

Inclusion ‘All present and correct?’ A critical analysis of New Labour’s inclusive education policy in England

Alan Hodkinson

Liverpool Hope University, UK

Abstract

Drawing on Derrida this paper considers how inclusive education in England was defined and operationalised within New Labour’s educational policy and by those teachers who reconstructed this policy within the confines of schools and individual classrooms. The paper has two critical ambitions. First it argues that the epistemology of inclusion was mediated by ontological ghosts which moved it away from its creation as a construct of social justice to recreate it on a stage of the phenomenological reduction of competing policy initiatives. Second, the paper demonstrates how teachers although fully accepting of inclusion’s theoretic nevertheless interpreted it in such a way that it became nothing more than spectacle where social presence cloaked educational absences. Based upon such findings the paper concludes that New Labour’s inclusion policy was illusionary and perhaps was as much about presenting inequity as it was equity.

Key Words: Inclusion, Inclusive Education, New Labour, Derrida, Exclusion

Introduction

In a recent research study (ref deleted) in England the construct of presence within government definitions of inclusion and teacher’s descriptions of schools as sites of absence became the subject of interest. This paper employs Derridean theory as a lens to re-examine data in relation to how inclusion was constructed in education policy and in the ‘speech acts’ of school teachers. This re-analysis specifically employs the lens of deconstruction, and Derrida’s theoretic on speech and language and absence and presence. Deconstruction is employed here as it formulates analyses which seek to expose and destabilise the dialectic tensions, paradoxes and hierarchies within texts and speech (See Royle, 2003).

Deconstruction is useful then as it reframes the inclusion “problem” by critiquing

'communications of consciousness and by disrupting the "decidability within texts, [thus] undermining and subverting the ideology of 'expertism' that plagues inclusion practice" (Allan, 2008). All 'writings,' Derrida (1998) maintains, centre upon a motif of reduction which is both homogeneous and mechanical. Here, the graphematic mark replaces speech and communicates to the absent by creating a "written syntagma¹" (Derrida 1998, p.9) to circulate the author's ideal meaning. Derrida (1998, p.20) suggests that the syntagma is "an imagination and memory necessitated by the absence of the object from the present presence" of the interlocutors. Writing, then, is a "communication of consciousness" and bearer of intentionality (Derrida, 1998, p.25). I want now to employ Derrida's thesis on writing and speech to deconstruct this consciousness in relation to the inclusion and presence of children with Special educational Needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) within government and teacher discourse.

This paper has two distinct aims. First, it reviews through textual analysis how inclusion became defined within educational policy during the period of the New Labourⁱⁱ government. Second, the paper seeks to critically examine how educational practitioners defined, interpreted and employed inclusive education within the confines of their own classrooms and schools. Before this analytical excursion may commence it would seem necessary to provide a context to the development of the policy of inclusive education in England.

The Development of Inclusion in England

In 1994 representatives from 92 governments and 25 international organisations met in Salamanca, Spain to affirm a right-base perspectives to education determining that countries should "concentrate their efforts on the development of inclusive schools" (UNESCO, 1994, p. 13). From the Salamanca Statement onwards the terms inclusion and inclusive education became part of governmental rhetoric gaining status in schools and the mass media.

In 1997 a New Labour government swept to power on a tidal wave of rhetoric and a commitment to reform the manner in which children labeled as SEND were to be educated (Hodkinson, 2005). Inclusion for New Labour became a political process (Allan, 2009) and a key component of governmental planning (Corbett, 2001) pursued through a powerful top down implementation approach (Coles & Hancock, 2002). Allan (2008, p. 75) accounts though that the government masked this political imperative presenting decisions related to

inclusion as “rational and ordered”. For example, the 2001ⁱⁱⁱ Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) required all teachers despite little or no training to identify and meet the needs of pupils labeled as having SEND within mainstream schools (Barber & Turner, 2007). This requirement saw government ‘placing the ball’ for meeting the needs of all children firmly in the court of mainstream teachers (Ellins and Porter, 2005). Over the last decade, then, inclusive education has made classrooms more heterogeneous and this has brought forth considerable challenges for teachers.

New Labour though whilst well versed in inclusion rhetoric also constructed many of the barriers that stalled its evolution. For example, whilst they promoted inclusion through personalised education and social inclusion, this did not square the selective education promoted within the 2005 White Paper^{iv} which set out to transform secondary and post-secondary education in England and Wales (DfES, 2005). Nor did it mesh with a National Curriculum and Strategies^v which placed emphasis on whole class teaching (Judge, 2003). For others, inclusive education did not go far enough because whilst supposedly committed to inclusion New Labour did not close the special schools (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). Furthermore, at the level of the local authorities inclusion succumbed to the same postcode lottery of provision faced by integration (Rustemier & Vaughan, 2005). This lottery of implementation meant that families were faced with unacceptable variations in the support available (Audit Commission, 2002) and for some children inclusion, like integration beforehand, became placement without adequate provision (Corbett, 2001). New Labour’s policy therefore rather than advocating inclusion by choice left some families with no option but the choice of inclusion. A review of the literature base whilst leaving no doubt that inclusion gained status also suggests a tension in how it became defined and operationalized by government and educational practitioners (Allan 2008; Armstrong et al. 2009; Dunne, 2009). It is these tensions within government and teachers’ definitions and operation of inclusion in schools that are the subject of analysis in the paper.

Methods

For the purposes of this research textual analysis was employed to ‘get beneath’ (Harvey, 1990) the government’s operationalisation of the complex and multifaceted concept that is inclusive education. This analysis approached government policy documents as cultural artifacts (Harvey, 1990) and as the means through which educational professionals were introduced to their governments’ actions (Dittmer, 2010). This analysis attempted to

deconstruct the 'rhetoric of the day' and examine the more connotative social meanings contained within the subcutaneous layer of education policy.

Second, the research aimed to examine "individuals' perceptions" (Bell, 2000, p. 7) and conceptualisations of inclusive education through "insight rather than statistical data" (Bell, 2000, p. 7). The researcher wanted to ascertain whether his experiences of inclusive education as a policy that legitimated exclusion from mainstream schools were common amongst teachers in schools. Semi-structured interviews lasting approximately an hour, and post interview protocols which allowed for further elaboration and clarification, garnered data from ten educational practitioners' whose experience of teaching ranged from two to thirty-five years. Their views were sought in relation to their understanding of:

- definitions of inclusion as it related to SEND;
- which children they thought could and could not be included in mainstream schools; and
- the benefits of inclusion for the school, the teacher and the pupils.

The interview data were analysed by the employment of grounded theory which focused on the discovery of theory from data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Within the application of grounded theory researchers seek to answer a fundamental question, that is- what is happening in their data. Through grounded theory researchers take control of the data by employing varying levels of coding to analyse and pursue themes which emerged from the research (Charmaz, 2003). Within the original research several themes emerged in relation to how inclusion had become defined through teacher's operation of government policy. A theme that dominated all data sets was the dialectical tension between inclusion theoretic and what inclusion had become in practice. This theme enabled a theoretical framework to develop that teachers whilst basing inclusion practice on the presence, in their classrooms, of all children were still regularly segregating some children. However, grounded theory is subject to criticism. As Charmaz (2009:319) relates "Researchers who use grounded theory methods do so through the prism of their disciplinary assumptions and theoretical perspectives". Therefore, the analysis and discussion contained within this paper were guided by Lewin and Somekh's (2005) warning that within grounded theory there is 'no one truth' or 'one theory'. Grounded theory here then was employed to provide a theoretical foundation

from which an understanding of how the participants conceptualised inclusive education was gained.

Discussion

Within the next section of the paper inclusionary presence as manifested within government discourse and policies is deconstructed and analysed. Policies which New Labour stated brought into purview the end of absence and in its place constructed a new canonical form of presence that of inclusive education. This analysis details how inclusion moved from constructs of social justice (see Armstrong et al. 2009) to become the politics of sincere deceit (Nairn, 2000). Based upon this analysis an argument is forwarded that inclusive education for this government was not about equity but rather became imagination absented from the practicalities of the educational context.

Inclusion: The Politics of Sincere Deceit

New Labour heralded inclusion as a radical departure from previous contexts of integration. Within the political environ inclusion policy seemingly became straightforward and rather like the Emperor's new clothes was not to be criticised but observed to be rhizogenic^{vi} to learning communities where all were welcomed and valued. In textual terms, though, inclusion's syntagma whilst simple did not represent an uncomplicated ideological construct. Allan's (2008, p. 82) deconstruction of government policy is useful here as a starting point to this paper's analysis. This is because it details how the underrepresentation of disabled people was previously attributed to "problems of access, teaching methods and attitudes" and it was this that "conjured" inclusion as a wish that mainstream schools should be "more welcoming to disabled students". Allan concludes though that inclusion in this guise constructed disabled students as 'guests' in the mainstream who would otherwise not be there.

New Labour's educational policy commenced in 1997. It promoted inclusive education as the teaching of disabled and non-disabled children within the same neighbourhood of schools. In this first Green Paper New Labour articulated its 'fundamental reappraisal' of how children's special educational needs were to be met in educational settings. The paper also presented the government's targets for meeting the special education needs of students with disabilities in England by the year 2002. Inclusive education enshrined within this document was defined as:

Where all children are included as equal partners in the school community . . . [and] that is why we are committed to comprehensive and enforceable civil rights for disabled people. Our aspirations as a nation must be for all our people (Department for Education and Employment [DfEE], 1997, p. 5).

. . . the participation of all pupils in the curriculum and social life of mainstream schools; the participation of all pupils in learning which leads to the highest possible level of achievement; and the participation of young people in the full range of social experiences and opportunities once they have left school (DfEE, 1998^{vii}, p. 23).

These definitions were then New Labour's ideal meaning and in Derridean terms were its 'vouloir-dire'; a mind's image for which a word is thought to exist (Shaffer & Gorman, 2008).

For Derrida though words do not represent a pure presentation of ideality^{viii} as they are never accidental but reflect linguistic origins and as such are historical products (Alison, 2005). Other definitions employed elsewhere by this government highlighted such origins as they suggested that all pupils regardless of their 'weaknesses' should become part of the school community (see Judge, 2003). In reconsidering the linguistic origins of the government's ideality of inclusion *in toto* it becomes apparent that their mediation of the inclusive education stood at some distance from that of the Salamanca Statement. For example, reconsider the government statement detailed earlier. In this text inclusion is defined as a right to be 'equal partners'; a right which extends to all children. Therefore, by implication any form of 'exclusion' becomes morally indefensible; thus inclusion becomes constructed as a form of social justice. However, the second statement seemingly places inclusion as a duty rather than a right. This form of 'participation' appears to leave inclusion not so much as a right but as an obligation. Inclusion in this guise accordingly is encountered as one of the "paradoxes of forced choice" (Žižek 2009, p. 25) and "of freedom to do what is necessary so long as pupils . . . do exactly what they are expected to do". Inclusion supplanted into this discourse of 'illusion' (Armstrong et al. 2009) then was not about choice or Nussbaum's (2006) capabilities but actually became formulated as *forced* participation.

The linguistic origins of this government discourse therefore by invoking such multiple ideologies pushed and pulled inclusion along discrepant axes. As such the signifier of inclusion became fractured by that which lay outside it, namely the world (Alison, 2005). Alison (2005) proposes that once lines of fracture exist, the distinction between indication

and expression cannot be maintained. The residual left Derrida (1998, p. 85) might suggest represents nothing more than a “contract of minimal agreement”. Consequently, New Labour’s inclusion should not be observed as an ideality of pure presence but rather should be seen as a site of interpretation. From the outset then the epistemology of inclusion and its linguistic origins were influenced by ‘ontological ghosts’ (Stronach, 2010). From the perspective of Derrida (2001) it was an ideality ‘out of joint’ and as Hayek (1976, p. 11) suggests was an “unintended by product of others exploring the world in different directions”. As detailed earlier government defined inclusion as the education of all children regardless of ‘any weakness’ they might display (Judge, 2003), in the same neighbourhood of schools (Hodkinson, 2007). This text reveals a further fault line in the representation of ideality. Here inclusion is maintained as a graft of integration placing importance upon simple presence in mainstream schools rather than on equity and the quality of learning experienced by the pupils. Second, the terminology of ‘weakness’ and disability employed here may be observed to shackle need to societal values and Victorian principles of charity, dependence and exclusion. This is because the usage of such terms are patronising and degrading and for some they inevitably lead to a narrow and contrived view of inclusion. Inclusion in these terms then is culturally loaded because it employs language which does not instil pride and value. Rather it refers to individuals who are seen to be ‘*not able*’ because of impairment. The employment of such terminology places a cultural cloak around inclusion; a cloak sewn with notions of deficit, pity and dismay. Definitions formulated in these terms do not promote inclusive education but conversely encourage the return to integration and thereby tolerance not inclusion of children with SEND.

The government’s writings detailed above did not therefore provide a solid point of embarkation for its inclusion policy. They were to quote Derrida a ‘*faux depart*’ – a false start- as by not producing an ‘irreducible concept’ they formulated inclusion as residual on a stage of phenomenological reduction (Derrida & Ronell, 1980). A stage which in England, as elsewhere in the world, was predicated by actors of deficit language, competing policy initiatives, functionalist ideology and presence as represented by full inclusionists. For Allan (2008, p. 81) inclusion therefore became a “double duty” where there was “the haunting of the one in the other” (Derrida, 1995, p. 20). In these government texts, then, the theoretic of inclusion was seemingly accepted without question. However, within inclusion praxis stereotypical beliefs and values related to the commodification of education continued to dominate educational thinking, planning and the teaching and learning of all children.

The paper now details how the supposed simplicity of presence heralded by the signifier of inclusion was further obfuscated within other government documents. By tracing these fault lines within the representations of ideality the paper seeks to reconstruct inclusion within a discourse of mutual interference.

Inclusion: A Stage of Phenomenological Reduction?

More recently inclusion in England became operationalised by agents of accountability. For example, Ofsted^{ix} [Office for Standards in Education] from the year 2000 employed inclusive metrics to judge schools' performances revealing an ideality where the teaching, learning, achievement, attitudes and well-being of every person mattered (OFSTED, 2000). In 2004 the government's publication *Removing Barriers to Achievement* refocused New Labour's vision for special educational needs. It formulated procedures that were designed to overcome the barriers to success that the previous inclusion policy had faced. However, within this document the Secretary of State for Education further fractured the ideality of inclusion by stating that:

... we need to do much more to help children with special educational needs to achieve as well as they can, not least if we are to meet the challenging targets expected at school (Charles Clarke, Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2004, p. 16).

Clarke's words reveal a fault line of reduction as policies of inclusion became operationalized within a regime of accountability. Schools too it seemed were to be forced to 'compete' whatever their handicap as obligation became a form of coercion. Schools, then, whose reputations depended upon surface success (Hanko, 2003), became wary of accepting those whose low attainment and 'poor' discipline might depress examination scores (Fredrickson & Cline, 2002). Inclusionary presence here then 'justified' the absenting of pupils from mainstream education. All may participate but not here, not where they want to. Inclusion as reform began to subvert itself from within.

To explore this fault line further consider David Blunkett's (New Labour's first minister of education) words:

...the education of children with special educational needs ...is vital to the creation of a fully inclusive society ...We owe it to all children ... to develop to their full

potential and contribute economically and play a full part as active citizens.’ (cited in Judge, 2003, p. 163).

Blunkett’s caveat of economics reveals a deep schism in inclusion’s ideality. Can inclusion with its notions of equity of opportunity really co-exist with the neo-liberalistic commodification of education which brings forth associated notions of competition? Indeed, is inclusion as a global initiative even possible given the unrelenting moves towards increased accountability, standards and economic prosperity which are necessarily folded into the neoliberal globalisation of the education product? (See Hodkinson and Devorakona, 2011). In reality the introduction in England of competing neo-liberalistic education policies with inclusion meant that inequity became the weak foundation upon which this policy was actually built. Indeed, teachers in the research clearly articulated how inclusion policy was diametrically opposed to many of New Labour’s other neo-liberalistic initiatives. Indeed, it was the ‘fear’ of such initiatives which fractured their ideality of inclusion. For example, one primary school teacher commented:

The issue we have at the moment is that we are an average school, is targets we are incredibly target driven. . . Schools are under so much constant scrutiny, in fear of Ofsted you know trying to get the grades. . . Teachers and the school cannot, you know what I mean, it is all well and good having the intention and I know all my students should have inclusion in place. . . it’s the time constraint . . . (Primary School Teacher 3 [PST3])

Another teacher related that:

. . . there is a massive disparity between inclusion . . . and the targets that the government are setting alongside and I do think that makes inclusion very difficult. (PST4)

In addition this secondary school teacher believed that:

. . . as a teacher you have got this thing about . . . you have got to move your class on, all the value added, all the tests etcetera. You know your time is sort of limited and if you do have a child who demands a certain proportion of your time you are then aware that perhaps you have not got the other job done . . .

Its ideality blurred inclusion, as this residual, became an amalgam of least resistance which legitimised the co-existence of competition, conformity, functionalism and absence with

social justice, equity and presence. Inclusive education was, and indeed is, a policy of sincere deceit where equity acts as a baroque fold to inequity.

The government's uncritical acceptance of this form of inclusion reduced its educational policy to a patrimonial inheritance. Inclusion became Robert Davies's 'ornamental knowledge' as '... a gross nonsense and doctrine of society [was] defended by every weapon of communal stupidity'. Inclusion here was as simplistic as it was dangerous. Like Nestlé's baby milk (see War on Want 'The Baby Killer' 1974) in the late 1970's it became a brand and packaged commodity that fashionable educationalists dispatched unquestioningly to the four corners of the globe (Hodkinson & Deverakonda, 2011). Inclusion's syntagma became elusive. Inclusion though thrived on such elusiveness. This was its strength. It became a Janus-faced concept.

Despite New Labour's protestations that inclusion was a radical new concept its policy iterations actually constructed inclusion as a graft of integration. As this residual construct it operated only as link in the chain of integration. A chain of pedagogy inexorably linked to segregation. Inclusion here then became Derrida's (1997, p. 145) "*suplérance*". It became a thing that supplanted adding "only to replace," it intervened and insinuated itself "in-the-place-of" of integration. Inclusion and exclusion entwined in this false dichotomy became rooted in a discourse of absence. It became a residual constructed upon the modification of presence rather than a struggle for Nussbaum's social justice. Here then is the sincere deceit. By absenting some children (the 'present perception') inclusion became imaginary. Whilst seeking the 'presence' of all children inclusive education actually only enabled representation through regularly supplanting presence (Derrida, 1998).

Inclusion: Teachers' Speech, Absenting the Presence

Within the next section the speech-acts of teachers are critically examined and analysed to reveal how their ideality of inclusion, like the governments beforehand, stood at some distance from that of the Salamanca Statement. Firstly then let us consider how the teachers initially defined inclusive education. At first reference, inclusion was framed within the premise of equity and was not based upon just the simple presence of a child in 'mainstream education'. These teachers also seemingly believed that all pupils should gain benefit from

accessing the same learning experiences. An experience as this teacher articulates which should enrich their lives:

. . . inclusive education is . . . including all students that are in a learning environment in the experience and making sure that they get the best out of that experience as is possible. . . (Secondary Teacher 2 [ST2])

. . . well I think that every school's duty is to teach the children who turn up at their door isn't it, you know that they are fully part of the school. . . (PST1)

Within the interview data though all teachers highlighted a gulf between inclusive presence and schools as sites of paradox where inclusion revealed itself in a plural reverse of presence. The further One delved into the transcripts. The more One realised that although the teachers were well versed in inclusion rhetoric the form of inclusive education they discussed was not one readily recognisable in light of the Salamanca Statement. The majority of the teachers interviewed possessed at best a conceptual naïveté or at worse were employing inclusion rhetoric to cloak exclusionary practices. The secondary school teacher's comments below reveal such contradictions. Inclusion here whilst accepted theoretically is revealed through words such as 'strength and courage' to be the battleground of presence and the forced absence of children. This teacher had initially related how inclusion should ensure that all children 'should be taught in mainstream' and have 'access and participation'. Indeed, the vast majority of the teachers defined inclusion as 'including all children' in the learning environment. However, note below how inclusion for this teacher moved during the course of the interview inexorably from mainstream schools as sites of presence to ones constructed upon forced absence.

. . . inclusion to me means that every child has access to a curriculum be that social, behavioural curriculum as well as an academic one which they can participate at their own level and achieve some modicum of success. It does not mean that you can be included in a school for the name of just being present. It has to be more than that. It has to be a participation of some kind.

I really believe in the inclusion agenda. I think I have become much more aware about inclusion and that stuff but on a practical basis . . . I have the belief to say that if it's not right and I think I have the strength and the courage and the belief to turn around and say that I disagree with it.

I think we have got to be very careful about the word inclusion and what it actually means and from some examples that I have seen in practice to include a child in

mainstream school has been more damaging and more isolating than if they have been in a special school that can cater for their needs, low numbers high input, high skills input

I think that sometimes the inclusion agenda takes away...because not all children can fit into a round hole when you are a square peg and that's the difference and that should be ok. (ST3)

It would seem that although at first reference inclusion is an easy construct to define, in practice it exists within multiple realities. As the teacher above went onto comment 'I think that it depends upon the type of inclusion you are talking about . . . '. Inclusion it seems, then, has many guises and for teachers this can range from strong support for its theoretical underpinnings to what may be observed as rather shallow interpretations of inclusion in praxis.

Inclusion as exclusion

A major success criterion of inclusion policy was that learning environments should value and welcome all children (DFES, 2004). Indeed, the difference between inclusion and integration was that within these new environments the school should change to accommodate the child needs. The transcripts though highlight how the majority of teachers did not understand this accommodational interchange as the central feature of inclusion policy. Consequently, although inclusion had a messianic expectation of the presence of all children in mainstream schools these teachers still regularly excluded children. The teachers in this research individualised inclusion with a secret polemic which justified the absence of children. Absented children were labeled as 'them and they' to be set apart from those in 'normal' schools. Teachers rendered some children as the distant 'Other' out of sight but not out of mind. For example, consider these teachers' statements in relation to which children should be included in mainstreams schools:

. . . if we are talking about all children you must include obviously the profound and multiple special needs. . . however, I don't feel they could fit into the mainstream class because of the nature of the school... A normal mainstream school is a very boisterous place and sadly that is the nature of the beast. It is not the best thing to say and I just think school is not the place for them . . . (ST1)

. . . inclusion works pretty well in our place . . . I would hope we would stand out as one of the better schools . . . in the assessment centre we now have children playing in the same yard, we still have dining separately because they still take a long time to eat

their meals . . . Again depending on the severity of their impairment disability, whatever, they would go to [special school] if they really needed it. (PST2)

In the statements above presence and absence are secreted into inclusive education. They are symbiotic. They act not in binary opposition but as an amalgam of continually blurring perspectives. As corollary to inclusive education these teachers had fallen publicly in love with the theoretic mistress of inclusion and had become seduced by her liberal caresses of equity and social justice. But we must take care here, in line with Nussbaum (2003) I would highlight, ‘What is this equity of which they speak and for whom is it actually for?’ Nussbaum argues that whilst social justice is a central political value the question that remains not asked is, ‘what is the right space for such values?’ Inclusion articulated by these teachers Nussbaum (2006, p. 37) might presume was not crystal clear but actually acted as an “illusion of agreement”. Social justice formulated in this guise of inclusion was not ‘good treatment’ or ‘fundamental entitlements’. Indeed, it undermined capabilities erecting barriers to the principles of equity (Nussbaum, 2003). Thus, inclusion was but an ‘illusion of agreement’; agreement which was quickly eroded as these teachers also embraced segregative education. Earlier the paper discussed how inclusion was grounded in the belief that learning environments should value and welcome all children and that schools should change to accommodate all pupils and their needs. However, a consistent theme highlighted at interview was that children should conform to school procedures. For example, note this comment ‘Once I had become aware of what this child needed to help him function at a nice calm level . . . it wasn’t any kind of problem . . .’ (ST4). Another teacher commented ‘When he came here he was . . . he did everything on his own terms . . . I wrote a report about him fairly recently I said he had learnt to conform . . .’ (PST5). Furthermore, not to conform to the ‘sensibilities of school’ was observed by many teachers to be problematic. As this teacher comments, ‘. . . if they do not get that far they are coped with . . . and it effects their learning and . . . their whole school life’ (ST3).

Inclusion here therefore was not about schools changing but rather that children should change their non-compliant behaviour. Note this reasoning as to why inclusion had been successful ‘It’s the nature of the child . . . The child was extremely friendly and pleasant he was not remotely demanding . . .’ (PST1). Or this comment which revealed inclusion centred upon the individual ‘. . . it very much depends upon what they can access and is of benefit to them . . . (PST5)’. These words are important ‘what *they* can access – what is of benefit to

them'. These comments reveal a further fault line in the ideality of inclusion. They reveal it in Foucauldian terms as self-management and self-regulation. These teachers then created 'The Other' a child distanced from mainstream education. Children, then, were there, but they were not really here. This shows how the teachers took no responsibility for inclusion nor considered how they created barriers to its success. Like Pontius Pilate they passed the buck. It's all down to the pupils, it's *their* responsibility to create success and *their* responsibility if things go wrong. Inclusion here was integration was inclusion – the concept was interchangeable and thus unworkable. This then was superficial inclusion as it related to presence and absence and pupils moulded to operational procedures and notions of sensibility.

Of concern is that for many of these teachers, inclusion also centred on whether all children could or indeed should be included in mainstream education. They employed inclusion rhetoric to cloak exclusionary practices revealing inclusion as a construction of absence. Consider again, the speech which mirrored the modification of presence in government policies. Asked to define inclusion a teacher stated '... well I think that every school's duty is to teach the children who turn up at their door isn't it, you know that they are fully part of the school' (PST1). Inclusion here fits well with the concept articulated at Salamanca. However, later this teacher fractured this commitment externalising 'They [children with SEND] have full inclusion for assemblies, playtimes and dinners so they are very much part of the school it's just a different class within the school' (PST1).

This comment is important, for this is inclusion as 'spectacle' where social presence cloaks educational absence. Consider how absence is expressed with a diminishing 'just a different class'. Absence reconstructed here becomes a distant presence a lingering memory and essence of belonging. This essence is further revealed below where presence and absence are constructed as in an open prison:

I think in other aspects the flexibility has been very good and the ability where you have a special school and a day release, that's not a good word, but they can have access to schools I think that is brilliant and I think that is really good. . . . It can take a long time to put a child in a special school . . . it's very difficult to get them into a special school. And I do not think that it is good the ability to do that has been reduced. (PST4)

Here the pupil is the prisoner of absence who only through ‘good behaviour and compliance’ is allowed ‘day release’ and presence in the mainstream. The prison metaphor was never far away in this research. In line with Giroux (1980, p. 259) though I do not pursue the notion of the prison as a “wooden metaphor” pressed out of the Orwellian discourse of the “total institution” where teachers are just prison guards in another form. Rather, as Apple (1995) accounts I perceive prison here to relate to the processes of embedded cultural practices and complex competing social forces that act as control mechanisms within schools. Here, then, the teachers’ comments reveal inherent prejudices and biases where pupils are perhaps observed as human capital which they are entitled to mediate through their productive and allocative functions (Giroux, 1980).

The other teacher (ST3) mentioned earlier, who believed all children ‘should be taught in mainstream’ and have ‘access and participation’ reconstructed presence in a separate ‘unit’ for children perceived to be too difficult to deal with:

. . . three years ago we went for full inclusive pilot where we put all of the children in mainstream classes with support and operated that for a year to see how it went and we got some really good things. Some of the children really flourished and some didn’t so that was a big one and as a result of that we amended, we re-opened the unit and we had the children back in here but with a better understanding of what they could cope with and as well it made us think this is not working and that was an important thing about inclusion. (ST3)

Another teacher commented:

Sometimes it is difficult to include children they cannot always access, especially children in the learning centre here. They are not always ready to access mainstream but we always try to access areas where they can like assembly. They might go out for a lesson you know they are particularly good at or interested in where they can, what they can cope with and . . . so we do seek to put them you know in the mainstream wherever possible.(PST1)

These comments reveal inclusion as a control mechanism operated by teachers who wielding this power ‘put’ children where they saw fit and so altered their lives forever. Many teachers though wielded this power without the necessary training, knowledge and understanding of inclusion and disability (See Hodgkinson, 2009). *Their* notions of sensibility and conformity superseded children’s rights and the enforced duty of participation. They created the ‘Other’

reducing inclusion to a “part of a no-part” as the “downtrodden [became] included in society but [had] no proper place within it” (Žižek, 2009, p. 116). Another teacher whose school did not operate a unit made clear her feelings that perhaps they should. She explained that ‘inclusion breaks down a lot you know because every child has on occasion, you know . . . every child should not be in the same classroom . . . you know you should not be forcing all of these different groups into one classroom’ (ST 5). This idea of ‘force’ is another significant use of language. Here, the ‘vice of exclusion’ is upended by the notion of ‘not forcing’ inclusion. Whilst inclusion centred upon ‘including all children’ these teachers’ ideality was fractured as they did not actually mean ‘all children’. The above accounts observe teachers flip-flopping between the ideality of inclusion and its practicalities in a way that inclusion becomes defined as exclusion. As a ‘better understanding’ of what pupils can cope with was gained the more they became included in their very exclusion. Inclusion reconstructed here becomes a symbolic fiction (Žižek, 2009). These teachers revealed inclusionary presence as a suppléance of integration by grounding it within the possibility of disengagement. They constructed inclusion as a graft cut off from the ‘vouloir-dire’ of Salamanca. Through such disengagement inclusion became enveloped in unlimited new contexts. Inclusion then became a conflictual site of metaphysics and of the hierarchy and subordination of presence. In Derridean terms inclusion here slipped away from its ‘ancrage’; its stable definition. Through ‘essential drift’^x it moved from its syntagma and became a secret cipher (Derrida, 1998). This process neutralised and subdued it into a “Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness” (Whitehead, 1997, p. 58).

Conclusion: Inclusion - Absenting the Presence or Presenting the Absence?

For these teachers the neologism of inclusion and the modification of presence ascribed by government had not been realised. At interview the teachers revealed how absence was the overriding construct in their ideality of inclusion and not the creation of welcoming environments which valued all pupils. Inclusion, defined by New Labour’s educational policy was therefore not at one with itself (Munday, 2010) but instead had become a “cryptic reverse of something utterly different” (Derrida, 1998, p. 53). Inclusion, articulated by New Labour and operationalised by these particular teachers was not crystal clear but acted merely as an “illusion of agreement” (Nussbaum 2006, p. 37). It was a concept with no logical purity which utilised a signifier so fractured that it made its existence redundant. Inclusion, then, had become an anchorless drifting ideality. Assimilated into the dominant discourse of

integration it had become contaminated by segregation. Inclusion as theoretic we might observe is a simple construct. However in the reality of practice inclusive education became focussed on how teachers dealt with children who did not conform to societal norms. Inclusion in the original research thus reduced operated as a series of gradations of presence and absence with ‘blurred boundaries’ and no sharp distinctions. Based upon these findings the paper concludes that New Labour’s inclusion policy was nothing more than illusionary and perhaps was as much about inequity as it was equity.

Moving Forward - A Utopia of Hope

Through this policy of inclusion New Labour and indeed teachers had a unique opportunity to move beyond, “post-modern local narratives” and disturb their functions by producing a truth which intervened into the Real perhaps causing, “it to change from within” (Žižek 2009, p. 33). Here, then, in this inclusion space existed the possibility of a new politic and possibilities, a chance to create a democratic, emancipatory and perhaps even subversive world. However, the educational space sketched out above is one which appears to be both dark and oppressive. A space which became predicated on extant Lacanian Master–Signifier relationships which were founded upon, “ground rules [which were] grounded only in themselves” (Žižek, 2009, p. 22). This inclusion policy, in this governmental form, empowered only phenomenological reduction and the, “homogenising logic of the institution” to, “(re) produce a homogeneity of demographic” (Golberg, 2000, p. 73). This hollowed out this space as a site of emancipatory possibilities (Larson, 2000; Žižek, 2009). I want now though to suggest how the ‘disabling narratives’, recounted above, might be reclaimed by pupils, parents and teachers and how this inclusion space might be opened up as a “space for a multitude of oscillations”(Chiesa, 2009, p. 210). In line with Bloc’s (1995) *utopia of hope*, this closed systems of oppression must be opened up and re-framed. This future landscape—this ‘not-yet-consciousness’ (Bloc, 1995) would observe the creation of a space of social justice where equity would stand as an achievable ‘state’ and as alternate possibility to the created ‘rational’ society that now exists. The reforms I detail below articulate my own ‘wishful images’ (Bloc, 1995).

Education in this landscape would be reframed within the principles of human rights, democracy, equity and social justice within which inclusion policy’s ultimate aim would be to develop schools’ where all children could participate and be treated equitably (Sandhill,

2005). In converting this aim into reality teachers must address “discrimination, equality... and the status of vulnerable groups in society” (Sandhill, 2005, p.1). In this form, education in this space would become a moral concept necessitating the expression of the values of self-fulfilment, self-determination and equity. However, for Bernstein (1996) an essential prerequisite to the promotion of cultural democracy, is that the individual has the right to participate and to be included within society at a social, intellectual and cultural level. For this new space to become effective teachers and government control has then to be challenged. Schools have to recognise that relations of dominance exist in society and that obstacles to effective education have become embedded in simple everyday habits of this new inclusion world (Slee, 2001). My belief is that if this world is to move beyond the “phenomena of structure” (Clough, 2005, p.74) and be built upon human rights and the democratic imperative it must give preference to strategies of empowerment.

ⁱ A syntagma refers to a series of linguistic units.

ⁱⁱ New Labour was a political movement in Britain led by Tony Blair to update traditional Labour Party values. Tony Blair became prime minister in 1997 See Hill, D. (2001) *The Third Way in Britain: New Labour's neo-liberal education policy*, Paper presented at Congress Marx International III *Le capital et l'humanité* Université de Paris-X Nanterre-Sorbonnedu mercredi 26 au samedi 29 septembre 2001. Retrieved from: www.ieps.org.uk/PDFs/newlaboursneoliberal.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ This code was designed to help professionals and local authorities to make effective decisions and obtain best value regarding the resources and expertise invested in children with SEN. The document covered such areas as definitions of special educational needs, parental responsibility and working partnership with parents. The code also discussed how pupils might be involved in assessment and decision-making, provision in the early years, statutory assessment of children under compulsory school age and the role of SEN Coordinator. See <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DfES%200581%202001> for more detail.

^{iv} The Education White Paper of 2005 reinforced New Labour's neoliberalist ideas within schools. It was argued it attempted to turn schools into businesses, where competition was enfolded into every child's education. (See <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2005/oct/25/schools.uk6>).

^v In England successive governments attempted to raise standards in education through the implementation of a mandatory National Curriculum and teaching strategies which had at its core the teaching of English, Maths and Science.

^{vi} I take rhizome here from the biological notion of Deleuze and Guattari to mean multidirectional embedded growth; a multiplicity of growth which is irreducible to a single root (See for example, Amorim, A.C. and Ryan, C. (2005) *Deleuze, Action Research and Rhizomatic Growth, Educational Action Research, Volume 13, Number 4*, 581-593.

^{vii} The 1998 Programme of Action trumpeted New Labour's commitment to inclusive education by reinforcing the rights of all children to be educated in mainstream educational settings.

^{viii} A helpful way to comprehend what deconstruction centres upon is to analyse the role of ideality. Ideality, differentiates between authorial intent and the language element that remains constant fixing meaning in the text. An ideal meaning is never therefore a pure presentation to begin with which means an author's intent is opened 'up to flux and play and endless deferral' (Vanhoozer, et. al. 2006: 164)

^{ix} Ofsted 'is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills . [They] report directly to Parliament and they are independent and impartial. [They] inspect and regulate services which care for children and young people, and those providing education and skills for learners of all ages'. See <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/about-us>

^x Derrida, would argue that every syntagma after its production through a process of interpretation, reinterpretation and misinterpretation begins to drift away from the author's original meaning.

References

- Allan, J. (2008). *Rethinking Inclusive Education – the Philosophers of Difference in Practice*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
- Allan, J. (2009). “Putting Philosophy to work”. In Inclusion in K. Quinlivan, R. Boysak & B. Kar. (Eds), *Educational Enactments in a Globalised World: Intercultural Conversation* (pp. 1-12). London: Sense Publications.
- Alison, D.B. (2005). Derrida’s Critique Of Husserl and the Philosophy of Presence. *VERITAS Porto Alegre*, 50(1), 89-99.
- Apple, M.W. (1995). *Education and Power*. New York: Routledge.
- Armstrong, A.C., Armstrong D. & Spandagou, I. (2009). *Inclusive Education: International Policy & Practice*. London: Sage.
- Audit Commission. (2002). *Special Educational Needs: a mainstream issue*. London: The Audit Commission.
- Barber, N. Turner, M. (2007). Even while they teach, newly-qualified teachers learn. *British Journal of Special Education*, 34(1), 33-39.
- Bell, J. (2000). *Doing your Research Project* (3rd edn). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Bernstein, B. (1996). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: Theory, research, critique*. London, UK: Taylor & Francis.
- Block, E. (1995). *The principles of hope* (Vol. 2). Boston: MIT Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2009). Qualitative interviewing and Grounded Theory Analysis. In Chiesa, L. (2009). The world of desire: Lacan between evolutionary biology and psychoanalytic theory. *Yearbook of Comparative Literature*, 55, 200-225.
- Clough, P. (2005). “Exclusive tendencies: Concepts, consciousness, and curriculum in the project of inclusion”. In M. Nind, R. Rix, K. Sheey & K. Simmons (Eds.), *Curriculum and pedagogy in inclusive education: Values into practice*, (pp. 73-81). Buckingham, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Coles, C., and Hancock, R. (2002). *The Inclusion Quality Mark*. Croyden: Creative Education.
- Corbett, J. (2001). *Supporting Inclusive Education: a connective pedagogy*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Derrida, J. (1995). *Points: Interviews 1974-1994*. Stanford: Standard University Press.
- Derrida, J. (1997). *Of Grammatology* (Trans. Spivak Gayatri). Baltimore: Hopkins University Press.
- Derrida, J. (1998). *Limited INC*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Derrida, J. (2001). What is ‘relevant’ translation? *Critical Inquiry*, 27(2), 174-200.
- Derrida, J. and Ronell, A. (1980). The Law of Genre Author(s) On Narrative. *Critical Inquiry*, 7(1): 55-81.
- DfEE, (Department for Education and Employment). (1997). *Excellence for All Children: meeting special educational needs*. London: DfEE.
- (1998). *Meeting Special educational Needs: A Programme for Action*. London: DfEE.
- DFES, (Department for Education and Skills). (2001). Retrieved from: *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice*. <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/3724/SENCodeOfPractice.pdf>
- (Department for Education and Skills). (2004). *Removing Barriers to Achievement. The Governments Strategy for SEN. Executive Summary*. London:DFES.
- Dittmer, J. (2010). “Textual and Discourse Analysis”. In D. De Lyser & Hobert, S. *The Sage Handbook of qualitative geography* (pp. 274-286). London: Sage,
- Ellins, J. & Porter, J. (2005). Departmental differences in attitudes to special educational needs in secondary schools *British Journal of Educational Studies*. 32(4), 188-195.
- Frederickson, N. and Cline, T. (2002). *Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Diversity, a textbook*. Open University Press: Buckingham.
- Dunne, L. (2009) Discourses of Inclusion: a critique. *Power and Education*, 1(1), 42-46.

- Giroux, H.A. (1980). Beyond the Correspondence Theory: Notes on the Dynamics of Educational Reproduction and Transformation, *Curriculum Inquiry*, 10 (3), 225-247.
- Giroux, H.A. (1983). Resistance in the New Sociology of Education: A Critical Analysis, *Harvard Educational Review* 53(3), 257-293.
- Golberg, D. T. (2000). "Heterogeneity and hybridity: Colonial legacy, postcolonial heresy." In H. Schwarz & S. Ray (Eds.), *A companion to postcolonial studies*, (pp. 72-86). London, UK: Blackwell.
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Hanko, G. (2003). Towards an inclusive school culture –but what happened to Elton's affective curriculum? *British Journal of Special Education*, 30(3), 125-131.
- Harvey, L. (1990). *Critical Social Research*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Hayek, F. (1976). *Law, legislation and liberty. A new statement of liberal principles of justice and political economy. Volume 2. The mirage of social justice*. London: RKP.
- Hodkinson, A. (2005). Conceptions and misconceptions of inclusive education: a critical examination of final year teacher trainees' knowledge and understanding of inclusion. *International Journal of Research in Education*, 73, 15-29.
- Hodkinson, A. (2007). Inclusive education and the cultural representation of disability and Disabled people: a recipe for disaster or the catalyst for change? An examination of non-disabled primary school children's attitudes to children with a disability. *International Journal of Research in Education*, 77, 43-55.
- Hodkinson, A. (2009). Pre-service teacher training and special educational needs in England 1970-2008: is government learning the lessons of the past or is it experiencing a groundhog day? *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 24 (3), 277-289.
- Hodkinson, A. & Deverakonda, C. (2011b). For pity's sake: comparative conceptions of inclusion in England and India., *International Review of Qualitative Research*.
- Jones (2004) *Supporting Inclusion in the Early Years*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Judge, B. (2003). "Inclusive education: principles and practices". In K. Crawford *Inclusive Education: principles and practices in Contemporary issues in Education*. (pp.) Norfolk: Peter Francis.
- Larson, N. (2000). "Imperialism, colonialism, postcolonialism". In H. Schwarz & S. Ray (Eds.), *companion to postcolonial studies* (pp. 23-52). London: Blackwell.
- Lewin C., Somekh B. (2005). *Research Methods in the Social Science*. London: Sage.
- Munday, I. (2010). *Performatives and Performativities in Three Scenes from Schooling*. Retrieved from: <http://www.philosophy-of-education.org/pdfs/Saturday/Munday.pdf>
- Nairn, T. (2000). *After Britain. New Labour and the return of Scotland*. London: Granta.
- Nussbaum, M.C. (2003). Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice, *Feminist Economics* 9, (2 – 3), 33 – 59.
- Nussbaum, M.C. (2006). *Frontiers of Justice. Disability, Nationality, Species Membership*. London: Harvard University Press.
- OFSTED. (Office for Standards in Education).(2000). *Evaluating Educational Inclusion: Guidance for Inspectors and Schools*. London: Office for Standards in Education.
- Royle, N. (2003) *Jaques Derrida*. London: Routledge.
- Rustemier, S. & Vaughan, M. (2005). *Segregation trends – LEAs in England 2002-2004*. Bristol: Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education.
- Sandhull, O. (2005, August). *Strengthening inclusive education by applying rights-based approaches to education programming*. Paper presented at ISEC Conference, Glasgow, Scotland.
- Shaffer, J.D. & Gorman, D. (2008). Ong and Derrida on Presence: A case study in the conflict of traditions. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 40(7), 856-872.
- Slee, R. (2001) Driven to the Margins: Disabled students, inclusive schooling and the politics of possibility. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 13(2), 385-397.
- Stronach, I. (2010). *Globalising Education, Educating the Local*. London: Routledge.
- UNESCO .(1994). *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* .Paris: United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Whitehead, A.N. (1997/1925). *Science and the Modern World*. London: Free Press Simon & Schuster.

Vanhoozer, K.J. Bartholomew, G.G & Treier, D.J.(2006). Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible. London: Revell.

Žižek, S. (2009). *In Defense of Lost Causes*. London: Verso.

Author Details

Alan Hodkinson, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in Centre for Culture and Disability Studies, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, UK.

Alan Hodkinson
Liverpool Hope University
Centre for Culture and Disability Studies
Hope Park
Liverpool L6 9JG
hodkina@hope.ac.uk
(0)151 291 3275