

# The Complexities of Teaching 'Inclusion' in Higher Education

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## Abstract

This article considers how action research can support the teaching of 'Inclusion' in Higher Education. As a professional committed to improving educational practices, action research was identified as a practical research approach to study the relationship between theories and practices of inclusive education. This article will report on a short action research project that focussed on an Applied Social Science undergraduate degree unit which is taken in students' final year: 'Contemporary Issues in Exclusion and Inclusion in Education'. Student's own understanding, expectations and reflections on their learning were captured via questionnaires to directly inform teaching and assessment practices. Action research facilitated a critical lens which enabled lecturers to reconsider teaching and assessment strategies in a collaborative, participative manner and early findings indicate an improvement in student learning.

## Introduction

Inclusion means many things to many people and can be expressed in very diverse ways. Discussions, writing about and teaching or training this subject is therefore complex, yet arguably very important. Indeed, the importance of initial and on-going training is recognised as central to improving educational inclusion (Liegeois, 1998; Taylor, 2005).

Traditionally the *Contemporary Issues in Exclusion and Inclusion in Education* unit had been delivered by the Unit coordinator alone, with some lecture input from different academics on specific subjects such as *Pupil Referral Units* and *The Education of Looked after Children*. In 2010, the author of this article joined the University and began co-teaching on this unit. As professionals who had both spent many years working to improve educational inclusion for marginalised groups, both lecturers wanted to work collaboratively to ensure that the student learning experience developed the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to improve educational inclusion in practice.

Students undertake two assessments as part of this unit. The first assessment involves a seminar presentation and paper, based on secondary research findings, on one of the topics covered in or relevant to the unit. Students are expected to present up-to-date knowledge on the topic and to relate this, as appropriate, to current policy and practice within the field. The presentation is undertaken as a group but the paper must be individually produced. Presentations take place in seminar sessions within the taught curriculum period; this has meant that as student numbers grow, more and more time is dedicated to this assessment.

The second assessment involves analysis of two case studies of different pupils in mainstream education; students are assessed on their knowledge and ability to provide resolutions for the case studies based on integration of research, relevant professional practice, broader theoretical perspectives and individual experience.

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Action research often starts with a 'problem' and this action research project was initiated by observations from last year's student presentations which highlighted that some students had simply not grasped the concept of inclusion at all. Inclusion is multifaceted and some confusion is to be expected. Nevertheless, several groups presented very inappropriate views as part of their group presentation, which was deeply worrying. For example, one particular group choose to focus their presentation on Jehovah's Witnesses and delivered a very critical and poorly informed perspective of the impact of Jehovah's Witnesses' religious practices on education. They demonstrated a critical, narrow-minded view, rather than a broad and balanced perspective on an area of education. This was somewhat surprising as the student cohort represents a very diverse group.

The ages of students on the reported cohort (55 students) varied from 20 to 49 years. Student's (self-described) their ethnicity as Black African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Zimbabwean, Black British, White British, British and British Indian, Mixed White/Black Caribbean, Black African British and British Black African. Yet there was only 1 male student.

The aforementioned 'problem' was compounded by the first assessment process and the number of students on the unit. The cohort of student numbers on this unit has grown significantly over the past 2 years. The unit is 15 credits and teaching only lasts for one academic term: 12 weeks. Assessment 1 was increasingly taking up seminar time leaving little time to cover all the issues regarding inclusion and exclusion in education.

The aim of this action research project was to study both teaching practices and the student learning experience and use findings to inform, modify and improve the unit. The objectives were to improve students' knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' in education by concentrating on definitions of inclusion and exclusion and the use of appropriate and inappropriate language. This article will consider how action research can support the teaching of inclusion in Higher Education and the structure is as follows:

Part 1: Justification for the use of action research by considering the relationship between inclusion/exclusion in education and action research. A consideration of the complexity of defining inclusion/exclusion and the particular action research model and methods this research draws upon.

Part 2: The two cycles of this particular action research process are explained. Research findings are reported and how these were used to inform, modify and improve the unit. The article concludes with a summary of the benefits of applying action research to teaching in Higher Education and future actions as part of this research process.

### **PART 1: Action Research and Inclusion / Exclusion in Education**

Inclusive education is not an end in itself but it is an ongoing, transformative process that involves improvements to education systems and practices so they have the

capacity to reach out to all learners and meet their needs. Ultimately inclusive education is a means to creating an inclusive society (Clough and Corbett, 2000). Action research can facilitate inclusive education as it combines *action* and *research* and is carried out by practitioners involved in education. Action research is therefore a valid and useful research method for inclusive education, as both are processes that involve educators in a process of cooperative enquiry and action.

Moreover, action research offers a practical way of reflecting on one's own practice to ensure it is what it should be (McNiff, 2002). Action research involves self-reflective practice which is more than the 'usual thinking teachers do when they think about their teaching'...This is because action research is 'systematic and collaborative in collecting evidence to inform such reflections' (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992:21-22). This particular action research project draws on lecturer and student views to inform teaching and learning methods. The literature considered as part of this study spanned across two different areas: Inclusive/Exclusive education and Action Research. The next section will consider both these fields in turn.

### **Inclusion/Exclusion in Education**

Inclusive education is not a new concept and the origins of this work began in the 1950s. Clough and Corbett's (2000) review of literature in the field highlight five major perspectives which are summarised below. These perspectives are not wholly exclusive of one another, nor are they strict chronological; however, each position plays an important part in the conceptualisation of inclusive education today.

- The psycho-medical legacy (1950s): Viewed the individual as different or deficit and assumed a need for a 'special education'.
- The sociological response (1960s): Problematises the social construction of Special Educational Needs (SEN) as perpetuating inequalities throughout the education system.
- The curricular approach (1970s): Emphasised the role of the school curriculum in meeting and creating learning difficulties.
- School improvement strategies (1980s): Focused on the importance of systematic organisation in schooling to achieve all-inclusive and a comprehensive schooling experience.
- Disability studies critique (1990s): Political response to the exclusionary effects of the psycho-medical model which has left a legacy of difference as somehow being the same as deficiency (p.8).

Defining inclusive education today is complex as it has come to mean many different things. For this reason even the term '*Inclusion*' is a contestable term used to different effect by individuals. Inclusion can be described descriptively or prescriptively, it can also be defined in narrow or broad terms. Narrow definitions concern the inclusion of specific groups of learners whereas broad descriptions focus on the diversity of all students and every other member of the school community (Armstrong et al., 2006:3).

Education is part of the wider social order and much of what happens in society and education remains the product of power struggles and vested interests (Tomlinson,

1982). Nevertheless, Armstrong et al (2010) suggest that 'the urge to include is easily expressed in Western countries' (p.6). Many government policies on inclusive education have rested on an uncritical view of 'normality' that has reinforced a traditional view of SEN, rather than considering how mainstream values and practices in society and the education system lead to exclusion (Armstrong et al, 2010:35). Hence educational inclusion for all children is still an ambitious target to be achieved.

As with any contestable terminology, it is important to define one's understanding and position in terms of inclusion. A consideration of the two main definitions (Armstrong et al, 2010) supports this process:

- 1) Inclusion is about all students with disabilities participating in all aspects of mainstream school.
- 2) Inclusion refers to all students actively participating in schools that value all students and persistently problematise notions of inclusion/exclusion and different ways of being.

It is the latter definition which captures the aims of this article as the literature (Gillborn et al, 2012; Jorgenson and Lowrie, 2013) and the author's professional practice and experiences of working in schools suggest that many students are still not actively included in schools, nor are issues of in/exclusion problematised. There remains a real need to revitalise social justice and equality agendas. Hence, teaching inclusive education involves a process of challenging the reproduction of inequality and working towards social justice with the aim of increasing the inclusion of all learners' needs in education. This position is somewhat different from those who see inclusion as being about the mainstreaming of special education.

### **Action Research Models and Teaching in Higher Education**

Kurt Lewin's research on social issues has been described as a major landmark in the development of action research. Lewin's work was applied to education by Corey and others in the USA (Koshy, 2000). Educational researchers aim to extend knowledge and understanding in all areas of educational activity and from all perspectives including learners, educators, policymakers and the public (BERA, 2011). Stenhouse promoted the idea of 'teacher as researcher' as action research enquiries often begin with the question, 'How do I improve my work?' (McNiff, 2002).

There is no one 'correct' action research model, however there should always be a social intent as the aim is to improve future learning (Norton, 2009). There are a number of action research models and this research draws upon Norton's (2001) ITDEM model which comprises five sequential steps that make up the 'research cycle': 1) *Identifying a problem*, 2) *Thinking of ways to tackle the problem*, 3) *Doing it*, 4) *Evaluating it (actual research findings)*, and 5) *Modifying future practice* to improve student learning.

Action research might involve one cycle of planning, action, evaluation and modification, yet it might be more usefully employed as an ongoing process because questions are often raised from the first cycle which is then worthy of another

investigation and action research cycle. This article reports on two action research cycles, although a third is being planned.

Effective university teaching is a holistic endeavour that embraces not only the practice of teaching but an understanding of how students learn in an inclusive and supportive environment (Hunt et al, 2013: 22). Reflection and action upon such reflection is therefore an important consideration in Higher Education as this process ensures continuing professional development whereby lecturers take control of their own learning and development (Norton, 2009). The process of practitioner enquiry or action research can therefore facilitate effective university teaching as Norton (2009: xvi) suggests:

Pedagogical action research involves using a reflective lens through which to look at some pedagogical issue or problem and methodologically work out a series of steps to take action to deal with the issue.

Thus, action research can support lecturers in critically reflecting on their teaching practice via a participatory, democratic process (Reason and Bradbury, 2001: 1). Collaboration with teaching colleagues and students is vital in order to evaluate and improve the student learning experience (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992). This action research project was centred upon evaluating and improving students' learning experiences and did this by capturing student's own views.

In order to ensure clarity of the study from the start the next section provides an overview of this project's research methods. This is followed by a description of the action research process itself.

## **Methods**

Data collection included two questionnaires; the first was completed at the outset and the second towards the end of teaching on the unit. Questionnaires were used to capture the development of students' meanings and understandings of inclusion and exclusion in education. Other data comprised observations and assessment of seminar presentations and lecturer's ongoing critical collaborative reflections on the teaching and learning experience. The research sample included all 55 students although not all were present on the days questionnaires were completed.

Questionnaire design is complex. As the purpose and the sample had been identified, the main consideration was the generation of appropriate questions to meet the aims and objectives of the research (Cohen et al, 2007). Defining these questions helped frame the problem this research was concentrating upon. Although questionnaires were not the only data collection method they provided a useful structure for ongoing observation and reflection as part of the entire action research project.

Becker et al (2012: 239) suggest that it is also important to consider the range of research analyses at the outset as it is important to consider the background information required about respondents. In this case information was collected on students' gender, age, ethnicity, course, current work role. Although it is common for

questionnaires to contain mainly closed questions (Becker et al, 2012) a mixture of open and closed questions were used in this case. Open questions were included to enable participants to write their responses in their own terms, and avoid the limitation of pre-set categories or responses. (See appendix A for questionnaires).

A range of questions were devised. Some questions directly informed curriculum content. An example can be found in the question 'Which particular aspects of inclusion and exclusion interest you'? Other questions aimed to measure the impact of learning on the unit. These questions tried to capture student's understanding of the term inclusion and exclusion and were repeated in the second questionnaire. The final set of questions (see Table 1 below) attempted to capture students own anticipations and reflections on their own learning.

**Table 1**

Question 8	How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your values regarding equality or diversity?
Question 9	How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your professional practice?
Question 10	How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your values/ practice once you have left University?

### **Data Analysis**

Initial analysis concentrated on the first questionnaires which were completed in the first week of teaching. Deeper analysis of all data occurred towards the end of term using techniques consistent with recognised research approaches that use constant comparison:

In constant comparison the researcher compares newly acquired data with existing data and categories and theories that have been devised and are emerging in order to achieve a perfect fit between these and the data (Cohen et al, 2007: 473).

Different questions were analysed for different purposes. As inclusion means different things to different people, analysis of certain questions needed to be approached with care. Indeed, different perspectives on inclusion over time have carried different terms with them; consequently there are many different ways to describe what an individual might mean by inclusion or exclusion. The concern is not to make judgements on the words necessarily but to recognise that there are different approaches (Clough and Corbett, 2000). Hence the analytical focus was on the number and context of the words used and a deductive approach that uses pre-set coding frame was applied to questions 4 and 5\*.

The final questions (see Table 1) were analysed by comparing answers at the beginning and at the end. This was possible with those questionnaires where there was identifiable handwriting, although one could not necessarily identify the person, one

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\*4: What does the term 'inclusion' mean to you today? 5: What does the term 'exclusion' mean to you today?

could identify certain students' first and second questionnaires. Analysing these responses gave lecturers important insights into student's own views and reflections on their learning.

*Ethical considerations:* Norton (2009) rightly suggests that researching teaching and learning within the institution one works in raises a number of ethical dilemmas. Educational researchers must operate within an appropriate ethic of respect towards their research participants (BERA, 2011). This study drew on BERA's (2011) ethical research guidelines in order to consider all aspects of the research process and reach an ethically acceptable position in which actions involving research participants are considered 'justifiable and sound' (p.4).

## **Part 2: The Research Process and Findings**

The detail of this particular Action Research process is now explained. Findings of both action research cycles are reported using Norton's (2001) ITDEM framework.

### **Cycle 1:**

*Identifying the Problem:* A collaborative reflection on teaching and learning practices identified the research 'problem' and how this could be addressed. Collaboration and reflection are often key principles that guide action research (Webb and Scoular, 2011: 470). Reflection on previous student presentations and the diminishing lecture and seminar programme emphasised the need to focus specifically on the definitions of inclusion and exclusion and the use of appropriate/inappropriate language. The concern was that students were not grasping the concepts of inclusion and exclusion. Thus the complexity and the use of language regarding inclusion/exclusion were identified as the areas of investigation.

*To address the problem* it seemed vital to study students' own views, and where they were starting from at the beginning of the unit. Thus, data was collected early on in the teaching programme via the use of questionnaires to add substance to lecturer's initial reflections and directly modify teaching on the Unit.

The *action* phase of the research involved collecting questionnaires, evaluating these and modifying practices immediately.

*Findings and evaluation:* Out of the cohort of 55 students, 32 (58.18%) completed the first questionnaire. Although many students could define inclusion and exclusion, it was notable that 37.5% provided short definitions (See Appendix B). Several students did not answer the question, or repeated the terms 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' by way of an explanation. Some students defined inclusion as only about providing 'the same' opportunities. These responses confirmed a need to discuss and clarify the context and terminology regarding inclusive education to ensure all students developed a better understanding of the nature of the subject of in/exclusion and could demonstrate this by devising their own descriptions by the end of the unit.

*Modifications arising from Cycle 1:* Three immediate, initial modifications were made. First, a list of all the topics students wished to cover was put together and considered

(Appendix C). Several of these topics were going to be covered anyway; however, those that were not were built into the curriculum. For example, the request for direct examples of good practice in addressing stereotypes and discrimination was built into my own lecture on Traveller education. Still, as teaching time was limited, certain topics could not be covered but have been considered further as part of next year's modifications to the unit.

Second, the lecture content in previous years had simply presented a series of separate in/exclusion 'issues'. Critical reflection as part of the action research process highlighted that this approach might actually fragment pupils into numerous 'problematic' groups and consequently inclusion could be perceived as a process of 'managing different individuals' (Armstrong et al, 2010: 30). This could exacerbate the identified problem. Hence, additional attention was paid to the lecturer content to emphasise different definitions of in/exclusions. Visiting lecturers were asked to emphasise terminology and their perspective/theory on inclusion/exclusion. Different inclusive education practices were included to highlight that in some cases diverse support is required to ensure all can access opportunities equally.

Third, a 'reflective stepping off' point was programmed in towards the end of the teaching period. This was a session where we asked students to complete their second questionnaire. We then reflected together with students on the issues regarding inclusion/exclusion that had been covered as part of the curriculum. Several students suggested that the subject and nature of inclusion/exclusion was complex and many provided examples from their own professional experiences to suggest inequality and exclusion for certain groups of pupils still exists. This provided lecturers a timely opportunity to reflect and discuss the sensitivity of use of language and labelling. The use of language is noted as important in the literature surrounding inclusion. Waltz (2005) highlights how dominant narratives of autism misinterpret and stigmatise this disability. Therefore it is critical that educators look critically at the information they receive and share.

This article will now turn to the second Cycle, which took place towards the end of the unit.

### **Cycle 2:**

*Identifying the problem and how to tackle it:* Cycle 2 also started with collaborative reflection, this time on the current year's teaching. Although modifications from cycle 1 had seemingly improved initial understandings about the complexity and the use of language regarding inclusion/exclusion, it was felt that further modifications were necessary to improve the student learning experience and long-term inclusive practices. Deeper analysis of all the data was seen as a way to achieve this. Thus the *action* as part of the 2nd cycle involved analysis of both questionnaires alongside reflections, observations and assessment of seminar presentations.

### *Findings and evaluation:*

24 questionnaires (43.64%) were completed second time around. Analysis of all data revealed four main findings. First, that those students working in practice within



education have a much clearer understanding of the issues regarding in/exclusion than those without this experience. Although this is fairly obvious it highlighted a need for differentiation of teaching and learning activities with more emphasis on providing insights into the lived educational experience for those without classroom experience.

Second, comparing students' definitions of inclusion and exclusion at the beginning and end of the unit suggested that teaching on the Unit had supported a better understanding of in/exclusion. This finding can be substantiated by the definitions students provided: the 2<sup>nd</sup> questionnaire contained more words and more elaborate explanations. Within the first questionnaires 37.5 % used 6 words or less, in the second questionnaire 20.8% did.

Third, a number of students defined inclusive education as pupils with disabilities participating in all aspects of mainstream school. Different definitions of inclusive education are reflected in the literature and it is important that teaching and learning embraces and recognises where students themselves are coming from. Discussing different perspectives with students themselves can facilitate a 'deep approach' to learning, which has been defined as:

An intention to understand and seek meaning, leading students to attempt to relate concepts to existing understanding and to each other, to distinguish between new ideas and existing knowledge, and to critically evaluate and determine key themes and concepts (Fry et al, 2003: 10)

Fourth, although one could not link the handwriting to the student, there were some questionnaires where first and second questionnaire could be compared through handwriting. This was particularly useful as it allowed for an evaluation of anticipated learning as well as a reflection on this learning and the impact on professional practice. The four quotes below evidence these findings:

*I gained vital knowledge which will be implemented into my working practice  
It has added evidence based research information to help guide my practice  
The reading behind the presentations and assignments along with the lectures has helped to inform me on various areas of equality and diversity.*

One student was quite sceptical and suggested: 'To be honest, I don't think I have gained much during this course which has added to what I already knew or how I work.' However, they then add:

*...although the Gypsy presentation was interesting as it's a group of people who don't get mentioned often.*

So although this particular student initially did not feel they had gained much, the questionnaire helped them reflect on certain aspects which had actually developed new knowledge and understandings.

In summary, action research facilitated important modifications to the unit which ensured a common message through all teaching and learning regarding in/exclusion. Initial findings suggest that this was effective, nevertheless further modifications were felt to be necessary. Lecturers set aside time to evaluate these findings and use these to modify teaching and learning for the following year's teaching.

#### *Modifications arising from Cycle 2:*

The action research process produced further plans to address the identified research problem. This research project enabled critical reflection and reconsideration of the literature and the widely differing approaches to inclusion/exclusion.

Next year more time will be spent with students considering different definitions of inclusive education and the complexity of the subject. As this will require more teaching time a further modification included changing the assessment process for the coming year from seminar presentations to a written assignment. This will allow time to cover more content and engage students in critical discussions regarding the ideologies, language and practices regarding inclusive and exclusive education. Freeing up teaching time will also facilitate differentiation for those who do not have practical experience of working in educational settings.

To monitor the impact of these changes and further improve educational practice lecturers have decided to continue the action research process. Questionnaires will be used once more to assist in monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, they will be used as a self-assessment tool for students who will participate in the analysis of their own completed questionnaires to deepen their own reflections on learning.

#### **Conclusion: How Action Research can support the teaching of in/exclusive education.**

Teaching 'inclusive education' is complex and there are many elements to consider, nevertheless this also makes it a fascinating subject to share with learners. Action research was found to be a valuable research process as it enabled critical, collaborative reflection on practice. Adopting a critical stance on one's own teaching is not always easy, however collaboration with colleagues and students was found to be a constructive process.

All insights gained from this action research project were seen to be beneficial to the teaching and learning on this unit. The research process emphasised how teaching inclusive education requires ongoing action for change and action research facilitated commitments to such change.

The aim of this action research project was to study both teaching practices and the student learning experience and use findings to inform, modify and improve the unit. The research process facilitated a critical lens which perhaps was present before, but required specific focus and time to consider. Action research is valid only when it sets out to benefit others. Gathering student views and involving them further in the research process next year is a process which will hopefully go on improving the student experience on this particular unit and will inform students practice in the classrooms of the future. Further action research alone, as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, as part

of the following year's teaching, will tell if such modifications have addressed the problem.

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## **Appendix A: Questionnaires**

### **INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE 1**

Date:

Age:

Gender:

Ethnicity:

Course:

Current work role (if any):

*Reasons for taking up the course:*

1. How do you feel about inclusion and exclusion in education?
2. Is this the reason for taking up this course
  - a. Yes
  - b. No – please explain other reason...
3. From your learning on your course so far, do you feel education is important to understanding young people's life opportunities/ outcomes and why (just brief summary – 1-2 sentences needed)?

*Thinking about language:*

4. What does the term 'inclusion' mean to you today?
5. What does the term 'exclusion' mean to you today?
6. Which particular aspects of *inclusion and exclusion in education* interest you?
7. Are there particular aspects/groups/issues that you want to learn about? Please list:

*Impact of learning:*

8. How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your values regarding equality or diversity?
9. How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your professional practice?
10. How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your values/ practice once you have left University?

### **REFLECTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE 2**

Date:

Age:

Gender:

Ethnicity:

Course:

Current work role (if any):

*Reflecting on language:*

1. What does the term 'inclusion' mean to you today?
2. What does the term 'exclusion' mean to you today?
3. Which particular aspects of *inclusion and exclusion in education* interested you most on this Unit?
4. Are there particular aspects/groups/issues that you still want to learn about now that you have completed the Unit? Please list:

*Reflecting on learning:*

5. How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your values regarding equality or diversity?
6. How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your professional practice?
7. How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your values/practice once you have left University?

## Appendix B: Data Analysis

### Coding Frame

Questions	Questionnaire 1 – at start	Questionnaire 2 – at end	Type of Analysis
What does the term inclusion mean to you today?  What does the term exclusion mean to you today?	Expectation:  A basic explanation	Expectation:  A fuller explanation	A) Count number of words used to answer the question.  B) Consider the 'inclusive' context of the words used
How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your values regarding equality and diversity?  How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your professional practice?	Expectation:  A basic explanation of impact of teaching on own values and practice.	Expectation:  A reflection on the impact of teaching on own values and practice.  Best reflection will be critical and make links with how learning will improve practice	C) Comparison of a small sample of students answers in initial and then final questionnaire.  As questionnaires are anonymous can base evidence on those with identifiable handwriting.

### Findings:

#### A) Number of words used:

- Questionnaire 1: 12 questionnaires with 6 words or less to answer questions.
- Questionnaire 2: 5 with 6 words or less.

#### B) Consider the 'inclusive' context of the words used :

Questionnaire 1: words used for INCLUSION : Included, differentiation, belonging, to have the same opportunities (x3), take part, diversity, to involve people, SEN going to mainstream, accepted, involved, integration, continue with studies.

EXCLUSION: left out, outcast, different, excluded, being removed from society, not allowing those who deserve the opportunity due to not willing or behaviour, not having needs met by education system, unable to attend, banned, denied opportunities, seen as different, alienated, prevented from pursuing education, separated.

Questionnaire 2: words used for INCLUSION : participation, access, differences accommodated not discriminated against, being part of, same opportunities, take everyone's needs into consideration, involvement, including everyone together but supporting according to their abilities, being allowed to come in, children in mainstream with support, needs met, available to all- changes made to allow access, feel valued, making adjustments to include isolated, catering for everyone based on individual needs

EXCLUSION: being taken away, different opportunities, putting a label on someone, expelled, children not in education, different, not socially accepted, not involved, treating everyone the same regardless of background

#### C) Comparison of a small sample of students answers in initial and then final questionnaire:

4 students' (A,B,C and D) initial and final questionnaires to consider impact on values and practice:

Questionnaire 1: How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your values regarding equality and diversity?

- A) I see it changing or confirming the way I feel about the needs of special needs individuals as a practitioner working with autistic children
- B) I don't see it changing my values to equality or diversity but may add to what I already believe.
- C) Because I'll be able to see the equal opportunities given regarding different areas
- D) I hope very much to look at bigger picture of inc/exclusion along with particular information from students/lecturers. Currently work in education both special schools and mainstream. To get a better understanding of equality and diversity.

How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your professional practice?

- A) Knowing how to go about improving people's situations
- B) It may change my opinion on different aspects allowing me to be more prepared for professional practice
- C) Yes because I'll be able to use the knowledge I gain within my professional practice and implement these
- D) I hope it will inform my practice and I will in turn be able to share good practice with peers.

Questionnaire 2: How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your values regarding equality and diversity?

- A) To be honest I don't think that I have gained much during this course that has added to what I already knew or how I work
- B) I don't think they have changed my values
- C) Positive, Better understanding
- D) The reading behind the presentation and assignments along with lectures has helped to inform me on various areas of equality and diversity.

How do you see your learning on this Unit informing your professional practice?

- A) The same response as question 1, although the gypsy presentation was interesting as it's a group of people who don't get mentioned often
- B) I understand the importance of helping children who may not want help but need it
- C) Gained vital knowledge which will be implemented into my working practice
- D) It has added evidence based research information to help guide my practice.

### **Appendix C: Responses to Questions 3 and 4**

This list was drawn up of topics students would like to cover:

- Options for SEN children if excluded from special school
- How different beliefs and cultures affect inclusion and exclusion in education
- Why does exclusion exist – why do some people exclude?
- Exclusion of BME groups
- Educational diversity – the experience of marginalised groups
- Disabilities
- Youth Offending
- Dealing with Challenging behaviour
- Children in Care
- Free School meals
- Examples of good practice in addressing stereotypes and discrimination (built into teaching on my session about Travellers experiences of education).