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PROVOCATIONS: PUTTING PHILOSOPHY TO WORK ON INCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion is currently characterised by confusion about what it is supposed to be and do; frustration at the way the current climate of standards and accountability constrains teachers' work; guilt at the exclusion created for individual pupils; and exhaustion, associated with a sense of failure and futility. This chapter considers the 'impossibility' of inclusion in the current context and how it has become a highly emotive and somewhat irrational space of confrontation, with questions about how we should include displaced by questions about why we should include, and under what conditions. An attempt is made to rescue inclusion from its valedictory state and to reframe it as an ongoing struggle and a more productive form of political engagement. This reframing takes some of the key ideas of the philosophers of difference - Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida and Foucault - and puts them to work on the inclusion *problem* (Allan, 2008).

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF INCLUSION

Questions raised by teachers unions about whether inclusive education can realistically be achieved have emanated from concerns about teachers being unprepared for inclusion (Macmillan et al, 2002) and about the 'collision course' between high stakes testing programmes and inclusion (NAE, 2005). Researchers report that teachers are increasingly talking about inclusive education as an impossibility in the current climate (Thomas and Vaughan, 2004) and about their lack of confidence in their capacity to teach inclusively (Hanko, 2005). A dramatic U-turn by the so called architect of inclusion from the UK, Mary Warnock (2005), who describes inclusion as a 'disastrous legacy' (p. 22), appears to have validated the resistance to inclusion. Whilst commentators have reacted speedily to the 'ignorant and offensive' nature of Warnock's comments (Barton, 2005, p. 4), this 'stunning recantation … by a respected figure' (Hansard, 22 June 2005, Col 825) has clearly had an influence.

Smyth (2001) acknowledges the extent of the exclusion experienced by teachers as well as children and contends that if we are prepared 'to think radically outside the frame' (p. 239) then we need to find ways of bringing people *into* the frame. Philosophy offers lucrative possibilities for enabling teachers to step out of the impasse which has developed with inclusion and into a new and productive frame.

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The philosophers of difference offer a reimagining of inclusion as a social, ethical, and above all political activity, which identifies everyone - including children and young people – as powerful and capable of enacting inclusion. It seeks to change the environments, the spaces and the people within them, to incite them to use this power and to direct it in productive directions. This is likely to produce change not through revolution or 'grand plans' (Roy, 2003, p. 147), but through 'combat' (p. 147), 'looking out for microfissures through which life leaks' and opening up new possibilities for inclusion.

THE PHILOSOPHERS OF DIFFERENCE

Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida and Foucault, along with Irigaray, Kristeva, Lyotard and others, have been recognised as philosophers of difference because of their concern with achieving the recognition of minority social groups and their attempt to formulate a politics of difference which is based on an acceptance of multiplicity (Patton, 2000). Each of these writers have in common an orientation to philosophy as a political act and a will to make use of philosophical concepts as a form, not of global revolutionary change, but of 'active experimentation, since we do not know in advance which way a line is going to turn' (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987, p. 137). Their work is a philosophy of affirmation which is a 'belief of the future, in the future' (Deleuze, quoted in Rajchman, 2001, p. 76). It does not offer solutions, but rather produces new concepts, 'provocation' (Bains, 2002), and new imaginings, 'knocking down partitions, co-extensive with the world' (Deleuze, 1994, p. 22). The key elements of Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault and Derrida's thought which are considered relevant to inclusion are set out in Allan (2008). This chapter attempts to show the provocations at work and unpacks some of the key concepts - Deleuze and Guatarri's deterritorialization, the rhizome and difference (1987; Deleuze, 2004), Foucault's practices of the self and transgression (1986, 1994) and Derrida's deconstruction (1997) - as they are put to work on inclusion.

The concepts of the philosophers of difference are made to work in two ways. First, the concepts themselves can be taken and *used* to help with a different way of seeing, thinking about and practising inclusion. It is not, however, a simple task to see, think and do differently, therefore, it is necessary also to use some of the practices of the philosophers of difference to help us achieve a new orientation to knowledge about inclusion - and about ourselves. Put to work in these ways, the concepts of the philosophers of difference open up possibilities for the enactment of inclusion and involve two sets of propositions. The first set of propositions involves *subverting* the balance of power in schools in favour of the students to enable them to participate more fully and effectively*, subtracting,* in order to do less more effectively and *inventing* new ways of learning and engaging together. The second set of propositions are concerned with changes in the processes of learning to teach and in the opportunities available to practising teachers to enable a more politicised form of engagement. These involve *recognition* of the double-edged and contradictory nature of inclusive teacher education, *rupture* of

conventional approaches to learning to teach and attempts to *repair* the profession by encouraging teachers to work on their own selves.

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS: SUBVERTING, SUBTRACTING, INVENTING

The tasks of subverting, subtracting and inventing speak back to power but are also about redirecting the huge amount of energy that already exists in schools in more useful and productive ways.

The rigidly hierarchical and bounded relationships between teachers and children and young people, with the latter subjugated by the former's authority, knowledge and power, could be interrupted by the teacher him or herself. The shift in teacher/student relationships could be characterised as a move, in Deleuzian (2004) terms, from communication to expression or from the sender-receiver mode, in which information flows along 'established power grids' (Roy, 2004, p. 298) that exist between teachers and their students, to more messy forms of exchange. The challenge for teachers is to try to think from within confusion (Britzman, 2002) without seeking closure through a demand for a clear distinction between the teacher and taught and to be open to 'the ethically rich drama that runs through education' (Edgoose, 1997, p. 1). Whilst this may be unsettling to teachers because of its departure from the intended content and may produce anxieties about achieving learning outcomes, such 'failure of fluency' (Edgoose, 1997, p. 6) is more likely to produce inclusive practice.

Transgression, the practical and playful resistance to limits, developed by Foucault (1994), is an important way for disabled people to challenge the disabling barriers they encounter. Transgression is not antagonistic or aggressive, nor does it involve a contest in which there is a victor; rather, it allows disabled individuals to shape their own identities by subverting the norms which compel them to repeatedly perform as marginal. Whilst it is necessary to continue to work to remove the barriers to inclusion which exist within schools and elsewhere, there is possibly a place for helping disabled and young people to recognise barriers, for example in the form of negative or patronising attitudes, and to find ways to challenge them. Teachers or other adults could work with children and young adults, individually or in groups, to plan transgressive tactics, either proactively or reactively. This could even be a project for disabled children and adults to work on with their non-disabled peers. More generally, students might be helped to become *readers of power*, learning to recognise how it is used to construct their identities and relationships with adults, control their movements, learning and behaviour. Developing literacy in relation to power would perhaps enable students to understand how adults are also implicated in this way and perhaps make them feel less antagonistic towards them. The students could then direct their resistance towards more productive and positive ends, although this will, of course, not be easily achieved.

The highly rigid and striated - territorialized - space of the school could be worked upon and smoothed out - deterritorialized (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) - by students. This involves inventing new ways for students to experiment with, and experience, inclusion and participation.

An example of effective work upon the school space was found in a school in which the headteacher had introduced children's rights (Allan et al, 2006). The headteacher's ambition was to explore the limits of children's rights under the terms of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. Having had limited success with various formal, bureaucratic activities such as assemblies and school councils, the headteacher decided to hand over some responsibilities to a group of children and a parent leader. The group called itself the Special Needs Observation Group, gleefully displayed its acronym (SNOG – a colloquial term for kiss) on tee shirts, and set about investigating inclusion and the right of all children to participate in school. One boy in particular, Alistair, became a strong leader of the group, particularly in relation to shaping the others' understanding about inclusion. The group excelled in identifying the barriers to participation and encouraging the whole school community to think and act more inclusively. Interestingly, the members of the group very quickly and comprehensively identified the need to examine inclusion by looking simultaneously at exclusion, a point which inclusion scholars have grasped only relatively recently in spite of enjoinders from Booth and Ainscow (1998), Ballard (2003) and others, and which continues to elude some. They operationalized intuitively the social model of disability, developed by disabled people, and recognised as an important framework for understanding inclusion because of its shift away from student deficits and onto the environmental, structural and attitudinal barriers to participation (Barnes et al, 2002, Barton, 2005). The students concluded that the biggest barrier to participation was the attitudes of teachers and students and made numerous suggestions for alterations which would remove the barriers.

The quest for certainty, closure and *outcomes* in learning could be replaced by a search for the undecidable, in which learning cannot be predicted. This does, however, involve a considerable subversion of the expectations contained within policy documents that particular behaviours will lead to particular outcomes. It also requires some inventive thinking about the alternative kind of learning that is to take place. The metaphor for the shift in learning used by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the rhizome, is particularly useful. The rhizome is posited as a contrast to the arborescent tree structure of learning in which knowledge is passed down in a linear fashion. The rhizome, in contrast, proliferates in unanticipated directions, requiring learners to undergo the 'disorienting jolt of something new, different, truly other' (Bogue, 2004, p. 341). The process of learning, thus, is the explication of these new encounters, an 'undoing of orthodox conventions' (ibid).

The invitation to students to narrate their own learner identities and experiences and map their own learning could assist them in becoming better learners, but they are likely to need help in managing the uncertainty associated with rhizomic learning. Experiencing uncertainty as positive, rather than as evidence of a lack of knowledge or understanding of the rules and expectations, could free students up to

pursue their own 'new lines of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 161) and avenues of thought and could be enormously liberating without posing a threat to the social order of the school. This may, however, be perceived in some quarters as an unacceptable challenge to authority.

The experience of the Special Needs Observation Group (SNOG) was a form of rhizomic learning in which they experimented with, and experienced, inclusion. They took rights - literally - on a walk through the school in order to discover the points at which exclusion arose. Simulation exercises of this kind, in which non-disabled individuals pretend to be disabled, can be superficial and essentialist, but these young people - because they had in their minds the rights of students to be included - forced their gaze on the barriers which restricted participation and found themselves constantly surprised, and capable of imagining more of the exclusion experienced by their disabled peers. This way of learning seemed to be particularly effective because it took them off in new and unanticipated directions. Having 'dealt with' disability, the group decided to move onto ethnicity, and identified some concerns about the level of participation of some individuals. They then decided to tackle 'fat' issues when they became aware of some of their peers' discomfort when changing for gym. Their experience and experimentation with rights had alerted them to new forms of exclusion which they wished to do something about.

For one young person, Alistair, the experience of being part of the SNOG group, and of rhizomic learning, was particularly significant in rescuing him from a downward spiral of misbehaviour and exclusion. He described himself as having formerly been out of control, often getting into trouble in the playground for fighting and being regularly excluded. Prior to joining SNOG, he had become a buddy to a disabled child and being responsible for someone else had made him alter his own behaviour. His membership of SNOG had, by his own account, transformed him into someone else, someone who had to have regard for others, and had allowed him to escape his deviant identity. It was a dramatic line of flight:

> Well, when I started to know [disabled students] I was, like, I need to show them I want to be good, 'cos I used to get into fights and stupid things like that but when I started to get to know them and got into the SNOG group I started my behaviour; I wanted to start again and be good … I didn't want everybody to know me as Alistair the bad boy. I want to be good now. So that's what I was trying to do when I went into the SNOG group … sometimes I'm amazing' (Allan and I'Anson, 2005, p. 133).

Alistair had transformed himself, but recognised that he had to police his own newly formed identity and occasionally he lapsed:

> I get into a fight or I get angry because it didn't happen. If I didn't get to sit beside my friends I start to get angry. I just want to be a good boy now. As everybody says "good boy." That's what I want to be – I want to prove them all wrong. They all think I [can't] behave but I want to prove them all wrong that I can behave … some people just know me as "there's Alistair – stay away from him." But I'm to prove them all wrong – that I'm good. I'm going to be good. I just want to be good now (ibid, p. 134).

Clearly such opportunities for escape would not be available to, or responded to by, every student with a label of behavioural difficulties. It is, nevertheless, a heartening transformation which delighted all with whom Alistair was connected - the headteacher, the teachers, the janitor, Alistair's mother, and us, the researchers. Most impressed of all was Alistair himself who came to know himself as 'amazing'.

NOMADIC LEARNING TO TEACH: RECOGNITION, RUPTURE AND REPAIR

Whilst the philosophers of difference can help us to challenge standards and accountability, this may be a long term task and it may also be possible to find ways of practising teacher education differently and more effectively - as education - and producing teachers who are keen to participate in the struggle for inclusion. The philosophers of difference assist with the *recognition* of the double-edged and contradictory nature of inclusive teacher education; the *rupture* of conventional approaches to learning to teach; and offer opportunities to *repair* the profession of teaching and teachers' own selves.

The most significant challenge for teacher educators is accepting that the aspiration to be inclusive creates a number of responsibilities which pull them, and their students, in different directions. These divergent responsibilities produce tensions because they are assumed to be resolvable or reducible to one choice but might be framed as a series of double duties or 'aporias' (Derrida, 1992, p. 22), both of which must be fulfilled:

1. How can student teachers be helped to acquire and demonstrate the necessary competences to qualify as a teacher *and* to understand themselves as in an inconclusive process of learning about others?
2. How can student teachers develop as autonomous professionals *and* learn to depend on others for support and collaboration?
3. How can student teachers be supported in maximising student achievement *and* ensuring inclusivity?
4. How can student teachers be helped to understand the features of particular impairments *and* avoid disabling individual students with that knowledge?
5. What assistance can be given to student teachers to enable them to deal with the exclusionary pressures they encounter *and* avoid becoming embittered or closed to possibilities for inclusivity in the future? (Allan, 2003, p. 143).

If these aporias were accepted as an inevitable element of teacher education for inclusion and if the pressure to choose between the double contradictory imperatives was resisted, there would perhaps be less confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion. Student teachers could be taught to understand the nature of these

contradictions and how to engage with the uncertainty they produce. Uncertainty, the greatest torment for the student teacher, could become acknowledged as an important element which beginning teachers have to enact, with the moments of undecidability being where they learn to do their most inclusive teaching.

Deconstruction, a process of reading texts with an eye out for their blind spots, contradictions and obfuscations (Derrida, 1997), could enable student teachers to see how they work to 'write the teacher' (Cormack and Comber, 1996, p. 119) in ways that are contradictory and oppositional (Honan, 2004) and constrain how they can act. Recognition of how they are regulated, and thereby controlled, and of the process of producing an effective teacher who is 'elastic or infinitely flexible and ultimately dutiful figures who can unproblematically respond to new demands' (Cormack and Comber, 1996, p. 121) may make the passage towards full teacher status less of an ordeal.

The rigid content driven programmes of teacher education, with their special education orientation, could be replaced through the process of deterritorialization. The four strands of this activity, developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), could be undertaken as a collective task within Higher Education Institutions or by individuals. The first of these, becoming foreigners in our own tongue, would involve scrutiny of the language used in lectures and materials, keeping an eye for where the language of special needs is prevalent and creating stutterings over words and expressions which have hitherto been familiar. Colleagues in my own institution developed a game of 'bullshit bingo' in an effort to pick up and subvert jargon in their written work. A similar exercise could be usefully undertaken with the teaching materials used with students.

The refusal of essences or signifieds is an important second strand of deterritorialization which could be undertaken within teacher education programmes. Instead of attempting, in lectures and materials, to define inclusion, we could point to who is included and who is not. We might also ask not what inclusion is but what inclusion does. This might take us closer to elaborating some of the consequences of inclusion for children and young people and their parents. We would then perhaps begin to understand how inclusion is experienced rather than how it is represented.

Creative subtraction would involve identifying what not to do within the curriculum. Instead of responding to the latest government imperatives to insert more content by looking to see where it can be squeezed in, there could be a search for what might be removed or reduced. An invitation to lose aspects of what we currently do in the name of inclusion and in education, in order to put some other things in, could be attractive. This, of course, will not be easy as there will be opposition from those who insist that the items proposed for shedding will remain purely because they have always been there and are precious to the individuals who put them there in the first place.

The acceptance that there is no-one behind expression, the final strand of deterritorialization, is a refusal to attribute blame or responsibility for content to any individuals and to encourage the contribution of new and untried ideas. Greater use of brainstorming sessions could enable staff to roam through the kind of

teacher education that they really want to do, rather than what they feel constrained to do, then to ask themselves 'why not?' The ruptures provided by deterritorialization may create opportunities for more productive learning.

Adopting the rhizome as the means for learning to be a teacher ruptures the interpretation of theory (Deleuze, 1995) and privileges experimentation and experience, taking the student teachers on, in Derrida's (1992) terms, an 'empirical wandering' (p. 7). The rhizome allows student teachers to invent themselves as the kind of teachers they want to become and instead of absorbing, and later replicating, content, student teachers would be involved in: 'experimenting with pedagogy and recreating its own curricular place' (Gregoriou, 2002, p. 231; original emphasis). Rhizomic wanderings, whilst extremely challenging because of the uncertainty they bring, could help to disrupt conventional knowledge about teaching and learning. They could also interrupt the dominant knowledge of *special needs* and enable student teachers instead to experiment with responding to difference in ways which are meaningful to the young people. This would force the student teachers to question what they know themselves, to 'ask what determinations and intensities [they] are prepared to countenance' (Roy, 2003, p. 91) and to abandon ways of working that seem unreasonable.

Student teachers' knowledge and understanding might be fashioned as a series of maps, 'entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 12). These maps do not replicate knowledge, but perform and create new knowledge. Reflexivity, which students are often demanded to practise but are rarely given guidance on how, could be directed towards producing maps of their journeys as becoming teachers. Maps of their school contexts could also be created by student teachers during their teaching practice. These could detail the exclusionary points, and openings for inclusivity, in the school as a whole, in lessons they observe and in their own classrooms.

Learning to be a teacher through the rhizome is not a journey towards a fixed end, as denoted by the standards, but wanderings along a 'moving horizon' (Deleuze, 2004, p. xix) which are documented visually. As well as creating new knowledge, these wanderings provide opportunities for student teachers to establish, in Rose's (1996) terms, new assemblages and new selves, as teachers. Students' wanderings need to be supported and responded to in a way which does not entrench further their novice and incompetent identity. Student teachers' 'creative stammerings' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 98), questions and searches for links would be engaged with, rather than closed down as indicative of their failure to grasp content. It is in these spaces or schisms where complex thinking would take place and where 'a new experiment in thought could be inserted … that might help teachers get an insight into the generative possibilities of the situation' (Roy, 2003, p. 2).

Teacher education has traditionally packaged difference for the student teacher in the form of lists of deficits, their causes and their cures. Even if this is done with the caveat 'no two children are alike' and a discouragement of categorisation, it still facilitates a recognition of 'types' of failings in children and what they might expect from them. A rupture in this typing could be achieved by asking students to

turn the gaze back on themselves and on the schools in which they do their teaching placements. The refusal to explain children's pathologies to student teachers might provoke wails of protest from them, but the reasons for this refusal could be set out along with an exposition of the consequences of pathologies for those at whom they are directed. Having outlawed pathologies of children, student teachers' energies could be directed instead to trying an alternative - social model - reading of students' difficulties which identifies the environmental, structural and attitudinal barriers to their participation. Student teachers could be encouraged to engage with difference *in itself*, as opposed to in relation to identity, and in comparison with the normal. They could undertake the task of finding out about individual children's 'conditions', but could investigate how this description has been arrived at and by whom. Student teachers might also scrutinise their own fears about responding to individuals effectively and share these with more experienced teachers or with fellow students. They might be encouraged to think of their anxieties about responding to the other as precisely the point at which inclusion and justice becomes a possibility:

> As soon as you address the other, as soon as you are open to the future, as soon as you have a temporal experience of waiting for the future, of waiting for someone to come: that is the opening of the experience. Someone is to come, is *now* to come. Justice and peace will have to do with this coming of the other with the promise (Derrida, 1997, p. 22).

This desire for, and openness to, the other privileges relationships over the delivery of content and makes knowledge of children's *needs* less important than knowing the children themselves. I have suggested previously that a concern for difference in terms of *needs* could be replaced with an attention to the child's and young person's *desires* (Allan, 1999). This is neither excessive nor radical, but simply involves asking the child or young person for guidance on the kind of support he or she is most comfortable with. There is clearly an enormous risk associated with bringing desire into educational conversations and this may be perceived as more or less dangerous within different cultural contexts. The Scottish school context is hardly the bedrock of permissiveness and indeed there was some disquiet among parents over the SNOG tee shirts, which also featured a picture of lips. The headteacher's determination to allow the students' enactments to be upheld prevailed but a less sanguine reaction to the introduction of desire in other schools can easily be envisaged.

The student teachers' own desires could be foregrounded in their identity as becoming teachers. Instead of their status representing a lack of competence, they could be encouraged to articulate their trajectory - emotional as well as in terms of their acquisition of skills - towards the kind of teacher they want to become. The narratives of experienced teachers could be a valuable resource in helping student teachers to understand the fractured, partial and embodied process of becoming a teacher and the centrality of desire, or at least emotion. Student teachers could be encouraged to offer and compare reflections on the intensities of their experiences and their 'percepts' and 'affects' (Deleuze, 1995, p. 164), the way they come to think and live as teachers.

Foucault's framework of ethics could be used by student teachers by, first of all, identifying the part of themselves as teachers which they wished to work on (determining the ethical substance). The second ethical dimension, the mode of subjection, could come from examining the rules which operate within schools or Higher Education Institutions and which create barriers to inclusion. Self practice or ethical work, the third dimension, could be directed towards their professional conduct and attempts to be inclusive. This might necessitate identifying the way in which their own teaching practices and actions, carried out *in the best interests* of children, creates barriers to inclusion, and modifying these. Finally, students could be invited to work out the overall goal, the telos, perhaps with guidance on this from children and young people and their families. The ethical project of inclusion is one which we undertake and practise upon ourselves, but on which we can seek advice from those who hold the greatest expertise and who are likely to know what their own best interests are.

Foucault's framework of ethics could also provide a structure for staff development and for supporting the work of practising teachers in becoming more inclusive. Staff development, instead of being a content driven attempt to skill teachers up in response to the latest government imperative, could provide a smooth space for them to pause, think and repair some of the damage they have experienced. Teachers might be given an opportunity to examine the exclusionary pressures within the education system. By doing some of this collectively they may come to recognise the struggle for inclusion as something which is constant, shared, and necessarily inconclusive. Determining the ethical substance, the part of teachers' selves and their schools to be worked on, could be done collectively, perhaps starting with 'confessions' of aspects of their practice which have been exclusionary. The mode of subjection could be identified by examining teachers' own school context and their experiences of exclusion and regulation. Self practice or ethical work could be focused on making their classroom practice more inclusive but also on trying to tackle some of the barriers they themselves encounter. Finally they could be encouraged to think about the overall goal, the telos, for both inclusion and for themselves as teachers.

UNCANNY ENACTMENTS?

The philosophers of difference offer possibilities for rescuing inclusion from the impasse which it appears to be in and encouraging all of those involved - teacher educators, teachers, student teachers and children and young people - to see themselves as capable of enactments of inclusion. They allow a response to the demand for practical solutions to educational problems such as inclusion in the form of new routes through the problems. The position of teacher educators in facilitating enactments is as curious, rather than as experts, acting to 'complicate rather than explicate' (Taylor and Saarinen, 1995, p. 7) and pursuing, not understanding, but 'interstanding' (ibid, p. 3). The act of interstanding occurs when

depth gives way to surface, in a search for what stands between and involves risking the personal (Ware, 2002). In other words, teachers and other professionals may find ways forward in those moments of undecidability when a new thought or a new kind of experiment emerges. These are unlikely to be new in the sense of never having been seen before, but 'uncanny … a thing known returning in a different form … a revenant' (Banville, 2005, p. 10). The provocations from the philosophers of difference allow us to make inclusion a more realistic possibility by 'acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come' (Nietzsche, 1983, p. 60).

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