people's experiences of it, then it would be appropriate to adopt commonly used research methods that would help to address the question. Such methods might include, for example, observation, personal accounts and

narratives or in-depth interviews that generate rich data. Open-ended interviews and narrative accounts provide space for research subjects to express their opinions through their own words. By being able to choose the words themselves, the research subjects are presumed to communicate their feelings thoughts, values, experiences and observations in a way that renders their 'inner worlds' and meanings accessible to the researcher (Alvesson, 2002, p.64).

My study is not so much concerned with inner worlds, meanings and experience or the personal views being expressed, although it did originate with such a concern. It does not delve into meanings, nor does it look at participants; their background personalities, subjective opinions and so on. Instead, it looks at the discourse used in constructing worlds and with how discourse and meanings come about. I was interested in how people working in education interpreted the word 'inclusion'; how inclusion was represented, and what the regularities in these interpretations might signify. I aimed to find out *how* the contemporary discourse(s) of inclusion, as a body of knowledge, is constructed and constituted in education; to find out what characterises it; to locate the discursive configurations that are associated with it; and to consider its potential effects. Discourse analysis seemed the most appropriate research approach. Rose (2001, p.142) suggests that a researcher who adopts discourse analysis is concerned with both 'the discursive production of some kind of authoritative account' (in my study, the 'authoritative account' is inclusion); and with the social practices both in which that production is embedded and which it itself produces'.

I am aware that the above description or the aims of my study suggests that I am positioning myself in some ways and to some extent as a discoverer of finder of knowledge in a 'real' world. This can present an image of a researcher who sets out to discover something that is true. I am aware that this presents a realist view of the world; that there is 'some thing' out there waiting to be simply discovered, when there is 'no unmediated access to the reality of the world' (Usher, 2000, p.172). I needed to keep reminding myself

that we cannot know reality 'as it really is' (Usher, 2000, p.184); we can explore what reality could become rather than explaining what it is.

I wanted to explore forums and arenas where inclusion is practiced and spoken about, in order to explicate its discourse. I wanted to locate the discourses, be they prevailing, marginal or otherwise, that circulated within particular discursive contexts and to deconstruct the constitutive and regulatory effects of them. I aimed to locate fragments of texts, reiterated words and statements that I believed would reveal discourses of inclusion, so methods were adopted that would help to trace and 'mark out' its discursive domain. The methods used may be seen as 'formal', or more empirical, and informal. In discourse research, 'empirical' data ceases to be conceived of as more or less accurate records of events or institutional facts, and is recognized more as a discursive monument (Tonkiss, 1998).

Discourse is inaccessible in its entirety, but 'traces of it are found in the texts that constitute it' (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004, p.236). I approached the data gathering process with an understanding that discourse does not consist of one text, one action or one source. Discursive statements appear intertextually and 'comprise of familiar patterns of disciplinary and paradigmatic knowledge and practice' (Luke, 1995, p.16). The same discourse, characteristic of the way of thinking or the state of knowledge at any one time (Foucault's episteme), 'will appear across a range of texts as a form of conduct at a number of institutional sites within society' (Hall, 2001, p.73). Mindful of this, I decided to collect a range of textual forms.

Groups of people or social actors working in various educational contexts in the field of inclusion, and all involved in professional development programmes, were invited to provide their interpretation and understanding of inclusion through either the use of drawings, group discussion or via an online discussion board. The 'mechanics' of this data gathering process are briefly described below.

Research project brief

As described earlier, my original intention was to research teaching assistants' narratives and to explore or delve into meanings and experiences around inclusion. I had intended to conduct informal interviews with individuals and groups of teaching assistants in a face-to-face situation and had planned to do this in September 2006. Over what seems like a relatively short time (perhaps a couple of months), my positioning changed quite radically as I began to deeply question inclusion as a common sense practice and seemingly fundamental good. The ontological and epistemological shifts and changes I experienced seemed to occur quite rapidly but I suspect, with hindsight, that they had been evolving over a longer period of time. The focus of my research had changed from meanings and narratives of experience to a more theoretical consideration of meanings, representations, language and discourse. As the theoretical stance and the focus of my research shifted, my choice of research methods also changed.

On commencement of the fieldwork, I decided to gather a range of data that still had features of my original research project intent and included the involvement of teaching assistants, but which also had an additional dimension in that it considered the responses of other professionals working in the field of education to questions of inclusion and interpretations of it. I also decided to adopt different, multi-method forms of data collection with the two groups of educators. In this sense, my research method brief changed considerably and widened.

With the first group (the teaching assistants), instead of interviewing, I decided to invite their comments and responses to a question via an online discussion board facility within the context of their studies for a Foundation degree. This decision was made in November 2006 and the online data gathering process and my rationale for using it is detailed later in this chapter. This part of the fieldwork commenced in January 2007 and continued until April 2007 as that was the duration of the teaching assistants' online studies. The teaching assistants who chose to take part in my study during this time period were

provided with a research project brief that explained in some detail that I was doing a study that was critically considering meanings, interpretations and discourses of inclusion. Consent was arranged via an online project consent form that was exchanged electronically.

In planning for the added dimension to my research, the involvement of other professionals, I decided to invite people who were to start an Inclusive Education masters module that I module-led, entitled 'Theories and Concepts of Inclusion', to engage in a group activity. This involved a group of twelve people presenting their interpretations and understandings of inclusion via a drawing and discussion that would subsequently provide my additional data. This data gathering activity was audio-recorded and occurred during a one-hour session prior to the more formalised commencement of their module in January 2007. Those who agreed to take part were also given a research project brief that explained the rationale of my study and project consent forms were exchanged. The drawing and discussion activity with this group of professionals is also more fully explained and detailed later in this chapter.

By April 2007, I had two 'data sets' to draw upon and analyse; the teaching assistants online discussion postings (data set 1), and the drawings and accompanying discussion (data set 2). The different types of data collected may be viewed as a kind of montage, a pieced together assemblage, or a collage (Moss, 2002), that, when analysed and woven together, formed representations of inclusion. The findings of my archive represented, for me, a possible product of forms of 'discourses of inclusion' in action.

Part of the fieldwork also involved compiling and archiving notes, reflections and observations that formed a research journal based on my teaching, everyday encounters and conversations that occurred 'outside' the research situation that could be regarded as a form of witnessing of language and discourse. This could be regarded as the informal method in that it was unplanned, serendipitous and was ongoing. St. Pierre (1997, p.179) refers to 'response data', i.e. those that enter the research 'uninvited'. I found myself spontaneously 'doing' research, or (in)forming data, when I had not expected

to; e.g. making retrospective notes following particular encounters that touched upon or illuminated aspects of my enquiry.

The actors

Davies (2004, p.4) suggests that when poststructuralists talk about 'the way that sense is made' they are not attempting to reveal something about the sense -maker (the subject), about his or her motives or intentions, but about the possibilities of sense-making available within the discourses within a particular sense-making community. I approached my methodology from this perspective and from an understanding that the speaking subject is located within a 'deeply anonymous murmur' (Deleuze, 1988, p.7).

The people who took part in the more formalised aspect of my study may be seen as belonging to particular communities of practice and all worked directly with children in schools. Communities of practice are linked to discursive networks that frame the possibilities for what people can (and cannot) speak about (Barr and Smith, 2007). There were two separate groups of educators, or two communities of practice, who took part in my study. The first group comprised of teaching assistants who worked in primary, secondary or special schools and who were studying for a Foundation degree. They took part in the online discussion data gathering part of the study. The second group comprised of practitioners who were studying on a Masters degree in Inclusive Education and they took part in the drawing and discussion activities.

Discourse analysis does not claim to be representative. I am not claiming 'this is what educationalists think about inclusion' or 'this is how they see it'. I am seeking to explore how particular ways of seeing or understanding are shaped, reproduced and legitimized through the use of language, and 'questions of representation are therefore not so crucial' (Tonkiss, 1998, p.253). In the next section of this chapter I explain why I chose to use the internet and online discussion postings (data set 1) to inform my study and I

describe how I went about it, before describing and attempting to justify the use of drawings and discussion (data set 2).

Data Set 1: Online discussion postings

Herring (2001, p.642) suggests that we owe to Foucault the insight that social institutions are themselves constructed and maintained through discourse and that 'nowhere is this more true than on the Internet, where 'communities' of users come together, sharing neither geographical space nor time and create social structures exclusively out of words'. The internet seemed a fitting resource from which to gather the data.

Using the internet in research and analysing data from discussion and email forums is a developing area for educational research. The web is a social sphere, albeit a 'detached' one, and the perceived advantages of using computer-mediated communication are that it is convenient and inexpensive. It may be seen as a non-intrusive method of gathering data, although it could be argued that all research that involves people is intrusive.

Online discussions took place between students (teaching assistants) who were studying for a Foundation degree and myself (their online tutor). I teach on a Foundation degree in Teaching and Learning Support and students may choose to study either face-to-face or online. The online, or flexible, study route is delivered via a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) called WebCT. This mode of studying tends to be favoured by those who, for example, are unable to be released from school or who live a long distance away from the university. I have been involved in the online course since its inception in 2002 and have written various online modules in the area of teaching and learning and inclusion.

The teaching assistants who took part in the online research worked in primary, secondary or special schools and may be considered to be part of a specific (discursive) community of practice. I had met the teaching assistants as a group of students during their WebCT induction and had formally

interacted with them face to face prior to their online studies. We had already established a form of mutual trust and support, which allowed, to some extent, the creation of a comfortable and recognizable online space.

Official discourse regards the learning support role in mainstream schools as crucial to the successful implementation of inclusive practice (DFEE, 1997; DfES, 2003b) and teaching assistants have been seen to occupy a pivotal role in the inclusion process (Sorsby, 2004). Following recent educational policy change and 'workforce remodelling' (DfES, 2003b) coinciding with the introduction of Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) standards (TTA, 2004) that are based on standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), many teaching assistants now appear to have increased responsibility, including whole-class teaching. However, within power relations of schooling, the role of the teaching assistant can present challenges, inequities in terms of forms of capital (Goddard *et al.*, 2008), and unacknowledged constraints (Dunne *et al.*, 2007; 2008a; 2008c). Despite the perceived increase in their professional status they continue to occupy a utilitarian role (Dunne *et al.*, 2008b and 2008d). The continued marginalisation and constraints facing this group of educators may, in Foucauldian terms, have come about as an incidental effect of the complex power relations and discourses within the educational field (Bourke and Carrington, 2007).

Over time, I became interested in the comments that were being posted on the various discussion boards by the teaching assistants, within a module entitled 'Inclusive Education'. There had been some frank and poignant exchanges, 'conversations' and expressions of strongly held views that, I believed, would provide fertile 'data' for my study.

Within the module discussion forum area and prior to the full commencement of the module, I set up a discussion that invited students to respond to the dual question 'What do you understand by the term inclusion and how do you interpret it?' This question was intentionally straight forwardly framed. In retrospect, I could have asked, for example: how do you know what you know about inclusion? Or, I could have been more creative in my questioning and

perhaps asked participants to provide a metaphor that described their interpretation of inclusion. However, it was decided to keep the question simple. The question was posted within the context of the students' studies, although it was clear that their responses would contribute to this study and those who took part provided consent.

Forty one out of sixty eight students in total responded to the question posted and subsequently engaged in online conversations, prompted by the discussion question. There were in excess of 300 postings, although I did not rigorously count them all. The length of the postings varied from brief sentences to fuller accounts that recounted more personal 'experiences' of inclusion. The posters varied in the degree to which they 'invoked the authority of lived experience' (DePalma and Atkinson, 2007, p.505). Most did not simply respond to the question but engaged in conversations with each other. Some provided multiple responses whereas others provided single responses. The discussion postings were printed and then securely archived.

The discussion forum area is a non-assessed component of the course and is used, amongst other things, to facilitate interactional exchange of opinion and asynchronous, rather than synchronous or 'real time', discussion. Synchronous communication requires both or a number of parties to be present for interaction and occurs in real time. Chat room facilities, for example, provide this kind of communication. Asynchronous, on the other hand does not occur in real time. Message board postings are an example of this. This social environment is, in a sense, both a public and a private sphere in that it is accessible to students and to tutors associated with the Foundation degree. Using the internet allowed access to people's views by removing boundaries of time and space. The internet transformed the 'space' (time) in which people could reflect on their thoughts and experiences in response to the question, rather than being committed to replying promptly.

Online research is devoid of the traditional social frameworks of face-to-face conversations and encounters, whereby both researchers and participants interpret the social characteristics of the other, either verbally or non-verbally.

When interviewing or observing in natural settings, researchers rely on the ability to judge a face, look for visual signs of authentic emotion and inauthentic pretence. Markham (2005, p.816) suggests that online research helps to expose the weaknesses of qualitative research approaches in that 'it brings to the fore how we classify, codify and categorise others'. When face-to-face, we make immediate categorizing decisions based on first impressions and even the most astute and cautious researcher unconsciously relies on habitual patterns of sense making in everyday interactions with others, 'but online this is suspended' (ibid.). Markham (2005, p.792) suggests that the intriguing thing about computer mediated communication is that it calls attention to the ways we literally see and make sense of the world and 'points out many of the biases inherent in our traditional ways of seeing and knowing'. In relation to the disembodied environment of online interaction, DePalma and Atkinson (2007, p.502) suggest that virtual spaces 'deny us the luxury of imagining unified persons with coherent identities' and 'force us to recognise the multi-voiced-ness behind even physically embodied exchange'.

I could have interviewed the online group face to face as well as seeking their online opinion. Markham (2005, p.809) signifies that following up online discussion and interviews with face to face encounters with recipients can add 'authenticity' to an interpretation and therefore can give more credibility to research findings. For the purposes of my research, however, I was not necessarily concerned with the face or the person behind the actual comments and postings; my main concern was the language, statements and the discourse used. I also had another data set to draw upon – the use of drawings and discussion, and it is to these that I now turn.

Data set 2: Drawings and discussion

The use of drawings in educational research

Discourses make up a dense fabric of spoken, written and symbolic texts of institutional bureaucracies (for example, policies, curriculum documents, forms) and their face-to-face encounters (classroom interaction, informal talk

and so on). Any actual instance of language in use is a 'text' (Fairclough, 2003) and visual images are also texts. It is possible to think of visibility as a sort of discourse. According to Rose (2001, p.137), 'a specific visuality will make certain things visible in particular ways and other things unseeable...and the subjects will be produced and act within that field of vision'.

Drawings, like other forms of visual imagery, are about how people see the world in its simplicities and its complexities. The cultural analyst Roland Barthes (1987) expands on Saussure's work around relational meaning and he writes extensively about the analysis of images. Barthes suggests that meanings are produced through the presentation of language in a text and through the anchoring of images with text. When text accompanies an image, it rationalises it and 'loads the image, burdening it with culture, a moral, an imagination', which he argues, orientates the reader to particular meanings (Barthes, 1987, p.40). For Barthes (1987), drawings and photographs evoke a variety of cultural and historical meanings, but the coherence of an image is maintained by the accompanying text that privileges particular understandings for readers.

Visual methodologies, and drawing in particular, traditionally tend to be confined to the arts rather than education. Art therapists and psychologists have used drawings to tap into or to bring to the surface emotions and feelings, frequently with children. In an educational climate seemingly dominated by the language of targets, outcomes, outputs, and delivery, using drawing as a source of research data can generate insight from different ways of knowing. Haney *et al.*, (2004, p.242) used drawings in educational research and claim that this approach has an unusual power to document and change the ecology of classrooms and schools, and are 'valuable as a research tool for delving beneath easy assumptions'.

Spouse (2000) used paintings combined with follow-up interviews in a longitudinal, phenomenological study to investigate nursing students who were on professional development courses while working in clinical settings.

Students painted a picture of what it felt like to be a nurse and later discussed the symbolism they had portrayed in the picture. A similar approach (e.g. drawing followed by discussion) was adopted in my study. Spouse (2000) suggests that using pictures in this manner gave participants an opportunity to tap into their pre-conscious knowledge and to give words to experiences that might otherwise have lain dormant. The images provided a stimulus for the nurses to continue to develop a narrative of their experience.

Kearney *et al.*, (2004), focused on meanings in their research and suggest that drawings create a path to, and are a valuable representation of, feelings and emotions. They used drawings as a research tool to explore the emotional impact of organisational change on adults in an educational setting and comment that 'the drawing process itself seemed to cause the related feelings and emotions to be internally accessed and therefore more readily available to verbal sharing' (Kearney *et al.*, 2004, p.367).

Visual imagery, in the form of photographs, and the use of artefacts is contributing to emergent arts-based approaches to research in the field of inclusion (Allan, 2008). Such creative approaches can dislocate constructions of epistemology in the situated discourses of inclusive schooling (Moss *et al.*, 2007) and challenge traditional forms of knowledge production.

I have frequently used drawings in the process of teaching and learning and asked groups of students to either collectively or individually draw, for example 'an inclusive school', as an alternative way of making visible their thoughts and feelings, and to share their representations in discussion. Aside from the students' initial 'shock' reaction of being asked to draw instead of to write or speak, and their plaintive self-deprecating cries of 'I can't draw' and 'I'm not an artist'; they invariably overcome their initial inhibitions about artistic ability, rise to the challenge with gusto and enjoy the activity. I have found that inviting students to draw can be an enjoyable 'icebreaker' for new groups of students and a stimulus for fuller group discussion. Drawings, when not seen as an examination, help to articulate feelings and thinking, as reflection goes on before and during the process. I share the observation that:

Drawings offer a different kind of glimpse into human sense making than written or spoken texts do, because they can express that which is not easily put into words: the effable, the elusive, the not-yet-thought-through, the subconscious. (Weber and Mitchell, 1995, p.34).

The issue of validity, within the traditionalist paradigm of educational research, is a common charge aimed at visual methodologies (Moss *et al.*, 2007) and qualitative research more generally. Interpretation of images is subjective and can be riddled with ambiguity. Two people can look at the same image and produce very different interpretations; furthermore, a person can look at an image today and see one thing, and view it at a later time and see something quite different. Is one interpretation more valid than the other? Is there ever one true interpretation? Working from a theoretical approach that questions singular truths, essentialisms and pre-existing meanings, I did not view this ambiguity as necessarily problematic.

Doing the drawings

Along with the teaching assistants who engaged in the online research (data set 1), a second group of educators took part in my study and their involvement formed the drawing and discussion dimension (not the online dimension). This group of ten were students on a Masters degree in Inclusive Education and consisted of teachers, a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), a careers advisor, several who worked in various capacities as local educational authority advisors and university lecturers.

The group were seated comfortably at wide desks. I handed them a blank, unlined A4 piece of paper and a marker pen and asked them to draw how they visualized inclusion. I assured the group not to worry about their artistic abilities, that the individual drawings were not going to be 'judged' and that stick people were perfectly acceptable. I affirmed that it was not the actual aesthetic merit of the drawing that was the focus, but the idea or representation within it and that the drawings were to be used as a stimulus for subsequent group discussion.

There was some initial gentle good-humoured resistance from most of the group to actually begin their drawing and, as in my taught sessions, some individuals expressed reservations about their drawing abilities. Individuals in the group seemed to need a few minutes to reflect and consider the ways in which they saw inclusion (at least that is what I assumed they were reflecting upon!) and then they drew their image, some did this hesitatingly and others with a more deliberate intent.

There was very little verbal exchange during the drawing process itself. After approximately 10 minutes, most of the group had completed their drawings and were then asked to write a line, a phrase or sentence, on the blank side of their paper that served as a title for, or an accompaniment to, their drawing.

Individuals in the group were then invited to describe and explain their image, one at a time. Each took approximately 3-5 minutes to do this, although the time taken for explanations varied. The group then discussed what they considered to be issues that had emerged from the drawings and explanations of them. Before talking about their representations, the group were invited to think about the following:

- ❖ What is being shown?
- ❖ What are the components of the image?
- ❖ How are they arranged?
- ❖ What relationships are established between the components of the image?
- ❖ What do the different components of the image signify?
- ❖ What is being represented?

The group talked about their drawings, individually at first and then collectively. The drawing and discussion session was audio-recorded and transcribed. I viewed the transcriptions as textual data. I avoided interjections and encouraged the group to speak. The discussion could be viewed as a focus group, although it was not formalised in this way. At a general level, focus groups are collective conversations or group interviews. Kamberelis and

Dimitriadis (2005) suggest that focus groups have allowed researchers to explore the nature and effects of ongoing social discourse in ways that are not possible through individual interviews and observations. They put multiple perspectives on the table. The synergy and dynamism generated within collectives can reveal unarticulated norms and normative assumptions. Focus groups and group discussion can help the researcher and participants to realise that both the interpretations of the individuals and the norms and rules of groups are 'inherently situated, provisional, contingent, unstable and changeable' (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2005, p.903).

The different forms of research data, both formal and informal, were gathered together and viewed as a whole entity. I felt that I had a wealth of spoken and textual data, plus notes, that I had merged and that would, following analysis, provide 'evidence' of a discursive field that would help me to address my main research question (e.g. whose interests are served by the discourses of inclusion?).

Ethics and interpretive context

Before discussing how the data was analysed, the ethical and interpretive context of my study needs to be considered. Informed consent was gained from those who took part in my study. However, as Malone (2003) signifies, informed consent is a concept inherited from the field of biomedical research and fails to address the multiple ethical dilemmas that research in education brings.

I regarded ethics as much more than a process of informed consent. Ethics and reflexivity were embedded in the whole research process and not external to it. In engaging in this research, I was aware of my own viewpoints,

perspective and opinions and continuously re-examined my own voice and positioning as the study evolved.

As indicated earlier, I had chosen to conduct this research in my own institution, or as Malone (2003) puts it, 'in my own backyard', as it seemed appropriate and convenient and presented fertile ground for enquiry into discourse and inclusion. I was very aware that, as a lecturer seeking the views and interpretations of my students, an unequal power dynamic existed. Those who took part in my study will have adjusted their responses to my questions according to their interpretation or view of the situation. People modify their discourse to suit the context in which it takes place. According to Gill (2000) as social actors, we are continuously orienting to the interpretive context in which we find ourselves, and constructing our discourse to fit that context. For example, a manner of speaking in a medical setting may not feel right in a social gathering. Discursive accounts tend to fit with contexts. We say what we think seems appropriate for the situation and all discourse is occasioned (ibid.)

Due to the unequal power relation, people, both online and in the group discussion, may have given responses that they thought I would want to hear, or they may have been searching for a 'correct' response, despite assurances that I was seeking their particular interpretation. The online postings may have generated different responses had the contributors had the facility to post anonymously. Anonymous posting is now possible within the virtual learning environment (VLE) of Blackboard, but this facility was not available when I gathered my data via the VLE of Webct.

In relation to ethics, it is worth reiterating that I was not looking for 'the person' or necessarily at the 'meaning' behind the person's statements; nor was I aiming to reveal the intentions or beliefs of the speakers or writers; I was looking for emergent discourses. I was, at the same time, working from an understanding of a Foucauldian notion of power, as a power that is not about subjugation or dominance, but rather the relative power of the discourses available to individuals (Bourke and Carrington, 2007). As discussed in the

previous chapter, people's talk may be an affect of the discourses they are interpellated by, rather than an expression of their subjectivity Knowledge interpellates and subjugates subjects (Edley, 2001). Those who took part in the research, including myself, are caught by particular discourses developed in schools. I was working from the understanding that discourse precedes social subjects. When I use some extracts as illustrations of specific discourses, as I do in the following chapter, my aim is to point to schooling as a cultural practice and not to suggest anything about the ethical or professional character of the authors or persons in question. Despite this, I remain concerned and uncomfortable that I have taken people's well-intended spoken and inscribed words as 'raw data' and, with their 'consent', have 'used' them in my interpretation. I re-visit and reflect upon these unresolved discomforts in the final chapter.

Analysis

This section of this chapter explains how the visual and textual data was analysed. According to Seale (1999) basic to the general process of analysis in qualitative research is some kind of sorting and categorising process to identify patterns. The term 'coding' has conventionally been used for the classification of research data into categories. Taylor (2001, p.39) suggests that the discourse analyst searches for patterns in language in use, building on and referring back to the assumptions she or he is making about the nature of language, interaction and society and the interrelationship between them. It is this theoretical underpinning rather than any data sorting or systematised coding process that distinguishes the form of discourse analysis that I adopted from other research approaches.

In poststructuralist discourse-based approaches to research, there are no set formats, rules or guiding principles to follow, or particular formalised 'tactics' for analysis; as Tonkiss (1998, p.258) suggests there is no 'textbook method' or standardised approach. Taylor (2001) does suggest that analysis is guided by the research topic, research questions and point of focus. Just to recall, my

main research question was: whose interests are served by different discursive formulations? It was underpinned by these sub-questions:

- ❖ How is the contemporary discourse of inclusion constructed or configured? (What are its characteristics?)
- ❖ What do discursive configurations evoke?
- ❖ What might be the potential discursive effects?

The process of analysis helped me to go some way in addressing these questions; although, as mentioned previously, I had some assumptions or pre-conceptions about possible 'answers' to these questions (i.e. that it might be constructed within a special educational needs framework). Analysis offered both confirmation of some of my existing suppositions (or perhaps I was analysing to confirm my suppositions?) and some unexpected surprises and revelations that are presented in the later reading.

The term 'data' sounds a little scientific and incongruous with the overall design and intent of my study. I came to regard the data more as collected material, or texts, that in some ways resembled an 'un-chronicled archive' (Tonkiss, 1998, p.252). Similarly, the term analysis appears to be quasi-scientific. 'Critical reading' is perhaps a more appropriate phrase to describe how I approached the texts; nevertheless, for the sake of clarity I continue to refer to the term 'analysis'.

Analysis in discourse-based research is not necessarily a distinct and separate activity. It began at the point when I decided to focus on discourse as an object of research. I became attuned to language patterns, terminology and expressions in social encounters. A form of analysis was going on 'inside my head' informally, before a more formalised process of analysis, or what I came to regard as a critical reading, actually began.

According to Wetherell (2001, p.384), 'the process of analysis is always interpretive, always contingent, always a version or a reading from some theoretical, epistemological or ethical standpoint'. Such an approach does not equate to un-systematised speculation but instead reflects the characteristic

reticence of those 'doing' discourse analysis within, for example, a Foucauldian or poststructuralist framework, to prescribe method or similarly make claims to truth through 'scientific', 'objective', 'precise' methodologies (Graham 2005). The analyst's job from this perspective does not consist of 'rediscovering' the unsaid whose place (the statement) occupies (Foucault, 1972, p.134, in Graham, 2007, p.5). Instead, the task is to determine, in all the possible enunciations that could be made on a particular subject, 'why it was that particular statements emerged to the exclusion of all others' (Foucault, 1972, p.134). Analysis can demonstrate *how* the use of particular techniques in the production of meaning enable statements to present a particular view of the world *and* prepare the ground for the 'practices that derive from them' (Foucault, 1972, p.139).

I regarded the textual data as fragments, snapshots of opinion, statements and discourses variously 'captured', either through talk, drawings, online postings and notes, at a particular place and time. The spoken discourse was transcribed and I made analytical notes during the process of transcription. When transcribed, the written words looked different to spoken words. I read and re-read the transcripts of the group discussions, online conversations / postings and referred to my journal notes. I also (re)listened to the audio recordings of discussions. I could have used software packages, for example, *Atlas*, to analyse the online postings, but I preferred not to do so as I felt I would be distanced or removed from my data.

According to Taylor (2001, p.24) research 'material' only becomes data 'through certain considered processes including selection'. Using several coloured pens, I selected re-iterated words and what I saw as powerful 'buzz words' and / or unusual words. I considered the words, language patterns and phrases deployed and recurring words, phrases and statements that appeared across the texts were noted. Attention was given to any apparent hesitations, contradictions, idiosyncrasies and in-coherences. Constructions of binary oppositions e.g. 'in' / 'out'; 'up' / 'down' were also noted. I located what I came to regard as families of statements and taken for granted words and signifiers.

The disparate data gradually began to come together. I developed a feel for the weaves, nuances, reverberations that it presented and that resonated with the emerging 'character' of inclusion. The way inclusion was framed and presented in the accumulated data began to 'speak' to me. Recurring phrases and statements coagulated around descriptions of inclusion. The patterns of emphasis, consistencies, repetitions and recurring words and phrases that were noted created what I saw as discursive regularities within a discursive field. Perhaps crucially, I found that nothing was exactly repeated in the same way but the enunciations had a similar character.

Graham (2005) suggests that one way of analysing a discourse is to consider the process of analysis as a process of 'formation of objects'. Mindful of this, I considered the 'objects' of the discourse and the subject positions that the emergent discourse(s) appeared to construct. It became an exercise in explicating statements that functioned to place a discursive frame around a particular position (Graham, 2005). I interpreted 'the statement' as an articulation that functions with constitutive effects. As discussed in Chapter 3, statements may be understood as things said that privilege particular ways of seeing and that codify certain practices. Statements about inclusion and discursive regularities slowly appeared across the texts and comprised of familiar patterns of knowledge and practice. The regularity of statements both in general form and in dispersion, represented a discursive field. When I felt that I had located discursive regularities within discursive statements, I asked various questions, for example: how are these statements framed or constructed? What do they do? What do they evoke? What do they enable or forbid? What might be their potential effects? How might they create or sustain a regime of truth?

I sought to locate discourses that I felt represented contemporary interpretations of inclusion and also those that signified dis-junctures or ruptures in existing 'recognisable' discourses and could be regarded as newly emerging discourses. I also sought to locate discourses or characteristics pertaining to them that might deviate from or fracture common sense notions of inclusion and disrupt progressive narratives relating to it. In preparation for

my reading or interpretation, and in addressing my main research questions (e.g. whose interests are served by the way that inclusion is talked about?), the wider implications of the discursive formations and regularities were considered, such as the identities that are made available through language and discourse and the significance of power, restraint and struggle (Wetherell, 2001). Analysis involved an exploration of the relationship of language to other social processes. It involved an exploration of how knowledge about inclusion acquires authority or a sense of embodying the 'truth' about it. The discursive field that emerged could also be traced or linked to a constituting field of power-knowledge, and to practice. In the process of analysis, I asked: whose or what knowledge(s) are privileged and excluded from these representations?

In analysing the data I found that focusing on discourse can be one at the same time exciting and frustrating. According to St.Pierre (2000, p.477), when we try to get to the bottom of language and meaning we find that we are lost in the play of discourse; 'not by any means an unrewarding experience, but one that can be frustrating for those who want to know exactly what is going on'.

Assumptions

Gill (2000) suggests that doing discourse analysis involves interrogating our own assumptions and the ways in which we habitually make sense of things. In analysing and reading the data, I was aware that my own ways of thinking, assumptions and presuppositions would influence what I perceived as constituting relevant data in the first place. The aspects of data that I selected as relevant for scrutiny; to be emphasized and presented as data 'extracts' in my interpretation or reading, were a reflection of my own assumptions, presuppositions and particular view of the world.

According to Tonkiss (1998), it is tempting for a researcher who is doing discourse analysis to impose an analytic schema on a piece of discourse; but, at the same time, we cannot make the data say what is not there. A

researcher may hold strong views about discourses they know exist within a larger discursive context and it can be frustrating to find these discourses absent in the specific data they are dealing with. It is recommended that a researcher suspends all assumptions and preconceptions, and sets aside closely held beliefs, as far as possible and to try to 'make the familiar strange' (Erickson, 1986, p.121). De-familiarisation is regarded as an important part of critical research. The well known, natural and self-evident should be approached in a manner that makes it appear strange, arbitrary and unfamiliar.

A counterpoint to making the strange familiar is that a researcher will be 'surprised' by the data (Tonkiss, 1998, p.254). As indicated earlier, I had some expectation that certain recognisable discourses would emerge from the data; for example, a discourse of special educational needs. This was my pre-conception and assumption and it was very difficult, if not impossible, to 'bracket' this expectation. It was sometimes difficult to step outside the data. I agree with Carabine (2001) who suggests that it is difficult to identify discourses within which we ourselves are immersed, or that we agree with, or which we ourselves accept as 'taken for granted' or common sense.

In this chapter I aimed to describe in as much detail as necessary how I approached the data gathering process and analysis. I attempted to provide a justification for the research methods adopted that I felt would help to address my research question and highlighted the ethical dilemmas this presented. In the next chapter, I present an interpretation, or reading, of the analysed data.

CHAPTER 5: A READING

Introduction

The montage of data illuminated some of the discourses and discursive practices of inclusion that were circulating at a moment in time and this chapter presents an interpretation, or reading, of them. An interpretation is a constructed outcome and an ordering of research material in a particular way. What is presented here is a tentative, singular and inevitably partial reading, and the possibilities for different versions or readings are infinite. Texts are always open to alternative readings and someone else would see something different and read the data in a different way. Humes and Bryce (2003, p.180), referring to the poststructuralist respect for uncertainty, point out that 'the search for clarity and simplicity of meaning is seen as illusory' because there will always be other perspectives from which to interpret the material under review. To seek a definitive account is, thus, a misguided undertaking and is not desirable. The 'right' interpretation does not exist, whereas a more plausible or adequate explanation is likely (Wodak and Ludwig, 1999).

An interpretation may be regarded as a provisional reality claim and recognition of the contingency of accounts of reality. The process of discourse analysis and interpretation is not straight forward and it requires reflexivity. It requires 'interpreting ones own interpretations, looking at ones own perspectives from other perspectives and turning a self critical eye onto ones own authority as an interpreter and author' (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000, p. vii).

It seems appropriate to recall again that I was looking at statements and meanings. In presenting an interpretation, I use data extracts as illustrations of specific discourses. I had at one point indicated from which particular group the extracts had originated, e.g. from either the online postings or from the group discussion of the drawings, with the signifiers 'online posting' or 'MA student'. However, I decided to omit these indications and not to differentiate the extracts in this way. I felt that the signifiers were unnecessary. I viewed my accumulated data as a cohesive whole that reverberated with discourses,

and not as separate entities, so there was really no reason to signify where the extracts came from. At times, however, I do indicate if an extract was a discussion extract (MA student) if an extract accompanies a drawing, but I only do this occasionally and chose not to do this consistently. By 'merging' my data in this way and treating it as a whole, I also felt that I may have further protected the anonymity of the speakers; although total anonymity is never guaranteed.

As indicated earlier, I am not looking for the person behind the statement. As discussed in previous chapters, people's talk may be an affect of the discourses they are interpellated by, rather than an expression of their subjectivity. Knowledge interpellates and subjugates subjects. Educators are 'caught' by discourse and knowledge(s) developed in schools and through policy and are locked into meanings afforded by, amongst other things, institutions and policy. Arnesen *et al.*, (2007) suggest that neither policy statements and rhetoric, nor teachers' reflections are 'voices' in any simple notion of 'authenticity' or 'wisdom', but are effects or reflections of reasoning that is formed historically. My intention in this interpretation is to point to this way of reasoning and not to suggest anything about the ethical or professional character of individual persons.

Having acknowledged this, it may seem that I am strongly critical of the discourses and practices that emerged and that are presented in my reading. This was intentional as I wanted to attempt to in some way illuminate what I regarded as insidious and benign discourse(s) that circulate, and point to the invisible effects and potential harm that can be done to those who are its objects. I believe that the way that inclusion is talked about has implications for practice.

Structure of the reading

This reading sometimes homes in on details and at other times it tries to glimpse the movements of and within the culture of schooling (MacLure, 2003). It is organised and presented in a relatively thematic way that may appear to go against the grain of a poststructuralist research approach. As touched upon in Chapter 3, thinking in terms of themes or categories can reflect closure and can be reductionist or essentialist. However, I found this to be the most comprehensible way of 'ordering' and presenting the reading. This is a potential limitation of my study.

In constructing an interpretation or reading, I was aiming to provide both a plausible movement from the data to analysis to reading, and a persuasive account. In presenting statements and discursive formations I aimed to show the characteristics of inclusion and to 'map out' a picture of the world that the discourse(s) of it represents.

In the reading I present data extracts that I refer to, at times, as 'data descriptions' that I felt were representative of exemplar descriptions, or certain discursive statements, that coagulated to form discursive formations. The discourses that circulated and the discursive formations that were located were associated with, and coalesced around, three predominant themes of 'policy'; 'othering' and 'self'. These three themes may be considered to be the dominant discourses that emerged from my study. I considered them to be dominant because of the regularity of their occurrence and because much of what was said or represented about inclusion could be associated in some way with either one or all of these themes. The themes were like a thread running through my data. Although I present and discuss the main discourses under separate headings or sections, they were fluid and interacted with one another.

The discourses (policy, othering and self) frame and form the three parts of this chapter. I consider the character and constructions of the discourses, their associated knowledge(s) and potential effects. The reading opens with a

consideration of policy discourse and, focusing mainly on representations in the drawings, I signify the aspects of the discourses that accorded with rhetoric in inclusive policy. I then present what I term reluctant and 'hesitant' or inclusion.

I then go on to present the data descriptions that were characteristic of an othering discourse. Here, I draw mainly on the online postings, group discussions and field notes. I aimed to show how invisible power is exercised and how sub-discourses, especially around special educational needs, can create and reinforce discourses and practices of othering. I then 'leave the data behind', as it were, and discuss the potential effects of this 'recognisable' discourse.

The third part of this chapter is similarly structured, with a weaving in of selective data that characterised 'self' discourse(s), followed by a leaving behind of the data for a more in-depth discussion on knowledge(s) and potential discursive effects. Although I amassed a considerable amount of data, this reading is not particularly 'data-driven' and is more discursive in itself and influenced by theoretical concerns.

The discourses of othering and self, and their sub-discourses, appeared to reverberate with a recurrent inside/outside theme. For example, the discourses characterised inclusion as being about the child and their perceived inherent needs rather than about outside forces in the environment. This inside/outside dichotomy was prevalent in various ways and by varying degrees. Sometimes it was highly visible, whereas at other times it was hidden. At times in this reading, I consider the ways in which the opposition between inside/outside was fashioned and framed within and throughout the discourses, and the implication or effects of this in relation to the construction of inclusion.

i. Policy as practice

Policy may be regarded as an influential form of social practice and an expression of power that can 'normalise views of how the world is' (Armstrong, 2005, p.145). Ideas and messages within policy, like ideology, can become pervasive, seem 'natural' and re-affirm societal assumptions about the way things should or ought to be. Through policy discourse, certain ways of thinking and acting become available to us, while other ways remain 'un-thought and unperformed' (St Pierre, 1997, p.183).

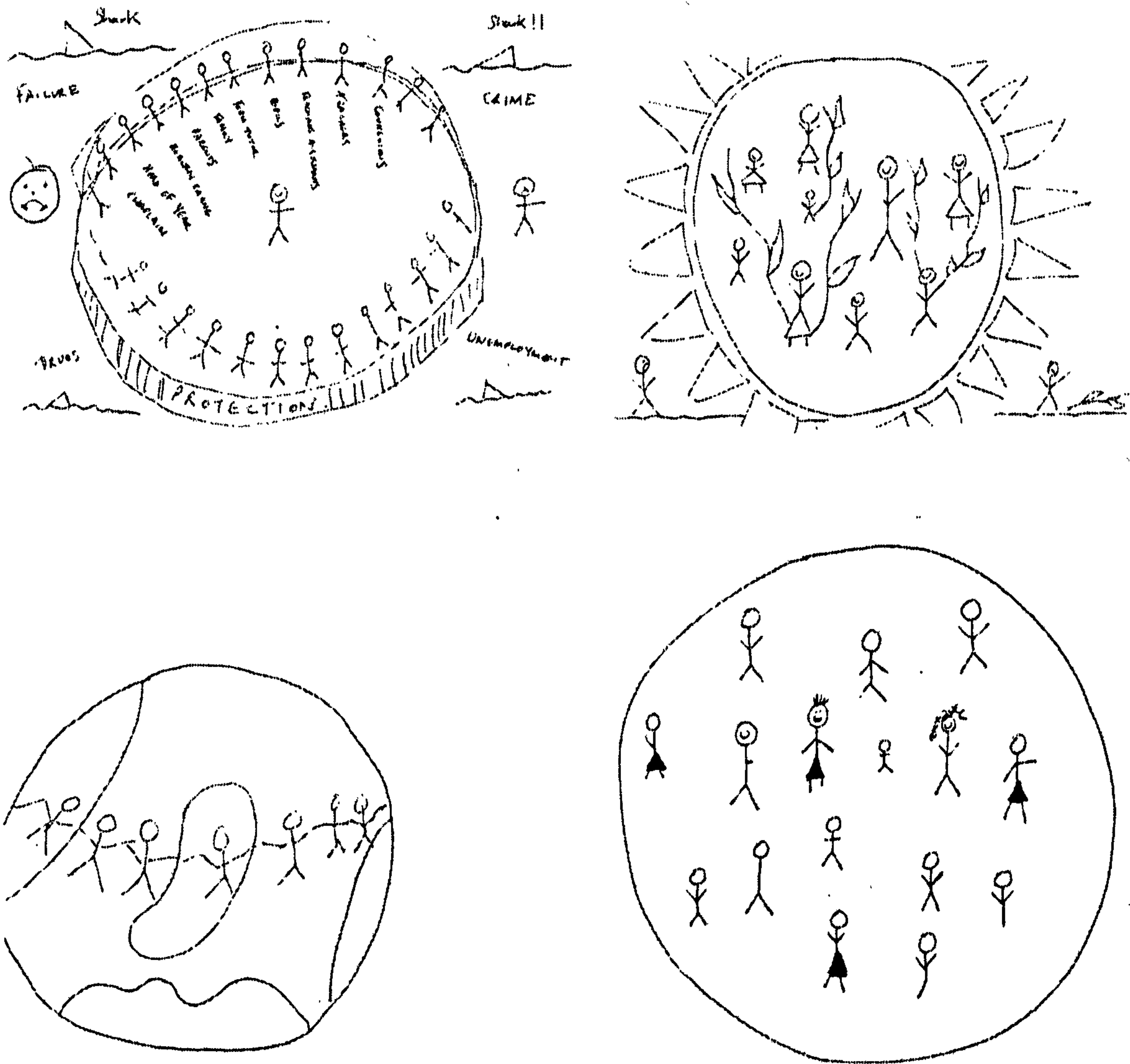
Peter Clough (1999) investigated notions of difference through stories and fictional narratives. He showed how teachers' thinking could be understood in the context of their workplace experiences and how these in turn were expressions of given policies at both local and national level. His research questions emerged directly from the realisation of how intimately tied up personal and professional experiences are with their political contexts. Clough links attitudes to consciousness and suggests that consciousness is to some extent an effect of structural and political processes in society and that 'organism and organisation' share structures such that 'to know either fully is to know the other' (Clough, 1999, in Clough and Nutbrown, 2002, p.152). Policies may be viewed not just as statements of intent but as instruments of power / knowledge relations, through which identities are constructed.

In Chapter 1, I suggested that the ideas and messages within current inclusive policy appear to remain quite nebulous and vague. The messages within policy may fail to specify who or what is being talking about, however, they are difficult to refute because they seem to embody common sense values that are indisputable. My data suggested that consciousness is to some extent an effect of, or is effected by, structures and policy (Clough, 1999) and these potentially shape the discourse of inclusion. The policy rhetoric of inclusion and interpretations of it appeared to be quite closely linked in my study, demonstrating that policy can permeate thinking and consolidate certain understandings into public consciousness (Armstrong, 2005).

Circles of inclusion

I have used the circle here as a starting point to illustrate this point. In the drawings, inclusion was interpreted in diverse ways, but drawings of circles or roundness predominated and Figure 1 shows some examples of the circles drawn:

Figure 1: Circles of inclusion



(The text in the top left-hand drawing is a little small and rather than tamper with or distort the image in any way, I will list the words used in the 'circle'. They read: 'chaplains, Head of Year, health and caring, parents, family, form tutor, pupils, teaching assistants, teachers, connexions'.)

After doing her drawing, one teacher commented that she felt that when it came to conceptualising inclusion, she was indeed 'going round in circles'. The circle or ring theme was not confined to the drawings:

Life is a circle! We satellite around the children - running in rings trying to make sense of it (inclusion)! I feel like I'm constantly running in circles, but we gotta keep running!

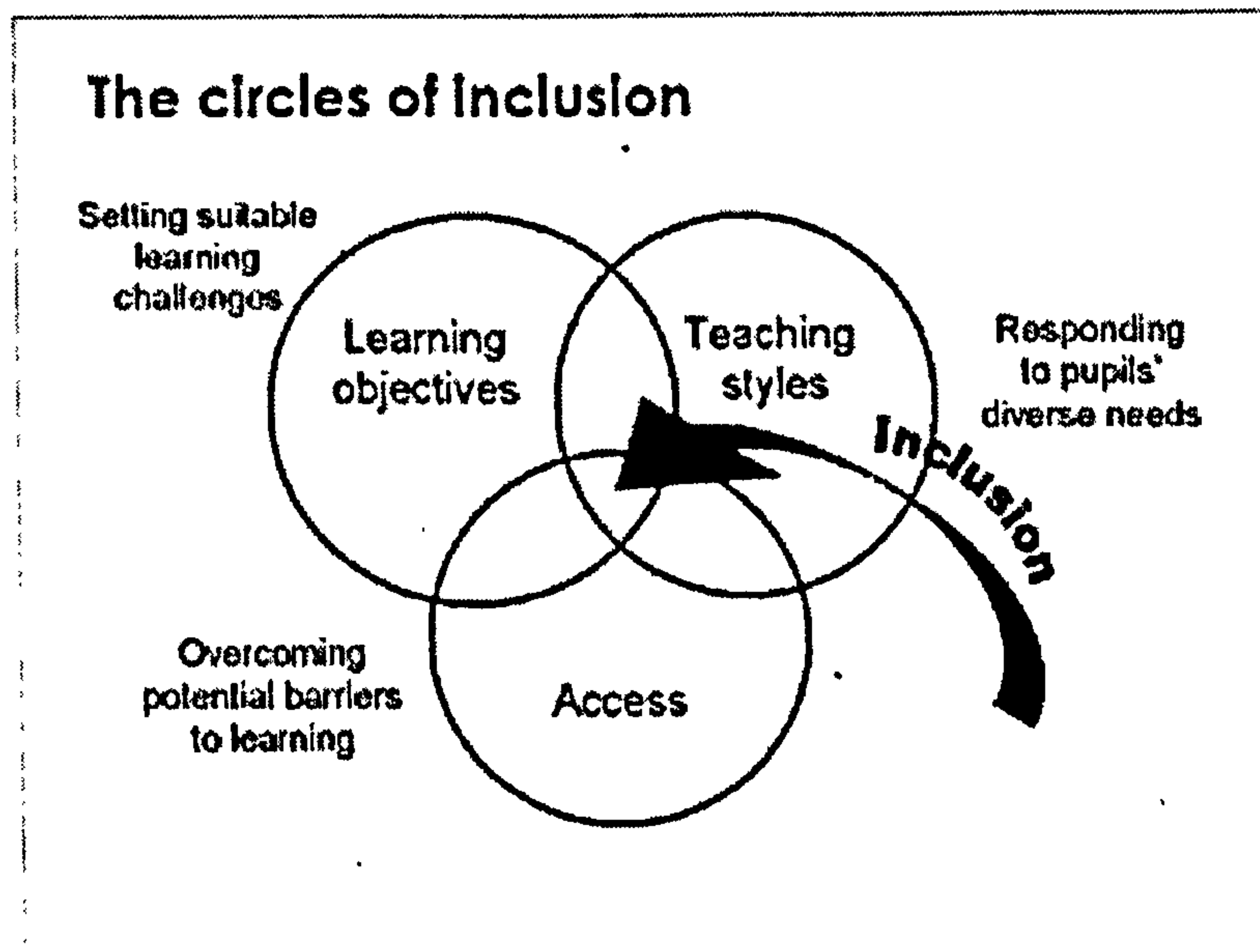
The circles drawn were sometimes explained as representative of 'protection' and of safety and they also appeared to represent and evoke a sharing, or a community-oriented 'joining together':

I think I got carried away and did lots of little pictures! I've done about the joining of hands in a circle and... like about inclusion being about 'joining' and about it being about all people. Smiling. Erm ...these two here are saying 'my needs are being met so we are happy'.

The circle is an interesting shape that conjures various connotations and associations with security, protection and belonging. It has been a popular form for pagan worship since ancient times, as demonstrated by numerous stone monuments found around the world, and is seen as a protective barrier, a sacred space or container of energy. Bentham's panopticon, that Foucault refers to in relation to surveillance, was a circular structure; reflecting a confined interiority. Circles appear to be the preferred figuration used by policy-makers to symbolise inclusion.

As shown in Figure 2, educators are encouraged by the government to think about inclusion in terms of circles. In its policy guidance and advice on inclusion, The Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2001) advises, in a potentially contradictory way, that 'the three circles are often in use in classrooms, but usually not all together' and 'all three circles need to work together to ensure inclusion'.

Figure 2: The DfES circles of inclusion



http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/local/ePDs/leading_on_intervention/site/u1/s2/2.htm)

Within the data, as well as links and connections made in terms of policy images, like the circle, there was a shared 'professional' discourse of inclusion that accorded with and resonated closely with current inclusive policy rhetoric. Recurring and repeated words and policy-derived statements included: 'meeting learning needs' and 'raising pupil self-esteem' (DfES, 2004) and in particular 'every child matters' (DfES, 2003a):

Inclusion to me means every child matters, every child should be able to be included in day to day school activities. Every child should have the right to learn.

The word inclusion means that every child's needs are met. That every child matters.

The meaning of inclusion for me is that every child matters, therefore a child should be allowed the opportunity to be educated in a school of their choice.

Aspects of the relatively new language of Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003a) that was present within the data appeared to be emerging as a normative educational discourse in relation to inclusion and I present and discuss this emergent discourse in the final part of this chapter.

Policy rhetoric may have secured a particular understanding of inclusion as a 'fundamental good' within a progressive narrative and there appeared to be an acknowledgement of this way of thinking and talking about it within my study. The messages within inclusion are appealing and there was affirmation of inclusion and agreement that it was valuable and beneficial; that it was an idealistic 'good thing':

Inclusion is a good thing... it benefits everyone

Children will reap the rewards of inclusion in the next ten years or so

Inclusion is for everyone, no-one is left out

In a recent study, Lawson *et al.*, (2006) found that teaching assistants' definitions of inclusion seemed to accord with at least some aspects of government, local authority or institutional rhetoric and discourse, but that personal stories focused on the human and personal aspects within a 'care and support' discourse, and that 'rhetoric and reality' were only tenuously linked. Lawson *et al.*, (2006) also found, as I did, that inclusion was generally seen as a fundamental good, but the affirmation of it, the 'yes', was more often than not modified by a doubt, or by a 'but'.

Yes /but

The 'yes / buts' and hesitations about inclusion were very evident in my study. There was a recurring discourse of doubt, with a reluctance to accept that everyone, all pupils, can or should be included:

Don't get me wrong; I'm not against inclusion, but not for everyone

The ideals of inclusion are great. But you do get that slightly uncomfortable PC gone mad feeling when you think about inclusion. You

know it's a good thing and you should be advocating it all you can. But you know that sometimes it just isn't the right thing to want to place every single child in a mainstream setting

Hesitancies and reluctance to acknowledge 'full' inclusion were expressed in relation to behaviour:

I'm not sure about inclusion. In my Year Two class of 27 pupils, I had one child with ADHD, one with Autism, and two with severe behaviour/emotional difficulties, throwing furniture, hitting staff and children and so on. The remaining children in the class were bystanders in a battle. As for one particular child who caused major problems well, they learnt that in that school they could basically do what they wanted - they were 'included' in whatever they wanted or did not want to do. Surely inclusion has gone too far in a situation like this?

Behaviour appeared to be a concern. War-like metaphors were frequently used, as in the above extract, when inclusion was linked to behaviour. Behaviour was frequently identified as the benchmark or yardstick by which inclusion, as a 'thing', was judged to have 'gone too far'.

Other reluctances and hesitancies to acknowledge full inclusion related to physicality and school placement. There was a division between mainstream and special school sectors that appeared to influence some of the yes/buts and doubts:

All children should be included but I have worked with children who just would not cope in a mainstream setting.

I work with a little group that would be better off in special school

This (policy) discourse on inclusion appears to be configured around doubt. There was an acknowledgement that inclusion is a fundamental good- who could argue with it? – *but* not for everyone. This is one of the paradoxes of inclusion in the current context. Inclusion for some (the majority?), but not for everyone. This evokes a division – between those who are and those who are not included. The yes / buts and hesitancy discourse around inclusion suggests that when inclusion is thought and spoken about, it is not in relation

to it as a political project (based on, for example, rights and entitlement)) but is much more resonant with models of integration.

Hesitancy

Located in the discussions around the drawings, there was a 'creative stammering' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.98). There was hesitancy and uncertainty around presenting the drawings and interpretations that I did not perceive as being necessarily associated with the fear of doing a drawing, but possibly more associated with inclusion itself. This hesitancy suggested for me that inclusion, in the non-quantifiable sense, is not something that can be easily talked about. Interpretations and meanings of inclusion did not always roll off the tongue with certainty:

I think mine's a bit pessimistic really...erm...I've learned something about myself I think...erm...yes. (Pause). Because when I'm putting children on programmes er...you know ... for inclusion reasons...you know...it would be like a work based learning programme or a BTEC in construction...I only ...I've just learned this about myself...I only ever look at the individual pupil...so that's why I never I looked at the whole picture of...a number of pupils and the whole school really...I'm not sure

The above extract perhaps signifies that commonly used frames of reference, or discourses, that create meaning are inappropriate, inadequate and lacking when it comes to meaning making and inclusion. Inclusion can be experienced as a *sheer happening*, but cannot necessarily be neatly captured, commodified or coded by words. The uncertainties represented 'spaces, gaps or schisms' and not a lack of knowledge (Allan, 2006, p. 130), for future exploration.

The repeated words '*I've learned something about myself*' may be seen as representing a discourse of hope in that the speaker was engaged in a reflective, hesitant struggle with his/her thoughts and beliefs. The speaker was perhaps engaging in a personal line of flight, struggling towards the 'un-thought' and other possibilities, and was perhaps 'performing' the 'real meaning' of inclusion in confronting or analysing his or her own values and ways of thinking. He or she was possibly actively doing ethical work on

themselves (Allan, 1999). This hesitancy may be seen as a deviation from the other discourses and it can represent a form of resistance, in that the speaker was struggling and was not completely 'caught' in discourse.

There was an acknowledgement that inclusion is now commonplace and an accepted part of practice in schools, without an awareness of where it came from or what drove it:

I wonder if I have my own set of ideas of what inclusion is but never a clear understanding of what the term really is being used for and where it has come from. I have just assumed a set of ideals as the norm

I now turn to consider the second discourse that emerged from the data. This was an othering discourse that was related to special educational needs.

ii. Othering and Special Educational Needs

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much.
(Joseph Conrad: Heart of Darkness).

A prevailing or dominant discourse that was threaded throughout the data descriptions was one associated with alterity or othering of perceived and frequently marked out or named difference. Spivak (1987) appears to regard othering as the playing out of the process whereby colonial powers create their subjects. Said (1978) also uses the term in relation to post-colonial studies and suggests that self is defined less by what one is and more by what one is not, through a process of 'othering'. I use the term 'othering' to mean a process of marginalisation, connected to socio-cultural power relations. The above Joseph Conrad reference captures, in some ways, the notion of othering as it is understood in my study.

According to Carlson (2005, p.40) the identity of the normal citizen is 'constituted through a project of constituting an abnormal other who

represents the irrational, the undisciplined, the delinquent and the exotic'. The other serves to confirm our own normality.

I found that discourses of inclusion appear to seek to subject otherness to reason; or to a corrective fixing. It appeared to be constructed within a powerful 'othering' framework. From their study, Croll and Moses (2005, p.2) found that in schools, inclusion was always defined (presented or performed) in terms of attempts to include individual, excluded 'others' who would still, essentially, be seen as 'others', or as 'they', owing to some characteristic that was seen to make them different. In my study, there was a resounding sense of otherness and a tendency for the data descriptions to homogenize the majority of students or pupils and set up a division between the majority (the 'us) and a minority that was presented as other or as special (the them').

'These children'

Processes of othering were particularly evident in the recurrence of a phrase that is a taken for granted part of everyday discourse and is frequently used by politicians: 'these people'. The phrases 'these people' or 'these children' frequently appeared in my data, and 'these children' is prevalent in many of the data description extracts that I have used throughout this reading. It was so prevalent that, during analysis, I almost became used to not seeing it. The selective examples below exemplify this particular language:

The ideas and sentiments behind inclusion are all well and good; but how can I have these pupils in my class when I am using dangerous machinery?

it doesn't make much difference if labels and language changes in moves towards inclusion. The crux of the matter is that these children do need help.

Parents will always be protective towards their young and even more so if they have problems so educating and including these people will certainly help the way forward

Inclusion is when every child's needs are met and difficulties overcome. These children may not necessarily be the ones who have a statement, but every child.

The seemingly benign statement 'these people' may be regarded as a vehicle for constructing and reinforcing divisions of difference and categories (of otherness).

(Neo-traditional) special educational needs

In my data, the minority, the special, the 'others' or 'them', were frequently overtly categorised, marked out and labelled. Where it was signified that inclusion is not for everyone, the 'not everyone' – the 'some' - were generally 'identified' and overtly named, for example, as 'special educational needs'. The term special educational needs was a recurring pattern of emphasis in my data and was a taken for granted signifier. It became a discursive regularity and was frequently given its commonplace acronym 'SEN', both in text and in speech.

There were categories, or grids of specification, within the discourse of special educational needs. Autism, degree of 'need' and 'problem behaviour' were specified as determinants of inclusion:

I feel that sometimes the total inclusion of some SEN pupils, particularly with extreme challenging behaviour, may have a detrimental effect on remaining class pupils

For some children...it's more beneficial not to be inclusive. For example, the severely autistic types that Jane teaches

Inclusion is a good thing but not such a good thing for special needs children with severe learning needs

There was an unproblematic grouping and ordering of children by certain labels and stratification, with identified and identifiable special or 'problem populations' who were often seen as alienated or socially excluded, this is demonstrated by the closing phrase in this comment:

I always took inclusion to mean that every child was entitled to a mainstream education by whatever means necessary to meet their individual needs. In playgroup, this meant we offered places to all children, including those with English as a second language - using translation sites via Internet - Downs, ADHD, Aspergers and Autistic spectrum - via additional specialised help where necessary - and then also all the rejected children from other settings

Needs

As indicated in Part 1 of this chapter, the phrases 'meeting learning needs' or fulfilling 'needs' were prevalent in the data descriptions, for example:

I would consider inclusion a characteristic of a civilised society in the way that it caters for its members to fulfil their needs in such a manner that fairness is maintained.

Inclusion is about differentiating an activity to suit everyone's needs.

Inclusion means meeting all aspects of children's needs, physical, intellectual, emotional and social and so on.

There appeared to be an assurance that full coverage would be obtained in meeting all aspects of needs in a totalising way, in the sense that nothing would be left out. The online discourses in particular indicated that a teaching assistant's role is often a supporting one that 'targets' children and their special 'needs' or difficulties, especially if they are attached to the 'SEN' department:

The children in our school have adapted really well to inclusion and to teaching assistants and the support we give, so much so that there are several children who plead with me to sit with them... and they have no special need at all.

Pupils 'needs' were objectified in that, at times within the discourses, they appeared to become detached from the pupil. Needs (as objects) can remain under the exclusive jurisdiction of the 'SEN' department:

I work as a subject specific TA in maths and MFL and find that although I do have a few SEN students, I am not really aware of their needs

because I go to meetings within these departments, not the SEN department.

It was very much taken for granted that meeting needs is an essential part of inclusion. What if we are too busy including disabled pupils and students in our educational system by taking into account their individual needs so that we cannot hear what they say about equity and living together; what if their need would be that they do not want to be addressed as people with needs?

In the online texts, teaching assistants were sometimes positioned, or positioned themselves, as police; in surveilling, searching out and identifying 'needs' and difficulties:

We sometimes have to act as detectives to see the full picture of a child's needs and problems.

This is evocative of a form of surveillance. In Baker's (2002) terms, it becomes a matter of searching for visible signs of pathology and of 'hunting down' perceived deficit.

Once difficulties, or needs, have been identified and marked out, pupils are subject to what might be regarded as a regime that involves observation, surveillance, and examination in the form of monitoring of learning, intervention, 'programmes' and assessments:

In our school, SEN children are put on programmes for inclusion

We use catch up units with our SEN and included children

The above statements suggest that the 'SEN' child' is now 'the included child'. The terms were frequently used interchangeably:

In my school, special needs assistants work separately with an included child.

This is our literacy area...it is an area that is set aside for the teaching assistants to work with included children in year 6

Within my setting, our agenda at the moment is to remove the class away from any aggressive acts of behaviour, leaving the included child observed but not challenged.

There remains a separation, either figuratively or physically, for children identified as 'included'. Observation of the included child can be silent and continuous.

The interchange of terminology (e.g. 'the included child' / 'the SEN child') signifies that Slee's (2001) observation that inclusion is simply special educational needs in a new guise applies to the current context. Slee describes the way that the vocabulary of inclusion and social justice have been adopted and used by special education professionals as 'neo-traditional special educational needs'. New language is used 'to signify its connection to contemporary attitudinal and policy shifts', while the underlying traditional assumptions of pathology of the 'failing' individual student remains un-touched (Slee, 2001a, p.117). As discussed in Chapter 2, inclusionists suggest that inclusion may simply become a reconstruction of traditional special education (Slee and Allan, 2001), or as Clough (1999, p.65) put it, just 'old wine in new bottles'. The interpretations given in my study were, more often than not, restricted to a neo-traditional special needs discursive framework, suggesting that the discourse of inclusion relies on Slee's (2001a) neo-traditional special educational knowledge.

Named difference

There was a proliferation of a labelling discourse and an objectification of 'the labelled', within the discussions and postings. A within-child deficit and a 'medical model' (Oliver, 1996; Thomas and Loxley, 2001) of need, where children are pathologised, was a particular grid of specification. There was a diagnostic language and patterns of emphasis within this language that described children 'with' specific medicalised conditions:

It's not fair to have a child with, say, autism in a mainstream class because they have an illness that may have an effect on the education of other children.

Deficit discourse was frequently associated with non-compliance and deviance:

We have a boy with Aspergers who was included whose behaviour deteriorated once he was diagnosed. He used it as an excuse to misbehave.

There was also a sense that certain prevailing medicalised 'conditions' and 'syndromes' have a disease-like characteristic, and that 'marked out difference' creates a form of spectacle. Autistic Spectrum Disorder was referred to its acronym ASD throughout my data and was a strongly 'marked out' difference. There was sometimes an accompanying sense of fear or revulsion, as evoked by these frank extracts:

It makes me cringe...the idea of ASD in mainstream

Having pupils with severe ASD in a mainstream would amount to a floor show, for the benefit of the other pupils

It would be unsettling for the other young children in the class to have someone who is autistic or, say, tube fed

Within the labelling discourse, there was a recurrent emphasis on 'difficulty', 'need' or 'problem'. Certain categories were presented as especially problematic in terms of learning or achievement:

I've got an autistic child in my class - not severely autistic but quite far on - who's not going to achieve anything.

This resonates with what Youdell (2004) refers to as 'educational triage', or the 'hopeless cases'. Labels can be useful in that they are indicative of 'needs' and 'signpost' them:

We can often tell which children should be placed under which labels. We know. We don't need an expert to tell us that much

labels can increase the awareness and acceptance in main stream as more and more people are becoming familiar with them; as they are more widely used, they are less threatening so more children can be included

They can also be superfluous:

I don't think it really matters what labels are used by adults to describe pupils learning needs. No matter how politically correct we are, no matter how inclusive, the children will always come up with their own names...in our school the children call it the 'spacca class'.

Labels can secure funding and be reassuring:

The argument for using labels in my opinion has its merits. Parents need to know and understand their children's conditions, often the lack of support available directs them to their own research and the terminology of a child's condition may support this.

Allan (1999) suggests that an effect of neo-liberal market discourse has been that labels have become commodified and become key to obtaining additional resources. This potentially reinforces perceptions of individual deficit and encourages parents and teachers to seek formal acknowledgment of them. The families of statements associated with labels coagulated to create a discursive field that marked out difference and was evocative of otherness.

The Code

Within schools, special needs teachers and teaching assistants are invariably required to follow a distinct set of working practices that reinforce a particular notion of expertise and that constitute and retain what Tomlinson (1996, p.177) referred to as the 'special needs industry'. Practitioners are required to be familiar with the Code of Practice (DfES, 2002), the specified 'areas of need' and recommended procedures, such as the specifically named Statements of Need, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), School Action and School Action Plus, in order to carry out their roles. Value, significance and considerable faith appears be placed upon such procedures:

Inclusion comes under the Code of Practice...

the Code of Practice means that issues of SEN cannot be ignored.

I've only been a TA for a short time and one of my targets is to become more familiar with the Code of Practice and what it means. I need to do this to get HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant status).

The (special) procedures and practices, that are seemingly valorised, can carry a self-evident authority and are presented within a prescribed framework that arguably requires a certain type of 'performance' from those who implement them. The Code offers interventions and strategies. It is important that strategies, that are almost tangible, are deployed and that they work:

Unfortunately, there is no interim magic wand and teachers still need to use the staff room to swap strategies that work with specific classes and individual students.

Practices within the Code appear to enable or facilitate certain pupil positioning(s) within classrooms and allow for a strategic manoeuvring in terms of learning that is seen to be mutually beneficial and effective. The following extract exemplifies this positioning, and also demonstrates how certain pupils who are subject to these procedures and practices are distributed and objectified:

Maths classes are setted. My Senco has ensured that where there is a statemented child there will also be some school action and school action plus children as well so that others get support off the back of the statemented child

The teaching assistant in my class works directly with the pivatted¹ children

¹ Reference to the use of Performance Indicator Value Added Target Setting (PIVATS) in assessing children who do not meet level 1

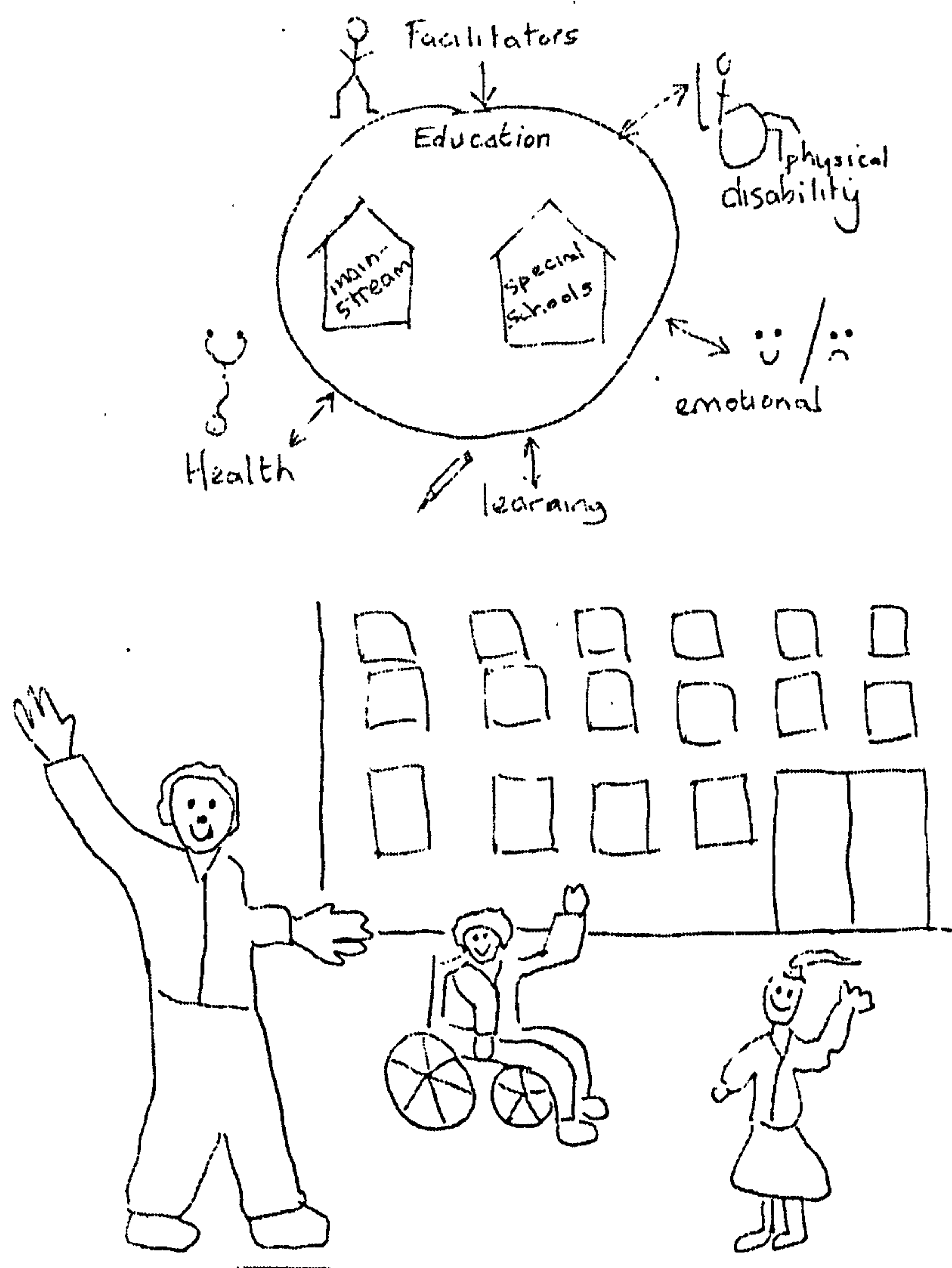
Children are individualised by special needs procedures inherent in the Code of Practice (DfES, 2002) such as statements and individual learning and education plans. They are potentially de-contextualised and become a-historical. Children and their needs are objectified. They become a case. Special educational needs and inclusion involves a network of documentation that can fix the child as an object of panopticon-esque surveillance (Morgan, 2005, p.336) and is illustrative of power-knowledge relationships. The child is placed in a perpetual state of scrutiny, or examination, within a field of power.

Structures and space

Strategic manoeuvring and positioning of individual pupils extended to groups and whole bodies of children in my data in terms of space and how it is used. Elements of the drawings and talk revealed an emphasis on practicalities, physicality and cosmetic adjustments to an 'environment' in terms of access to buildings and 'included' children being 'housed' together under one roof. The word 'environment' recurred throughout my data. This use of language and way of thinking was again reminiscent or evocative of the concept of integration that was evident in the 1970s and 1980s, with its emphasis on the physical placement and accommodation of pupils. According to Allan (1999), increasing dissatisfaction with the spatial and technical connotations of integration led to its replacement with the concept of inclusion.

Although the majority of the drawings depicted circles and enclosed shapes and spaces, there were also pictures of buildings, houses and schools, along with the circles and on the following page Figure 3 provides some examples:

Figure 3: Buildings



References to shared roofs and open doors characterised spatial discourse:

I'm not sure my drawing represents what I mean but...well; we're all under the same roof...so that might be we're not actually in the same building but we're all under one roof

Ok. Mine is about mainstream and special schools working together with a kind of open door policy really where we can learn from each other and through each other

Erm...mine was...erm... a building, a school, whatever setting...with an open door so none is excluded from it. And different types of people who have different needs but all their different needs are being met and no-one is excluded from it. It's an open door

Space is demarcated, despite the 'same roof' and the 'open door'. Twenty or so years ago, in my own practice as a learning support teacher, I worked with groups of variously categorised pupils in dubious educational spaces, including stock cupboards, toilets and broom cupboards. This was, at the time, commonly accepted practice. The issue of the use of space, and the value and hierarchical classifications attributed to it, appears to remain in the current context:

The SEN department in our school is separate and other kids speak of it as the base where the thick kids work.

In the following extract, inclusion is used as a disciplinary device:

How inclusion works in a school environment can mean something different. There is an inclusion room where pupils are sent if they disrupt or generally step out of line. Here they are excluded from their peers.

The use of outside space was also demarcated and differentiated:

At the school where I work...I think my school is inclusive...the SEN pupils were actively encouraged to be out and about at break times but this did not go down well with some parents and midday supervisors.

There was frequent reference to onsite 'units', either as designated spaces of prestige:

We are inclusive school but we have a separately funded dyslexia unit. The children who are lucky enough to get a place (there are only 16 places available) in the unit are referred to as 'SPLD pupils'. Staff have a higher expectation of these children that they have of the ones who attend the SEN unit, event though the SEN unit has a lot of dyslexic students who did not gain a place in the unit for one reason or another.

Pupils we have in our PLD unit have 80% of their timetable in mainstream they are accepted in the school by pupils as 'one of us' and interact together.

Or as outmoded spaces:

Our school became a popular choice for parents of children with Aspergers. We are pleased with our success with these pupils but now are in the unusual situation of five Aspergers pupils in the same class. It was easier to keep them all together and they benefit from each others support, but if this continues we could end up with a complete group and then that would be more like a unit which is exactly what we are trying to replace.

Our Senco department works effectively. We have our own room with no title on the door, this way we are not seen as the special needs unit. (Although, our gifted and talented co-ordinator has his title in gilt edged capitals on his door).

The bracketed 'aside' on the above extract is particularly revealing in terms of hierarchies of space, and the use of it as a social status signifier.

The discourses around the use of space conjure territorial maps; with 'good and bad' or desirable / undesirable designated spaces. Spaces are designated for 'them' and 'the others'. As Prosser and Loxley (2007) observe, there is no a-spatial space and classroom or school space is not a neutral container but one that can be read and has influence. The repartition of space into areas, social arenas and sites is not 'natural' or neutral; the use of space is political.

The field of power is invariably invisible but special partitioning makes it visible. Physical, cultural and social space is used in education to produce and reproduce particular power relations between different groups in society (Armstrong, 1999). In schools, pupils are positioned and located in hierarchical ways. The physical positioning of children is significant and it has effects. A school building is an important space for the playing out of struggles and conflicts. Schools are designed with their spaces divided up and allocated to different groups for different activities, allowing for different social and cultural reproduction to be organised and for insidious processes of othering to be sustained. Armstrong suggests that:

the spatial repartition of children...produces and reproduces values and meanings which hegemonically sustain difference and exclusions. These values and meanings are seen as natural because of the familiarity of the practices and discourses which surround them. (Armstrong, 1999, p.76).

The spatial (panoptic) ordering of pupils in schools may seem natural but it can also be seen as a form of discipline. Discipline proceeds from an organisation of individuals in space and it requires a specific enclosure of space (Rabinow, 1991, p.17). Disciplinary space 'tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed' (Foucault, 1977, p.143). The use of space and how space is delineated and used in schools may be seen as a dividing practice, a technique of domination and as another mode of objectification.

Linked to the use of space was a recurrent reference to the term 'environment'. The Standards site advocates the use of the term 'environment'. The Inclusion Programme (DfES, 2007) aims to raise teacher's skills and confidence so that they can provide a 'quality learning environment'. What a quality learning environment consists of or looks like remains unclear. Inclusion was seen in terms of an environment and the term reverberated throughout the descriptions:

Inclusion for me is about an individual person being included in all forms of learning and life; the individual having the opportunity to play upon their strengths, feel valued and equal in all environments.

Inclusion is about involving everyone in the school environment

Inclusion means being fully part of a learning environment

Inclusion is about ensuring that the resources, environment and support for each child are in place

Inclusion is about children feeling accepted as a person and comfortable in their environment

Inclusion is involving all children within an educational environment that addresses their individual needs

Inclusion was rarely associated with the notion of community or with a world. One extract did refer to community; in terms of adjusting to it:

Ultimately we are preparing young people to live in our community and by running an inclusive school we are preparing them socially to fit into the community in later life.

Audit and performance

Inclusion was presented as a struggle, particularly by some of the teachers who took part in the drawings and subsequent discussion. A drawing (Figure 4) depicted teachers struggling with bundles of paper.



Figure 4: 'Burdened by bureaucracy'

The frustration that bureaucracy can bring was reflected in the accompanying comment:

I think teachers see inclusion as something that would be achievable if they weren't bogged down and burdened by the weight of bureaucracy

As discussed in the latter part of Chapter 3, the context in which inclusion operates is propelled by notions of school effectiveness that is symbiotic with the elements of the broader culture of 'performativity'; to capture the ways in

which nothing is taken to be real unless it can be measured and accounted for. Indeed, 'needs' are being commodified and accounted for.

A discourse of performance and performativity emerged in my study and there were signs that inclusion has become a commodity within an audit culture:

The last school I worked in had a big push towards achieving the 'inclusion award' in schools This involved 'including' children who would otherwise have been sent to special schools. Due to the school just achieving the 'inclusion mark', it seemed that the management of the school were reluctant to exclude the children for what I would term as 'dangerous behaviour'. They also stated that it would look bad on the school statistics if these children were excluded.

An audit and performance discourse was characterised by an emphasis on reiterated statements that referred to tests and pupil 'levels' of attainment. There was a concern with 'meeting targets', measurement, pupil levels and mutual teacher-pupil 'performativity' in terms of academic success for those pupils who were seen as 'under-achievers' and who had 'dropped off the bottom of the scale'; for example:

Because my experiences of teaching children who have dropped off the bottom of the scale at key stage 2 - you know, their maths is just basically non-existent - their numeracy is very low. So my experiences of inclusion and understanding is involving these children in a maths lesson and getting them to enjoy the maths and the numeracy and actually experience some success really...to raise their game

We have a dedicated English TA and Science TA; this seems to have paid off. As well as supporting the bottom groups they are able to work with pupils in intervention groups who are not secure at level 4.

The use of intervention, a differentiated curriculum and adapted worksheet was seen as synonymous with 'meeting learning needs', pupil performativity and with 'levels' of attainment:

(Pointing to figures in drawing) Somebody is doing 2 plus 3 there, in the class, and they've got different worksheets. Ones got worksheet A and ones got worksheet B and it doesn't matter if they're all doing different

things, as long as they're doing something that meets their needs and that's at their level

My class teacher starts with a normal lesson plan that goes up for one lot and down for the others

In relation to performativity, the notion of educational triage (Youdell, 2004) and hopelessness that was referred to earlier was again evident:

I want to get my group of under-achievers through the exam but it's a struggle all the time. I feel like I am setting them up to fail

What's the point of differentiating, taking all the pupil's needs into account, if you then put them through the indignity of an exam?

We spend our time with the disruptive pupils whose grades we shall never be able to change...

The discourses surrounding performance indicated a regime of classification; with those that 'can' perform and those who struggle and who are marked out as 'under-achievers'. This regime of classification appears to assume that the majority, the *un-named*, have similar ways of learning and pace and order of development. The notion that most pupils learn the same way is a widely held form of pedagogical reasoning, based on theories of developmental psychology that is embedded in schools across countries. Within an audit culture, so much in education now evolves around the quantifiable, a grasping of content and the certain. Learning is presented as a certain journey with fixed subjects towards a fixed end.

Pupils are assumed to be able, productive, skilled and accountable individuals and they are assumed to fit the construction of 'the modernist, unitary, humanistic subject' (Chinn in Goodley, 2006, p.321). Students or pupils who may not fit, or who disrupt the subject construction of the autonomous learner become problematic, 'under-achievers' who have 'needs', or are seen as 'lacking' in some way. The notion of achieving academic excellence is troubled by those who might never be capable of, or be interested in, such achievements (Goodley, 2006).

In the next section of this chapter, I temporarily leave the data behind to discuss more generally the potential implications of what has been presented so far.

Discussion

The term 'special educational needs' does not appear to have any real inherent meaning, but it can function to reinforce an enduring otherness by conferring a not-like-us value judgement (Potts, 1998). Pupils are seen to have 'special' needs that, by implication, differ from universal, human needs, thus indicating a division between 'them' and the 'normal ones' or those with the power of defining. As illustrated, special educational needs was a recurrent taken for granted signifier in the discourses. It signified and marked out difference. My reading of the data suggests that special educational needs remains a powerful discourse that is a marker of abnormality, deficiency or lack. Educators continue to put faith in the practices and sometimes revered procedures, like The Code of Practice (DfES, 2002) that offer a way of identifying and fixing this lack.

The discourse of inclusion justifies the construction of particular children as other and legitimises the continued regulation and disciplining of their lives (Cannella, 1999). School practices, especially in the area of special needs, appear to attempt to want to 'master' forms of otherness. Forms of otherness are illuminated and made highly visible. In schools, there is an apparent regime of visibility and sayability of what can be discussed; with a need to 'know' the child, to know and own his or her 'soul'. Usher (2000, p.184) suggests that in attempts to master otherness we lose sight of the unnameable and the unsayable in the Other and we therefore lose a sense of ethical responsibility by this attempted mastery. We strive to say the unsayable and name the unnameable. We attempt to account for everything and resolve problems, to master reality as it really is. There may be positives of othering. It may, for example, create space for alternative oppositional voices outside the normal or hegemonic discourse and may forge a collective solidarity (Carlson, 2005).

The special educational needs systems, discourses and practices that individualise and 'mark out' children as different appear to have transferred to inclusion. The 'gap' and dilemma that difference creates appears to have been filled by discourses and practices that continue to classify, stratify, discipline and attempt to correct or normalise. Certain 'types' of pupils continue to be 'marked out', targeted, surveilled and are seen as 'the included', and others are not. This is one of the paradoxes of inclusion.

Discourses and practices of special educational needs are presented in pseudo-scientific terms and appear to be heavily influenced by psychology and psychology-derived theories of human development. The knowledge base that is privileged, and is authoritative, in special needs discourse is that of the psy-complex (e.g. psychology, psychiatry). Educational theories of how children learn, such as those that are commonly used in initial teacher training programmes (e.g. Piaget) and associated practices, appear to draw heavily on psychology and its theories and findings. According to Rose (1996, p.3) psychology is an 'intellectual technology', a way of making visible and intelligible certain features of persons, their conducts, and their relations with one another. The discipline of psychology provides us with a particular knowledge about ourselves, and we subject ourselves, by controlling and regulating ourselves, to this knowledge (Millei, 2005); so that effects of knowledge are modes of control. Educators acquire and utilise psychological knowledge(s) about children, teaching and learning, by exercising this knowledge they are exerting power; at the same time they are controlled by this knowledge.

The psyche-oriented language, technicist terminologies used and associated 'specialist' practices can privilege professional judgement and promote powerful expert discourses. Tomlinson (1996) suggests that it is the experts, rather than recipients, who derive the greatest benefit from the practice of special education. Rose (1999b, p.134) claims that expertise, is 'characteristically deployed around problems, exercising a diagnostic gaze, grounded in a claim to truth', and that 'the soul of the young person has become the object of governance through expertise'.

Expertise

It may not be so surprising to find that (neo-traditional) special educational needs emerged as a dominant discourse, as most of the teaching assistants and some of teachers who took part in this research are, by their own account, closely associated with the practices and procedures relating to it. Teaching assistants and other support staff, such as nursery nurses, have traditionally worked alongside children categorised as 'special' and are, like Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (Sencos), immersed in the operation of special educational needs (Cole, 2005). They are part of the 'special educational needs infrastructure and equilibrium' within schools. (Slee, 2001, p.170).

Teaching assistants who undertake the Foundation Degree at my workplace invariably define or describe their role as supporting, or teaching, 'pupils with special needs' and are usually managed and mentored by their school Senco. A considerable number of them are now Sencos themselves or have some kind of similar role in 'managing special needs' (Dunne *et al.*, 2008a), partly as a consequence of professional development and possibly as a consequence of their increased perceived 'expertise' in specific needs.

The Warnock Report (1978) talked a great deal about professional and specialist expertise in meeting needs (Fulcher, 1989, p.155) and there has since been a continued 'formidable proliferation' of the notion of expertise within the discourse and practices of special needs. Cole (2005) found that many secondary school Sencos, and, by association, many teaching assistants, saw themselves as the leading expert on special needs and Dyson and Millward (2000) similarly found that an emphasis on specialist expertise is seen as something that is positive and to be encouraged. According to Cole (2005), the creation of the 'special' educator as a professional expert is still under construction. Training and professional development in inclusion and / or special needs can create the idea that practitioners cannot cope unless they become 'experts'.

Identity

The discourses that guide responses to children and young people who are marked out as special continues to involve constructing or defining problems in relation to a label or with reference to individual deficits. An accompanying 'intervention discourse' perceives there is a lack or deficit to be rectified or fixed. The constitution of a child through a discourse of special educational needs is not innocent; it produces effects. The dangers inherent in categorising and labelling have been widely documented in the past. Armstrong (1999, p.78), for example, suggests that labels can become a defining feature of the child 'with the individual child, as person, becoming lost behind the label'. Pupils can become essentialised in relation to a category of need or a label, become defined by it, and special identities can be nurtured and shaped. Focusing upon 'needs', which invariably become labels or difficulties, 'tends towards the negation of all other elements that fuse to produce the constellation of the person' (Slee, 2001a, p.117). According to Armstrong (2005, p.146) special education operates 'as a mechanism suppressing the alternative cultural representations of dis-empowered identities'. Conceptualizing an individual in deficit terms or in terms of particular needs also focuses on the 'inside' rather than the 'outside' and discourages a consideration of the contingencies in the social context.

The categories in which children are talked about may be seen, in Foucauldian terms, as grids of specification. These classify and regulate pupil and student identities, bodies, spaces, and social practices in different relations of knowledge and power. As discussed in Chapter 3, categories create classifications for previously unknown 'types' of people. These classifications then affect the possibilities for personhood.

Youdell (2006a) suggests that the discourses and practices of special educational needs are a powerfully constitutive force. Discourses are constitutive in that they construct particular versions of reality. Individuals can be constituted as special, disruptive, incapable and so on. A child caught in special needs practices and procedures is invariably, and by degrees,

positioned as being 'less than; 'other' and in need of fixing. He or she has been designated as such. The discourse produces a place or position for the subject and individuals identify with, or recognise, those positions that the discourse constructs. Further to this, Youdell (2006a) explains that the act of designation constitutes the individual or the subject as if they were *already* 'special educational needs' and that the performative discourse of special educational needs itself *produces* that which it declares, e.g. 'SEN' identities. The subjects that the discourse produces are figures who personify the particular forms of knowledge that the discourse produces.

The norm

The most hidden of the unspoken categories that emerged from my data, and at the same time perhaps the most evident category, was the category of 'normal'. This is the starting point for most of the categorizations, the normality against which the other categories are constructed and against which the 'others' become visible. The scrutinized, labelled 'outsider', or 'other', must conform to the norm and must make efforts to be able to meet the expectations of what it means to be normal.

Disability researchers and commentators (e.g. Baker, 2002; Graham and Slee, 2005) have suggested that, in the present context, 'inclusion' can be seen to be about absorbing alterity, or 'making normal' perceived difference. From this perspective, inclusion is tied up with normalisation and refers to a 'making normal' of any perceived difference or deficit. Several researchers have offered a conceptual model to exemplify how the contemporary notion of inclusion becomes a process of assimilation and normalisation (e.g. Baker, 2002; Graham and Slee, 2005; Graham and Slee, 2008) and I draw upon these ideas further.

The word 'inclusion' alludes to a bringing in to a centre or a whole, and this centre may be represented as normality. In this normalised space we might find 'common sense', hegemony and normative myths. Within the normative centre we might also find the desired norm, for example, the self-regulated

child who learns according to the dominant approaches or paradigms. These paradigms speak to proper approaches to learning in order to calculate the proper dispositions and sensitivities of reason so that children become reasoned citizens of the future (Popkewitz, 2001).

From the illusory and discursively produced normative centre, that is comprised of unnamed characteristics of dominant groups, constructions of otherness and the designation of marginal out-of-centre positions become possible. Discourses of reason work to construct both centre and margin by defining and universalising tacit standards or ways of being from which specific others can then be declared to deviate (Graham, 2006). The explicit naming and identification of particular groups or individuals to demonstrate inclusion, functions both to locate, or point out, difference and to naturalise normalised ways of being. Abnormal is extricated from the shadows of the normal and becomes subject to an 'uninterrupted play of calculated gazes' (Foucault, 1977, p.177).

Each time difference is named, made visible, or created, for example by professionalised talk of 'the 'SEN' child; the 'included' child; the 'pivatted' child; the 'ESL' child, the 'vulnerable' child and so on, the invisibility and the power of the phantom normative centre, and of hegemony, is strengthened and secured. In this respect, inclusion is about 'morphing recipients into accepting the subjectivities of ableist normativity' (Baker, 2002, p.688).

Within this frame of reference, inclusion may be seen as a normalising or perfecting technology. It may be seen as an attempt to perfect; to make normal, to defer to 'the order of things'. It is evocative of Derrida's logocentricism, 'where heterogeneity is reduced to homogeneity and difference to an economy of the same' (Usher, 2000, p.163). According to Baker (2002, p.675) perfecting technologies are 'indebted to a controlling logic of ableism' that hopes to turn everyone into the one kind of being, at least at some level. I now turn to the third and final discourse that emerged from the data: a discourse of self.

iii. Self (esteem)

In the opening of this chapter I highlighted how policy can leave imprints on educators and how it can become internalised and effect discourse and practice. I indicated that the relatively new language of Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003a) was present within my data and aspects of it appeared to be emerging as a normative educational discourse in relation to inclusion.

Every Child Matters policy reflects a fundamental shift in what the British government regards as key roles for educational institutions. According to Ecclestone (2007) a crucial theme in this shift is the way in which the government has responded to popular concerns about safety, emotional vulnerability and unhappiness by deeply incorporating them into educational policy and practice. The goals and arrangements for Every Child Matters require, amongst other things, welfare and educational agencies to work together to ensure that, as part of being 'safe' and able to achieve educationally and socially, children's well-being is paramount. An effect of this new discourse is to encourage an alignment between education and welfare. Risk, vulnerability and protection are part of the language and discourse of this recent educational policy (Armstrong, 2005).

Risk and safety

In my study, risk or vulnerability was linked to health and safety issues:

Some curriculum subjects have very little support, if any; a particular problem is Technology where some pupils could be considered a health and safety risk. Some staff are refusing to have pupils with behaviour problems in their lessons because of this.

The ideas and sentiments behind inclusion are good; but It's a health and safety issue, we use highly complex machinery. It's too dangerous.

The above extracts may be seen as illustrative of how aspects of certain policy initiatives can be interpreted as permitting a relinquishing of practitioner

responsibility towards pupils and students and how it can be deployed as a disciplinary device.

Safety, in terms of 'safe environments' and child protection, was also an emergent theme, especially for those who taught in the special school sector:

I wanted to include this little person here...in a special school.. it needs to be remembered that their environment is very safe. That's something I've learned since I went into special that there are a lot of children that... that's what inclusion is to them ...its about being really safe in a safe environment.

The children in the (special) school where I teach need a very structured, safe and very isolated learning environment.

The drawings of circles that were referred to earlier where sometimes explained as representative of 'protection' and of safety; implying 'outside' dangers, risks and vulnerability.

One child I looked at specifically in the centre (pointing to a circle) and sort of a protection type net all around them...chaplain, heads of year, parents, family, other pupils...teachers...teaching assistants as well... a whole host that can stop them from drugs, unemployment, failure...just generally from the slippery slope to leaving school.

Self-esteem and happiness

Smith (2002, p.99) suggests that self-esteem is now seen as an essential building block, if not *the* building block, in a good education and that to criticise wanting to raise self-esteem is 'to violate some sacred precept'. As with other prevalent notions within education, such as 'inclusion', there is a vagueness surrounding the notion or construct of self-esteem; yet there is an apparent uncritical acceptance of it. It appears, on the surface, to be both benign and empowering. Like 'inclusion', it is presented within a progressive narrative as some 'thing' that is intrinsically good, desirable and attainable. Rawls (1971) described self-esteem as a 'primary good' in democratic societies. Happiness, emotional well-being and engagement, have become

central policy concerns within Every Child Matters. An emphasis on emotions, self-esteem and feeling good about the self seems to be becoming as significant in education as reading and writing.

The psychology-derived construct of self-esteem has been given priority and raising it has seemingly become a fundamental educational goal. Recent school-wide 'intervention programmes' and initiatives such as circle time, a focus on emotional literacy, nurture groups, mentoring programmes and initiatives such as Sure Start aim, amongst other things, to directly address pupil self-esteem:

Bragg (2007) found through her research on pupil voice that it is held to be 'obvious' by school management that young people are in search of happiness: that they need to feel in control and involved and that individual responsibility is personally empowering and desirable. The notion of happiness and self-esteem and the relation between them were powerful discursive formations that emerged from the drawings, comments and postings in my study. Self-esteem appears to be the newly emergent 'buzzword' associated with inclusion. The notion of self-esteem was privileged. There were reverberating statements around pupil self-esteem and raising it appears to be a goal. Explicit links were made between self-esteem and happiness, as shown by this extract that accompanies Figure 5:

I've tried to do a circle- here... er...where these link together and the idea is that the child is boosted by enabling support, to raise self-esteem. And they're all happy...we might all be off doing little different things together but we still all come together at the end to be happy and have fun.

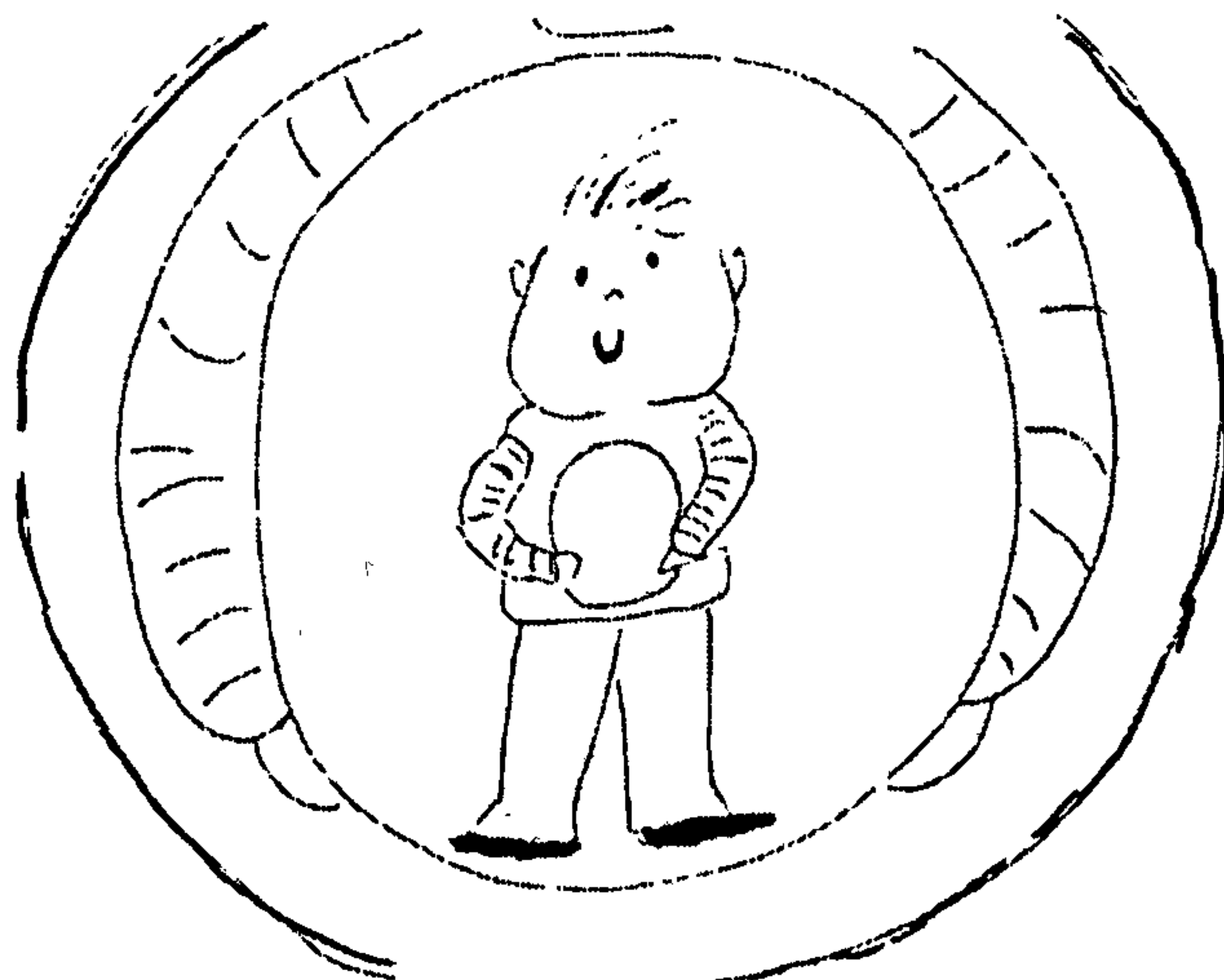


Figure 5: Happiness and self esteem

There were smiling faces in the drawings and a recurrence of the phrase 'happy children' in the descriptions and explanations of them; especially from those working in the primary school sector. All of the figures in the drawings that showed facial features had happy faces.

The association with, or correlation between, self-esteem and happiness and academic achievement is now seemingly commonplace and has a common sense resonance that is evident in much recent literature. Burton's (2004) article: 'Self-esteem groups for pupils with dyslexia', for example, correlates raised self-esteem with improved reading. Miller and Lavin (2007) make positive links between formative assessment, self-esteem and competence. In my study, similar connections were made between self-esteem, understanding, learning and educational achievement:

And for me it (inclusion) is about the light going on and understanding something that they couldn't previously understand and that's all linked to self-esteem.

An example of an innovative, effective and inclusive practice in my school is the use of an Alpha-smart keyboard it is very teacher-friendly - it requires no IT support and the pupil can just use it as a word processor This has been used for creative writing with a particular pupil I support and her confidence and self-esteem has improved enormously. She has realised she can achieve and her progress, self-image and self-confidence has definitely improved.

Growth

Focusing on increasing pupil self-esteem appears to present a universalised and humanist vision of a fixed self that is self-actualising, linearly growing and progressing, conforming to, and confirming, a 'realist' or modernist way of understanding the world. For example, self-esteem was linked to a linear tree-like linear 'growth', as shown in Figure 4, again in an 'environment':

I've got sunshine and then in the middle there's all children and I've written on the back 'an environment where learning needs are met for all'. I've put leaves growing around them all because they're all growing in self esteem and they're in an environment that helps them to flourish



Figure 6: Tree-like growth

One extract signified that educators appear to have much to do in terms of being aware of, differentiating between and meeting particular social and emotional needs:

Emotional intelligence, self-esteem, anger management, bereavement, self harm, drug and alcohol awareness, bullying, behaviour change, transition, attendance, school refusal and punctuality, revision skills and friendship are what I work with, rather than in-class academic support. It just happens that if you deal with these issues, scores usually go up.

Once again, I now leave the data behind and in the following discussion I consider the potential wider effects of the discourse of self.

Discussion

Pupil disaffection or social exclusion was frequently associated with low self-esteem in my study. Increasing emphasis tends to be placed on building (in a relatively straight forward and linear-like fashion) self-esteem for certain groups or individuals who are singled out or targeted for programmes of intervention, and who are subsequently invariably characterised, or labelled, as emotionally 'vulnerable' or at risk.

A potential danger is that disaffection and low self-esteem are inextricably and automatically bound together in a similar way that increased self-esteem correlates with happiness. A potential effect of this binding is that the gaze is then firmly fixed upon the pupil. To see in a disaffected or bored pupil someone suffering from low self-esteem is to make a large assumption and a dubious correlation. Smith (2002, p.94) suggests that the correlation of disaffection and 'inherent' low self-esteem may be misguided and can result in an invisible 'blaming' of the pupil, without considering the school environment and teaching and learning approaches.

Focusing on self-esteem is introspective. As with discourses and practices of special educational needs, discourses of self-esteem shift the focus from the outside to the inside and individuals are regulated (towards a norm) from the 'inside'. Masschelein (2001, p.10) reflects that we appear to be in an egoistic age where everything is submitted to the interests of the self and where 'egoism hides life itself'.

An 'inside' focus can sideline or shift attention away from outside structural and systemic explanations of a problem, to a focus on peoples feelings about it and /or their 'inadequacies'. This fails to address the wider environmental

contingencies that may be attributed to pupil responses or perceived resistances to schooling. The focus shifts to emotional and individual outcomes instead of material contingencies and social effects.

Self-esteem and other psychology constructs that fall under the umbrella of 'emotional competence' now also appear to be characteristic of and part of the performance and audit culture of schooling. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority requires schools to assess young children's emotional competence in a Foundation Stage Profile. There are guidelines for primary schools to 'diagnose' emotional well-being and there are instruments and devices that measure and quantify different aspects of emotional competence.

Therapeutic culture

The language and discourse of self-esteem and emotional subjectivity that appears to characterise discourses of inclusion may have beneficial effects. It may, for example, appear to emphasise our uniqueness in an uncertain world. With its apparent soft, personalised outcomes, it also may provide a welcome antidote to the hard impersonality of levels, targets, measures and bureaucracies that characterise education and it may be seen as a distraction from the pressure of performativity.

Perhaps privileging and prioritizing pupil self-esteem and emotional needs is a worthwhile educational goal. However, it may encourage further intrusive assessments, interventions and diminished educational aspirations, leading to negative images of people at a deeper cultural level. An over-emphasis and fixed determinism on self-esteem and therapeutic practices can have the effect of lowering pupil aspiration for achievement if learning involves risk, struggle or challenge. There is a danger that the more groups and individuals are defined as 'at risk', the more a new sensibility of fragility and helplessness takes hold (Ecclestone, 2004, p.129).

A focus on self-esteem may be seen as democratic and more humane. It can also be viewed as a new practice or technique of power that has emerged and circulates that is, again, at the level of the soul. It can be viewed as a technique of power that is endemic not just to education but as part of a larger formation; to society as a whole.

The emergent discourse of self-esteem can be seen as an educational intervention, or part of the emotional well-being goals, that coalesce in a broader therapeutic ethos or discourse that has pervaded UK culture (Ecclestone 2004; 2007). Nolan (1999, in Ecclestone, 2004, p.123) resents a therapeutic ethos as 'a widespread cultural ethos or system of moral understanding' and 'a way of understanding the nature of man and an *ordering* of human experience based on this understanding'. Foucault treats therapeutic discourse as a variation on disciplinary discourse (Carlson, 2005). Therapeutic discourse concerns itself with individuals defined as 'abnormal' in one way or another and its aim can be seen as a 'normalising form of rehabilitation' (Foucault, 1980, p.176). It privileges a particular way of being at the expense of others.

A therapeutic discourse offers a set of explanations, and possibly a script, about appropriate feelings that individuals *ought* to have and how they ought to respond to events. The therapeutic discourse in my study appeared to be linked strongly to both the construct of self-esteem and to practices of special educational needs and was frequently associated with a set of fixed systemic practices or rituals, in the form of monitoring and 'targeting' pupils, intervention programmes and measurement, in which pupils must make sense of themselves and others.

Everyday discourses of human vulnerability and frailty, repression and low self-esteem are drawn and inscribed within a therapeutic ethos and discourse that casts individuals and their behaviours in pseudo-psychological terms (Ecclestone, 2007). The knowledge base or discipline that is privileged within a discourse of self-esteem, as with a discourse of special educational needs, is psychology. The promotion of particular skills and competencies, based on

communication, self-reflection and so on, tend to draw on descriptions of assumed inherent, 'naturally given' or rational competencies that are derived from psychology, are authoritative and are not questioned (Masschelein and Quaghebeur, 2005).

Usher *et al.*, (1997, p.81), suggest that psychology has the power to 'name' and 'by naming to normalise'. To constitute 'the learner' in a particular way is to name and bring into view the 'normal' learner in terms of certain 'scientifically validated', rational capacities, attitudes and ways of behaving. Competencies and constructs proclaim certain authoritative 'truths' about individuality and individuals are guided by these 'truths'. Self-esteem, self-confidence self-knowledge, self-reliance and other self-oriented characteristics are presented or prescribed as normal, desirable 'true' features of individual well-being and what it is to be a 'real' person, or a certain kind of self.

According to Ecclestone (2004) advocates of a therapeutic culture do not look outwards to social change, but inwards to explore, or repair, (psychologically) damaged identities. When self-esteem, or addressing emotional vulnerabilities, is presented as a kind of remedy for exclusion, self-esteem is recast not as a psychological construct but 'as a psychological *condition* that people suffer from' (Ecclestone, 2004, p.129). Having a perceived low self-esteem is almost presented as a medical condition that is treatable. As Ecclestone (2004) puts it, emotional vulnerability may be seen as the new deficiency.

A technology of the self?

As discussed in Chapter 3 and in part 2 of this chapter, culture, and schooling play a role in creating shaping and reproducing particular subjectivities. Subjectivities may be shaped by accounts that schooling presents about the nature of human potential in coping with the challenges in life. Ecclestone (2004; 2007) suggests that educators, in claiming new rights of esteem and recognition on behalf of subjects seen as unable to assert their own, are in

danger of creating a 'diminished' subject; one that lacks a sense of agency or collective responsibility.

Cruikshank (1996, p.234) regards self-esteem as a 'technology of self' that is linked to the technology of norms, it is used 'for evaluating and acting upon our selves, so that the police the guards and the doctors do not have to'. Self-esteem is a technology in the sense that it is a specialised knowledge of how to esteem ourselves to 'estimate, calculate, measure, evaluate, discipline, and to judge our selves' (Cruikshank, 1996, p.273). It perhaps has more to do with self-assessment than with self-respect, as the self continuously has to be measured, judged and disciplined in order to gear personal 'empowerment' to a collective yardstick, determined by norms.

Entrepreneurial identities?

Self-esteem discourses and other self-oriented discourses that appear to circulate in schools may, as suggested previously, be seen as part of wider social practices that are conducive to neo-liberal forms of government, (as discussed in Chapter 3), and they have wider implications and effects. Focusing on the self (and on self-esteem) encourages individuals to make their own subjectivity the focal point. Individuals (or learners in schools) are encouraged to strive to grow and to 'self-actualise', following prescribed norms and guidelines of what it is to be a real or competent person. In becoming active, adaptable, competent, skilled and self-confident, learners consequently *invest* in their pre-defined competencies and skills in order to meet their needs and interests and to develop (Edwards and Usher, 1994). By investing, they become individually responsible for their own market position and develop an 'enterprising or entrepreneurial relationship with the self and with others' (Masschelein and Simons, 2002, p.594).

As discussed in Chapter 3, an entrepreneurial identity, or an enterprising self, is a characteristic of neo-liberalism. It implies a characterisation of a life as a producer-consumer with needs and human capital, situated in a market where everything, including relations with others, is calculable and has an economic

value. An entrepreneurial self is a form of personhood that 'sees individuals as being responsible for conducting themselves, *in the business of life*, as an enterprise, a project, a work in progress' (Kelly, 2006, p.18). It is an active, calculating self; striving to fulfil basic needs and to acquire 'normal' competencies. The entrepreneurial or enterprising self does not actually exist as a given entity but it is a direction in which individuals are invited (or interpellated) to transform themselves. It is something people must become and it stems from fulfilling individual basic needs.

Bragg (2007) suggests that by taking up the notion of self-esteem, or by being interpellated by it (or drawn to it), we allow ourselves to be governable -and governable in a certain, contrived way- from a distance. To return to the school: student or pupil subjectivity, when developed in happier directions, ultimately serves the self-interests of the school and ensures organisational and academic success. Increasing a sense of well-being and raising self-esteem may be seen, then, as more than an altruistic educational goal. It can be seen as a political, governmental goal that legitimises and extends institutional and governmental influence over emotional and psychological states (Ecclestone, 2007).

From this, and from the discourses that emerged in my study, the notion of inclusion may be read as a project that attempts to instil norms of individualisation, self-reliance and self-management which resonate with new configurations of power and authority under neoliberalism; respond to specific debates about school standards and school effectiveness and help construct young people as reflexive knowledge workers (Bragg, 2007).

Individualism

Individualising social problems and omitting reference to social causes of inequality is, like entrepreneurialism, characteristic of neo-liberalism. Furedi (2003) suggests that an over-emphasis on self-esteem and other self-oriented constructs encourages, and imposes, an emotional form of individualism. This imposed individuality denies access to a fuller range of meaning of what it is to be a person and undermines what makes individuals individual. It projects an understanding of the person as a singular and independent being who is only connected or related to others through a generalisation of the same kind of individuality.

Through learner-centred approaches, learners are conceivably cut off from the wider context of social participation during the learning process and this is liable to reaffirm learning as a form of isolated individualism rather than a collective project where individuals may act together. An over-emphasis on individual 'needs', interests, self-esteem and personal development may be seen as detrimental to the collective. A society of isolated and insulated individuals is not necessarily 'rich' in social capital. The self-oriented, self-interested and entrepreneurial individuality that characterises the discourses of inclusion may affect social relations. A focus on the self may lead to an isolated or 'separated' self that displaces more social communitarian sensibilities and may induce a 'forget-fullness' that life is relational and about others (Masschelein and Quaghebeur, 2005, p.63). It may 'immunise' us and prevents us from listening to what 'the world', as opposed to 'the environment', has to say to us. The paradox of inclusion then, is that 'the included', once subjected to disciplinary practices that effect subjectivity, are included in 'an environment' and are immunised from each other.

According to Masschelein and Simons (2002, p.604), community is a 'condition of our existence'. Individualisation and entrepreneurialism threatens this 'outside' experience and insulates individuals against others and the world. They suggest that our individuality can only be truly conceived of in relation to an outside; that is, to others and our obligation to them, and such a

relation is 'not calculable or manageable' (Masschelein and Simons 2002, p.602).

Possibilities exist to challenge the dominant competency-led and needs dominated approach to learning by considering alternative competencies that are not as narrowly conceived and directly geared towards the self, the individual or as preparation for the world of work. This may involve, for example, educators thinking in a non-totalising way that opens up avenues of exploration that are not constricted by fixed learning outcomes. Educators may show that knowledge is not uniformly structured or an inert unit of consumption (Standish, 2005). They may draw upon their enthusiasm for a subject to 'open up' learning to a wider 'world' that is not confined and restricted to a 'self' or to prescribed psychology-derived 'competencies'. Learners are entitled to gain other things aside from self-esteem, self-confidence, self-confidence and so on. There remains the opportunity for a different construction of the individual and social responsibility (towards the Other); perhaps one that is focused on the public rather than a private good, and one that aims at long-term sustainability of living together in a world, rather than on immediate gains in a certain 'environment'.

Summary

There were what may be interpreted as limitations in terms of the range of discourses that emerged in my study relating to inclusion. Why might its discourse be limited? Drawing on the notion of policy as practice, its discourse could be limited because the discourse within UK governmental policy appears to be limited and vague (as discussed in the opening chapter).

Prior to doing the fieldwork, I anticipated that a discourse of special needs would emerge from my data, and it did. I was perhaps anticipating to locate a 'discourse of care', especially in the teaching assistant's online postings in

relation to inclusion. Seemingly altruistic discourses of care are not, like inclusion, without critique. They can obscure the performance of regulatory practices (Billington, 2006). My work on previous research projects (e.g. Dunne *et al.*, 2003; 2007; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2008d), and other research (e.g. Lawson *et al.*, 2006), suggests that teaching assistants and school support staff, especially in the primary school sector, appear to operate within a discourse of care, but this discourse was not discernable or prevalent within my data in relation to 'inclusion'. This might be because inclusion is seen as some 'thing' that is almost separate to pastoral issues; it may be that it is seen as some 'thing' that is to be 'done' or performed, rather than as an intrinsic educational value or ethos. Or, it may be that a discourse of self is eradicating discourses of care.

In its earlier stages, fifteen or twenty years ago, the notion of inclusion was, arguably, politically driven by rights groups, activists and researchers interested in an end to segregated schooling (e.g. CSIE) and greater equity. A discourse pertaining to human rights and inclusion as a social justice issue, as an ethic or as a *value* in its own right, was also absent from my data descriptions.

In my study, inclusion itself was viewed as a dominant and normalising discourse, that is backed up by policy, and that leaves 'imprints' on educators. The aim was to locate contemporary discourses of inclusion and to analyse or deconstruct them, and to consider their potential effects. Through my study, I found that the contemporary dominant discourses that surround inclusion are constructed or configured in several ways.

Firstly, I found that the discourse of inclusion reflects policy discourses (and policy interests?) around meeting learner's needs and it is seen as a fundamental good, but not for all children. Certain messages about inclusion and about what it ought to be appear to have permeated discourses, understandings and interpretations of it. The language used resonated with

policy. Visually and symbolically, inclusion was invariably represented as a circle, resonating with and reflecting governmental representations of it (DfES, 2001). 'Needs', 'meeting needs' and raising self-esteem, was heavily characteristic of the discourse and also reflected policy (DfES, 2003a).

Secondly, the discourse of inclusion appears to be constructed within an othering framework that is characterised by a neo-traditional special educational needs language and practice. In this potentially disciplinary discourse, pupils are subjected to forms of surveillance and examination and they and their needs are objectified. This discourse 'others' and problematises groups and individuals. It evokes a broken-ness that needs correcting or fixing. It enables and justifies the continuation of practices of special educational needs, the spatial partitioning of individuals, the notion of the expert and it privileges psychology as a knowledge base.

Thirdly and finally, the discourse of inclusion also appears to be constructed around notions of happiness and raising self-esteem that, although seemingly altruistic, again may be viewed as a variation of a form of disciplinary discourse. When the psychology-derived construct of self-esteem is viewed as a technology of the self, it evokes forms of individualism and entrepreneurialism. It enables a focus on the individual with a form of striving, or growth, within a progressive narrative, towards self-actualisation and towards an enterprising self. This discourse is seemingly altruistic but is prescriptive and, like the discourse of special needs, it forbids, amongst other things, a consideration of the whole person or of other ways of being.

To return to the question that drove this enquiry: whose interests are served by the way that inclusion is talked about? I have attempted to show that, from within a Foucauldian framework, it is not necessarily 'the included child' who benefits from discourses and practices of inclusion in the current context and that apparently altruistic discourses and practices of inclusion ultimately serve the interests of neo-liberal forms of governance.

CHAPTER 6: REFLECTIONS

This chapter does not offer any grand or definitive conclusions but is more of a reflection on my study. I feel that I have learned much from engaging in this study and it is difficult to specify particular things gained from it. Nevertheless, I attempt to pin down some of the things that I believe that this study has taught me. I begin this chapter by reflecting upon what I have learned from the research process itself and on how it changed and affected my understandings and ways of seeing. I then describe how these shifting understandings have, in turn, affected my practice. I conclude by offering suggestions as to why and how inclusion, as it exists and is represented in the current context, might be put 'under erasure'.

Disruption

In chapter 2, I suggested that the process of change had played a part in the construction and nature of this thesis and I outlined my changing ontological and epistemological positioning. I also indicated that my study had morphed and evolved into something quite different from my original research proposal that aimed to consider personal narratives and experiences of inclusion. Indeed, prior to my engagement with poststructuralist ideas and theory, I seemed to be committed to narrative as a research methodology (see, for example, Dunne and Penketh, 2006) before being propelled in quite a different direction.

As outlined in Chapter 2, the shifts and changes that occurred appeared to be contingent on, amongst other things, the research process itself, as well as on engagement with ideas encountered in reading and discussion. My way of thinking and seeing the world changed and I experienced a gradual shift from a realist to more of a poststructuralist understanding of the world. I (and my research) became disrupted.

Self-doubt

Doubt is uncomfortable...certainty is ridiculous.

Voltaire.

The research process, or, (to risk a cliché) the 'journey', throughout the past four years has been exciting, enjoyable and seemingly life changing. It has also presented challenges in the form of self-doubt, struggle and uncertainty. Self-doubt has been present since I embarked upon the doctorate programme in 2004 and it appeared to gain momentum as my doctorate studies continued and as I encountered new ideas. Self-doubt appeared to be influenced and driven by a 'realist' self that appeared to be in conflict and uncomfortable with a new or different self.

I came to identify the realist self as one that was influenced by its own long history conforming to norms, rules and expectations. Its knowledge(s) drove my unintentional preoccupations; for example, with an idea of conformity, the necessity for 'full coverage' and with 'getting it right' in my research and practice. As Atkinson (2000a) explains, tacit knowledge is embedded. It resists 'new fangled' ideas and stands in opposition to more recent learning. I learned that I am capable of holding apparently contradictory knowledge(s) and beliefs at one and the same time and that this can be perplexing and, at times, disturbing. Atkinson (ibid.) suggests whilst there are advantages in attempting to reconcile these contradictory elements, there also seems to be a particular energy that arises from the existence of the struggle and contradiction itself. It was perhaps this energy that drove me on.

Realist self-doubt was embedded in the (realist) discourses I had for so long inhabited and perpetuated. It was partly characterised by a perceived self-lack; for example, I feared that I did not have a sufficiently strong philosophical knowledge base to engage with, or write within, a more theoretical or critical frame of reference. I did not have the requisite degree in philosophy to write with any credibility. Although I found Foucauldian ideas fascinating, I was not a Foucault 'expert' and I had read alarming and scathing

critiques about researchers' potentially 'using and abusing' Foucault in their work (e.g. Scheurich and Bell McKenzie, 2005).

Yet, I was curious about language and fascinated by theoretical debates surrounding discourse and its hidden power and effects. I had always been interested in language, discourse and its use - in how it appears and the ways it is used differently in different situations - and this could be traced back to deciding to become an English teacher. Yet, whilst becoming absorbed in theories and ideas about language and discourse, I felt that I was being dangerously propelled away from my safety or comfort zone and from my 'direction'. I feared that the new direction I was following as my study developed was possibly misguided because, amongst other things, I was not a discourse or discourse analysis 'expert'.

These fears and doubts suggest that I remained, and still remain, caught in realist or humanist thinking. On reflection, I was possibly creating my own sense of failure and lack by setting up culturally derived boundaries, limits and restrictions within a way of reasoning that I have actually critiqued in my study (e.g. the notion of the expert). St. Pierre (2000, p.479) suggests that humanism produces its own failure, but that once they become intelligible, boundaries, limits and 'grids of regularity' can 'be disrupted and transgressed'. My realist thinking had me captured in a grid of regularity that I was struggling to disrupt and escape from. I found, over the duration of my study, that having a 'position' can be troublesome.

During the early stages of the research process, I experienced at one time what could be described as a kind of sheer panic. I had been 'on course' with my thesis, intending to write about narratives and experience and knew (or thought I knew) where I was going with it, or where it was going; but this linearly-determined course had been disrupted through the shifts I was experiencing in my thinking and perspective. My project and the thinking around it seemed to be in disarray.

Part of this panic may also have been contingent upon the different way I came to see 'inclusion' itself. As described in Chapter 2, I had, for some years, drawn heavily on the social model of disability and had taught within what I now recognise as a more progressive and rights-based narrative. On reflection, I had, to a degree, enforced the notion of inclusion as a simplistic and fundamental good and I was beginning to question and to problematise it. The interruption of my own progressive narrative was unsettling and had implications for my role as a lecturer on inclusive education development programmes. For example, I could no longer unquestioningly teach to, or comfortably 'deliver' what I came to see as the official script. The consuming panic that I experienced could be described as syncopation (Smith, 2004, p.32); a syncope moment is where we feel strong emotion, tears and hysteria and it is those moments 'that reveal difference'.

At one time, about half way through my project, I felt that perhaps it would be better to 'play safe', to abandon this newly found philosophy of ideas around discourse and continue with my original research proposal with what seemed to be a more 'grounded' approach on narratives of experience. However, the force of my changing positioning and perspective, and my will to engage with and pursue a new way of thinking and seeing, meant that I was fully embarked on a different route and, although I felt that I was floundering in uncharted territory, I had to continue and accept that feeling safe and reverting to my original research proposal was not an option as it would be dishonest. It then became a matter of putting postmodernism to work (Allan 2004) on myself by abandoning attempts to know 'exactly what is going on' and by attempting to embrace the uncertainty, self-doubt, conflicts and fears and of recognising and accepting them, along with the limitations of my own understandings.

I have read and re-read this work many times, reflecting upon the words and expressions used in the text. I asked myself how I was positioned in this study and what assumptions or 'claims to truth' were evident in my writing, and there were many of them. Re-readings of my work, in tandem with ongoing reading of the work of researchers in the area of discourse and

postmodernism (e.g. MacLure, 2003; Graham, 2005; 2006; 2007; Youdell, 2006a and b, and others), inevitably led to revisions and re-writings. Atkinson (2000a) shows how ontology can change and how these changes can affect the writing process. At one point, I considered the idea of presenting two versions of text; one written within my realist ontology and the other from my more recent, changed perspective as this might illustrate the 'two selves' involved in the writing process, but this appeared to be overly complex.

Doubts about my writing did not subside but I came to accept, with the support of my supervisor, the uncertainties and insecurities of the writing process. I also came to recognise that my study presents a particular moment of thinking in time that has been 'captured' in text. I could continue to make changes and adjustments indefinitely, as my viewpoints and way of seeing changed through critical reading; but the study would never reach completion.

There are many limitations in my study. I may stand accused of having 'cherry picked' Foucault's concepts and engaged with his work at a superficial level. My 'ignorance' may be 'fairly transparent' to those (experts?) who 'use Foucault in a more substantiative way', (Scheurich and Bell McKenzie, 2005, p.859).

Another potential limitation may lie in the way I presented my data. As explained in Chapter 4, I regarded the data as a cohesive whole. I could have been more imaginative or creative with the data and, for example, looked at differences in discourses between the different groups who took part. This might have revealed differences in deployed discourses between seemingly differently positioned groups of individuals (e.g. between teachers and teaching assistants). I could have also incorporated more data extracts to strengthen my analysis and reading. At times, I appeared to get carried away with ideas and discussion and may have lost sight of the data. I had to remind myself that I had a wealth of data to draw upon to substantiate the claims and interpretation in my reading.

Ethics (revisited)

In pursuing a different research angle or paradigm, (e.g. from narrative to discourse), there were also implications surrounding ethics. This new approach presented new and different ethical dilemmas. In my original proposal I had worked out a seemingly neat, potentially mechanistic ethical framework that appeared to 'protect' participants and their identities from potential harm. As discussed earlier in Chapter 4, ethics is embedded in the whole research process and cannot be bracketed off. In time, ethics became, for me, a consideration of the kind of knowledge that I was producing or contributing towards. I was also very aware of my changing perspective and the ethical work I was doing on myself (Allan, 1999) in the sometimes painful and uncomfortable process of examining my own discourse, assumptions, changing positioning and shifting understandings.

One of the most difficult aspects of engaging in this study was the ethical dimension involved, not necessarily in gathering data, but in the process of analysis and interpretation, and in presenting the reading. As suggested in the previous chapter, an interpretation or reading makes some kind of knowledge claim. Although I stated that my reading is a provisional reality claim and is contingent upon my subjectivity, I have some lurking doubts or reservations about its 'credibility'. My analytical framework might not appear to be sufficiently 'rigorous' and the links between the discourses and my reading of them may appear to be tenuous and overly influenced by my own expectations or assumptions.

The reading is presented in a relatively unambiguous way. I am not sure that I fully engaged with looking for the gaps, the unsaid or the inexplicable in my data that could not be neatly packaged or categorized. Is my reading not a little too neat, ordered, tidy and contrived, indicating a kind of unity? Where is the messiness, the contradiction and the chaos or discontinuity in my reading that is characteristic of a postmodernist understanding of life? Where is the recognition of a failure of mastery? Perhaps I am not yet brave or confident enough to push out the boundaries or fully detach from my realist self to

present an 'alternative' looser reading that more fully engages with complexities and ambiguities.

I have signified and reiterated throughout this study that I intended to focus on the discourse of inclusion and not on the 'voices' of the agents of the discourse. I emphasised that I was not attempting to reveal something about the speaker or sense maker and that my interest lay in *how* different views are established and on what they do, not the views themselves. I aimed to objectify the words used and not the person who used them. I remain uncomfortable that it may appear that I have taken someone's well-intentioned words and 'used' or 'exposed' them for critical analysis and interpretation. In retrospect, a possible way around this may have been to fictionalise the extracts (Clough, 2002).

Critical consciousness

Engaging in this study has incited new forms of awareness or a critical consciousness. It taught me to be aware of how meanings become institutionalised and reified. I have learned to see the relationship, and make connections, between discourse, forms of power and regulation and to be aware of the hidden disciplinary power mechanisms that are all around us but tend to go unnoticed. I can recognise how changes in discourses and re-significations can be related to wider processes of social and cultural changes.

Doing this study has taught me to be more aware of how my own political understandings, affiliations and interpretations might influence teaching and learning. In my interactions with students, I am more self-critical of my own practice and tentative or cautious about the claims that I make, especially regarding those that might inadvertently reinforce or reproduce traditionalist understandings that can potentially petrify or essentialise. I am also more acutely aware of, and attuned to, my own 'careless language' (Corbett, 1996) and of the potential effects of the seemingly innocent discourses in which we operate.

In my practice, I now incorporate a greater focus on language and discourse within my teaching on professional development programmes in the area of inclusive schooling, with the belief that greater awareness of language and discourse is a possible starting point for change. My study raised questions about how we (educators) go about our work and how we interact with children. Billington (2006) asks:

How do we speak of children? How do we speak with children? How do we write about children? How do we listen to ourselves when working with children? (Billington, 2006, p.8).

These are the kinds of fundamental questions that emerged from my study and that need to be confronted and addressed.

Alterations in language practices could have implications for change in social practice. Throughout this study I have attempted to forefront the power of language and discourse and its potentially damaging effects. New language and new words can be invented that create new meanings that may give rise to social change. According to Hacking (2000, p.8) 'with new names, new objects come into being. Not quickly. Only with usage, only with layer after layer of usage'. There are possibilities to speak otherwise and to find alternative words and languages that disrupt existing discourses around inclusion.

Hegemonic or dominant discourses may be challenged and superseded. As Fairclough (2001, p.3) puts it, 'human beings can change what human beings have created' and change or resistance may depend upon people developing a critical consciousness of dominance and its modalities. As discussed in Chapter 3, discourses can be re-structured and re-ordered, resulting in new hybrid discourses; through producing new ones, people can function as agents of discursive and cultural change. The classroom is a site for possible resistance, change or interruption (Dunne *et al.*, 2008b).

I encourage the students with whom I work, who are invariably teachers and teaching assistants, to be more aware of and cautious about their assumptions and presuppositions that can be part of the invisible processes that exclude and other. They may reflect upon their positioning and think carefully about language and how it is used. I also encourage them to try to see how their relations and practices are constructed and effected by discourses and to engage in critical reflection about the dominant social discourses that constitute social life. By gaining a critical awareness of language and discourse, we may be more able to recognize when an ideological or normative position is assumed and are more likely to question and challenge that assumption (Oughton, 2007).

I encourage and invite students to interrogate their language and listen to it - what do we mean when we talk about 'these people' or 'these children'? who are we talking about? – and to question their taken for granted practice. I have, for example, used fictionalised and 'real' narrative snippets that reveal how everyday seemingly benign phrases and statements made about pupils can have hidden yet powerful effects. I encourage them to consider contingencies, rather than to try to identify simplistic causes and effects. I also encourage them to locate the discursive rhetoric that is present in policy and to recognise how this rhetoric (that frequently remains unquestioned) can become a taken for granted part of everyday language and practice and that this, too, has effects.

In my practice, I consider my positioning within discursive arenas and how I might encourage more generative discourse during group discussions. This involves ways of talking or representing that simultaneously challenges existing traditions and offers new creative possibilities for action. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) notion of the rhizome (a horizontal underground network of plants), Allan (2006) suggests that student learning ought to be experimental, experiential and rhizomic, rather than fixed, representational and linear. According to Allan (2006, p.130) the rhizome is more than a metaphor for thinking about teaching; 'it is an instrument of flight which lives rather than represents'. 'Rhizomic wanderings' (ibid.) could help to

disrupt conventional knowledge about, for example, inclusion or 'special needs', and enable student teachers to experiment with responding to difference in meaningful ways. Rhizomic wanderings might invite student teachers to question what they know about themselves.

Professional development is an entitlement for educators but care needs to be taken to avoid practitioners from being de-skilled by approaches that can perpetuate a myth of exclusive special educational knowledge and expertise. Educators may recognise that special educational needs (and education), is not a science and that the way that some children are spoken about, positioned and 'managed' in schools is not harmless; it has effects.

Earlier, I described how inclusion is about assimilation into a norm and referred to the idea of a normative centre. Graham and Slee (2008) ask what might be done to disrupt the construction of this normative centre from which exclusion derives? They argue that inclusive education invites the denaturalisation of 'normalcy' to arrive at a ground-zero point from which we banish idealisations of centre. In this way, the language of special and regular education is rendered redundant. Teachers and teaching assistants on professional development programmes may be encouraged to question the notion of the special needs expert and reflect upon the tendency to ascribe a taken for granted essence to pupils associated with established categories (of need). They may refuse to submit to taken for granted categories and norms that have assumed the power of timeless essential 'truths' or, as a starting point, at least they may be more cautious and question them. They may recognise that ranking and manufactured categorising of learners (and their identities) is a transient social activity, belonging to a particular historical and cultural context (Billington, 2006) or episteme.

So much in education now appears to evolve around the quantifiable, a grasping of content and the certain. By engaging in deep questioning, probing, a valuing of alternative viewpoints, and not on the transmission of (units of) knowledge itself, lecturers may open up possibilities for a

questioning of the taken for granted and normalising procedures and boundaries in which actions are enclosed. Deeper questioning may equip those engaging in learning to question the social order of things and their role within it. There is perhaps a need for a recognition that not *everything* can be accounted for, quantified and measured. There are also things that cannot easily be spoken about or explained within conventional or rational frames of reference. Understandings can be tacit and not so easily put into words. Not everything can or needs to be 'said', or captured, by words.

I believe that there is a need to continue to unsettle the habits of my own corporeal ways of knowing. In my practice, I still sometimes feel that I am not 'getting it right' and that by not teaching to the learning outcomes I may be doing a disservice to the students. I am sometimes caught within my own performance but I am far more cautious in my approach and critical of official scripts. I have developed an aversion to the use of bullet points that can reduce ways of knowing and knowledge(s) down to a neatly packaged frame of reference.

Shapiro (1992, p.270) describes the way in which Foucault's genealogical imagination construes all systems of intelligibility as the arbitrary fixings of the momentary results of struggles among contending forces. These struggles could have produced other possibilities and other systems of intelligibility. It becomes a matter of exposing what we seem to know today with such certainty and attending to the fact that things that we know with such certainty today could have been different. As Shapiro (1992, p. 279) puts it, 'the now is an unstable victory had at the expense of other possible nows'. In relation to my study, what is intelligible and recognisable as 'inclusion' in the present context, could quite easily have been otherwise. I agree with Goodley's (2004, p.116) suggestion that things that are man-made can be demolished and rebuilt and that 'possibilities exist for rebuilding versions of humanity'. Discourses and practices of schooling that exclude and marginalize can be rebuilt or remade.

As I discovered through the highs and lows of the process of research, there is a need to 'free ourselves' of certain conceptions about our selves and our conduct. We perhaps may free ourselves by 'backing out of the call to relate to ourselves and to others in a particular way' (Masscheleien, 2006, p.148) or, to not so much discover who we are, but to refuse what we are or to liberate ourselves from 'the kind of individuality that is imposed upon us from the state' (Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p.216). This may involve a labour or ethical work on the self in order to establish new relations with the self and with others (Allan, 2005).

Earlier I signified how my changing ontology and positioning had been disorientating; how it created disruption and how having a 'position' can sometimes be troublesome. Simons and Masschelein (2006, p.12) urge us to attempt to embrace this kind of disorientation because 'being without direction is about having an experience'. An experience here is about 'transgressing our actuality or present, transgressing who we are and what we should be like' (ibid.). This can only happen when we resist the comfort of having a position and when we are 'out-of-position'. When we are out of position we are exposed, to a 'world' and to others and not to an 'environment'. There are possibilities to think and to speak otherwise and conceive of other ways of being together in a 'world', rather than a fixed or pre-given environment (Masschelein, 2002).

There is more to read and more to be done. In many ways, my study has raised more questions about the notion of inclusion than it answered. For example: how and why do we 'mark out' perceived difference? Why are some children marked out as 'included' and others not? What are 'the included' included into? How might new teachers recognise how pupil (and teacher) identities are shaped by discourse and systemic practices? What might be done to stem the tidal wave of an entrepreneurial discourse of self, self-esteem and individualism that appears to be so prevalent in schools? What

might be the longer-term effects of this kind of discourse on communities? These are some of the questions that emerged from my study that will drive my future enquiries in the discourses of inclusion.

Graham and Slee (2005) suggest that it is necessary to move beyond the present limiting notion of inclusion that retains associations with 'special educational needs' and seems to seek to incorporate 'recognisable' forms of otherness within a reified, Gramscian 'common sense' system. I recognise that by focusing on inclusion in my study I have perhaps reinforced or reinscribed it and that this may not be particularly helpful in moving beyond it.

Inclusion can be placed 'under-erasure' (sous-rasure); this is where something can literally be crossed out to demonstrate its inadequacy, whilst admitting its inescapability (Atkinson, 2000b). It would look like this:

~~Inclusion~~

As other commentators and researchers have suggested (e.g. Slee and Allan, 2001; Graham and Slee, 2008), it may be time to put inclusion under erasure. When it is no longer talked or spoken about, it has happened.

Postscript

In Chapter 2 I wrote that my personal interest in the area of inclusion partly arose from the experiences of a family member, my uncle, who did not have a formal education due to his impairments.

In May 2008, uncle John died suddenly at the young age of 63. John had been a very significant person in my life and much of the inspiration behind my work in inclusion, disability studies and this study. As I continue to pursue my work and research in the quest for greater social justice and for a better 'world', rather than 'environment', I will cherish the memories of the happy times we spent together and the joy that John brought to those who knew and loved him.

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