Inclusion Reconceptualized: Pre-Service Teacher Education and Disability Studies in Education

Christopher M. Gilham
St. Francis Xavier University

Joanne Tompkins
St. Francis Xavier University

Abstract

In this article, two teacher educators describe and explain how they are reconceptualizing a pre-service teacher education course on inclusion using disability studies in education (DSE) scholarship. The DSE approach better connects the oft-separated field of diversity and inclusion, and builds on the program's overall focus on equity education. Using a critical reflective self-study approach, these researchers weave together scholarship about inclusive education with their lived classroom experiences in a teacher education program. They conclude that cultivating practical judgement in pre-service teachers is important to inclusive education.

Keywords: inclusion, disability studies in education, special education, pre-service teacher education

Résumé

Deux professeurs dans un programme de formation des enseignants décrivent et expliquent leur reconceptualization d'un cours d'éducation inclusive informé par la recherche en études sur l'incapacité. Les études sur l'incapacité créent des liens entre les disciplines de la diversité et de l'inclusion et font la mise au point sur l'équité en éducation. Ces formateurs d'enseignants se servent d'une approche de pratique réflexive critique et auto-apprentissage et tissent l'érudition de l'éducation inclusive avec les expériences vécues des enseignants en formation. Les auteurs conclurent que le développement du jugement pratique est d'une forte importance dans la formation des futurs enseignants.

Mots-clés : inclusion, études sur l'incapacité, éducation specialisé, formation des enseignants

Introduction

In this article, we describe and explain how we are reconceptualizing our pre-service teacher education course on Inclusion using disability studies in education (DSE) scholarship. DSE work largely follows the social model of disability, which holds that our societal beliefs and practices disable individuals rather than seeing people as inherently having deficits, which are described as disabilities (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, & Valle, 2011; Baglieri, Valle, Connor, & Gallagher, 2010). For example, rather than seeing the person who needs an accessible ramp as disabled, poor access to a building disables the individual. If a building has and maintains clear and clean rampways, more people can access the building than if only steps were available and maintained.

Likewise, in teaching, the use of closed-captioning on video brings some of those traditionally on the margins to the centre of learning, and it can also assist other diverse learners, such as newly arrived immigrants to Canada who do not speak English as their first language. As an example, closed-captioning, used or conceptualized in this way, is a tool that can benefit more students than those we might at first consider. Some students might hear within a "normal" range, however, they struggle to absorb or retain high verbal content. Hearing and reading what is being said can reinforce learning. Closed-captioning is an example of one possible "rampway" to student success.

We were encouraged by American pre-service teacher education programs that embraced the DSE perspective (Connor, 2013, 2014; Connor & Bejoian 2014; Connor, Gabel, Gallagher, & Morton, 2008; Valle & Connor, 2011). Our reconceptualization of our inclusion course, known as "Inclusion One," included the following:

1. Revealing the troubling history of special education and how much of today's scholarship on inclusion remains embedded in special education's deficit model of disability.
2. Bridging a divide between diversity and inclusion scholarship.
3. Introducing the concepts of the social model of disability and ableism.
4. Continuing our exploration of Differentiated Instruction (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010) and Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2015) as a way to create inclusive classrooms. Additionally, introducing our pre-service teachers to Inquiry-Based Learning (Jardine, 2012) using the Galileo website (http://galileo.org/)

and the Universal Design for Learning approach using the Center for Applied Special Teaching (CAST) website (http://www.cast.org/).

5. Discussing the importance of practical judgement in inclusive education.

Our aim has been to better understand how to improve professional practice in teacher education (Bolton, 2014; Laboskey, 2004). Two decades ago Lytle and Coch-ran-Smith (1992) urged teacher educators to develop their professional knowledge base by drawing on their own inquiry. Self-study emerged as a promising research method for teacher educators. Loughran, Hamilton, Laboskey, and Russell (2004) found that, for teacher educators, self-study "has been the most powerful impetus for the growing number of research into the development of teacher educator identity, competence, and practice" (as cited in Dinkleman, Margolis, & Sikkenga, 2006, p. 7). Therefore, self-study was an obvious methodological choice for us as two teacher educators who taught a foundations course offered over a nine-week semester. There were multiple opportunities for us to meet and talk about our conceptualizations of and reflections on the course. Our data collection involved conceptual mapping exercises (on large whiteboards), where we visually laid out the scope and sequence of this course and its connections to the previous and subsequent course in the foundation series. Our weekly meetings allowed us to debrief and plan the course, and these conversations and reflections on our practices were captured through field notes, providing us with visual records of our conceptualizations. In our learning conversations we articulated, clarified, made sense of, and reconceptualized our understandings of this course. Through this article, we wish to reappropriate an understanding of inclusion to encompass all students as diverse and in need of various supports, services, and educational practices. We conclude our discussion with our plans to embark upon further research with our pre-service teachers to understand how they take the learnings from this course into the field and apply practical judgement to their practice.

About Us

Both of us have been involved in inclusive education as in-service teachers prior to entering teacher education. Joanne has been involved in the development and teach-ing of this course for almost 20 years. Prior to this she worked in Nunavut as a teacher,

administrator, and a board-level consultant promoting *integrated* education, as inclusion was conceptualized in the 1980s. This extensive experience provided her with a long-term view of how inclusion, and other related topics and their courses, have evolved during that time. Chris joined the team in 2013, fresh out of a doctoral program where he used interpretive approaches to explore the topics of inclusion, disability studies in education, and mental health. Prior to this he worked in Alberta in various roles, mainly in special education as a teacher and then as a school board consultant. For his PhD dissertation he interpreted an educational team's understanding of inclusion after their one-year pilot project with inclusion classrooms. Students diagnosed with mental illnesses were designated for placement in a segregated classroom in their community school. However, this educational team used the resources assigned to the segregated classroom, alongside the resources of two of their community classrooms, to create two new inclusion classrooms for both community students and the students with mental illnesses, together. The pilot project was deemed a success by the educational team and researcher.

Over the past three years, the two of us have been consistently on the Inclusion One team, involved in the co-planning, co-teaching, and critical reflection about the course, while different faculty members rotated onto the team each year. Self-study was chosen as our methodology, which supports teacher inquiry (Loughran, Hamilton, Laboskey, & Russell, 2004; Hamilton, 1998; Zeichner, 1999). Initially, as a way to make our assumptions and thinking about the course visible to ourselves, we mapped the central course themes on two whiteboards. We also included themes we thought were missing. Once we had this map for the course, we were able to frequently discuss how the map was or was not enlivened in our individual classes. Hence, over the past two years' weekly planning and debriefing meetings, we have cultivated a "reflexive habit" (Brookfield, 2009) allowing us to "illuminate (a) sense of where we are in our own practice, and in our relation to our profession and our institution" (Bolton, 2014, p. 1). These ongoing conversations have helped us make sense of our work, as critical reflective practices help "[make] maps … to sort through and learn from muddles, uncertainties, unclarities, mistakes and anxieties" (p. 3).

We also believed that discussions of power are too often unnamed and/or avoided in both pre-service or in-service education (Cummins, 2016). Yet it is an element which highlights how differences, whether race, class, gender, ability, or sexual orientation, come to matter for some and not for others. Howard and Aleman (2008) recommend

a critical approach as exactly what is needed when developing teacher capacity. They recommend that "what teachers need to know, care about, and be able to do can/should no longer be thought about in a context where inequities that relate to race, class, and gender and other markers of identity are ignored or tolerated" (p. 158). Hence, we use critical pedagogy (Apple & Beane, 1999; Dei, 2008; Freire, 1970/2000; McLaren, 2016) as a framework to ensure that power relations remain a central part of our analysis and understanding of what happens in schooling. However, critical pedagogues have seldom engaged explicitly with power as it relates to ability and able-bodiedness, and to this end we borrow from recent works by Baines (2014), Danforth (2014), and Lawrence-Brown and Sapon-Shevin (2014). A critical lens was present in our study right from the beginning, and we emerged from these learning dialogues with a reconceptualization of Inclusion One that we feel will better equip our pre-service teachers to create inclusive classrooms.

DSE and Inclusion

The field of educational psychology often dominates inclusive education in Canada's K–12 systems (Andrews & Lupart, 2000; Jahnukainen, 2011; Lupart, 2008; Winzer, 2009). This has been described as a form of "Neo-Special Education" (Slee, 2011). Disability categories and deficit-based assessments for the determination of disability continue to exist as they always have, however, special education language is replaced by "exceptionalities." Some recent Canadian work points to a turn in the inclusion conversation, for example, the journal *Learning Landscapes* published a special edition entitled, "Inclusive Education: Socially Just Perspectives and Practices" (Butler-Kisber, 2014), and the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) published its "Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Inclusive Education in Alberta Schools" (ATA, 2014). Both documents introduced disability studies perspectives into the topic of inclusive education. This work depended on scholarship in the fields of DSE (Connor, 2013; Connor & Bejoian, 2014; Connor et. al, 2008; Valle & Connor, 2011) and interpretive studies (Gilham, 2014; Jardine, 2012; Williamson & Field, 2014), where the dominance of inclusion as special education is challenged.

We argue that inclusion as special education often neglects the intersectionality of important diversity topics such as race, class, and gender of individuals with disabilities.

Furthermore, society's positive valuation of those individuals deemed normal, or non-deficit bearing, creates the conditions in which both of these "sets" of individuals—the "diverse" and the "special"—remain separate and on the margins. We offer that an over-emphasis on students as the singular sources of their deficits (as being "less than" most others in ways that are only explicable at the level of the student's being, typically as a medical problem to be ameliorated, modified or adapted to) is deeply problematic. Such a view conceals the very nature of this marginalizing power while also limiting pre-service teachers' attitude, knowledge, and skills for teaching and learning (Freire, 1970/2000; Illich, 1977; McLaren, 2016). Put differently, and perhaps more broadly, we suggest that the persistent belief that diversity and disability are inherent or solely within the student dangerously reduces the scope of our considerations as educators.

Our Pre-Service Teacher Education Program

Our pre-service teacher education program is a four-term program spread over two years. Each term is comprised of a nine-week, on-campus, full-time course-based schedule followed by a five- or six-week field experience in schools. In total, pre-service teachers spend 36 weeks on campus and 22 weeks in schools. In a program restructuring effort in 1996, four key themes were articulated and continue to be focused upon: social justice and equity, integration of technology, professionalism, and a valuing of professional experience. In 1996, two important changes were occurring in our local and provincial context. The first was a clearly articulated mandate at our university to prepare both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal pre-service teachers to effectively teach Aboriginal students. Hence, a clear focus on anti-racism, decolonization, and social justice was required. At the same time, inclusive education mandates and policies were being adopted at the ministry and board levels and pre-service and in-service teachers needed deep understanding of equity and inclusion, and their application in classrooms.

As a result of the program restructuring, during 27 of the 36 weeks pre-service teachers spend on campus, they are in one of three core courses: Sociology of Education, Inclusion One, and Inclusion Two. The first course, Sociology of Education, has a distinct anti-racist emphasis through which issues of power, privilege, and cultural capital are explicitly named and examined. Pre-service teachers critically explore their own lived

experiences in an effort to understand the social construction of identities and power hierarchies in schools. Specific to our context, the marginalization in the public school system of Aboriginal and African Canadian students and students living in poverty is examined. This marginalization is seen as a result of historical processes related to racism, colonization, and classism, which continue to be played out in the contemporary context of schooling. More recently, the focus of Inclusion One has enlarged to include the effects of sexism, homophobia, and transphobia on learners, reflecting society's need for an increased understanding of diversity.

The learning community in this class is intentionally and carefully constructed using a blend of the principles of adult education, cooperative learning, and engaging teaching strategies. Pre-service teachers work individually, and in small and large groups. In this environment, voices that have perhaps never had a chance to speak are raised and listened to. The impact of this core course—to create focus on social justice and increase equity in teacher education—has been documented elsewhere (Tompkins, 2002; Tompkins & Orr, 2009).

In the second term of the program, after a five-week field experience, pre-service teachers return to Inclusion One. The pre-service teachers stay with their same instructor in the winter term. This allows the established classroom community to further evolve as big ideas from sociology move forward into the conversations within Inclusion One. In the second year and third semester of the program, pre-service teachers enrol in Inclusion Two, this time with a new instructor and with different classmates.

As the pre-service teacher program has developed, the relationship between Sociology, Inclusion One, and Inclusion Two has shifted and changed. Sociology was often seen as the "social justice" course, where critical thinking skills were explicitly taught and the language and vocabulary of oppression and marginalization was developed. Pre-service teachers were invited to see racism, classism, and sexism as not merely individual acts of exclusion but as part of larger systemic issues, similar to current DSE scholarship.

Over time, Inclusion One evolved into a course that looked at learners from the point of view of ability differences, acknowledging that if all learners are different then we must vary the ways that we teach. For examples, the course aimed to model for pre-service teachers rich strategies such as differentiation and learning centres that could reach a wider group of learners. Multiculturalism, welcoming new Canadians into

classrooms, and issues related to social exclusion, such as bullying, were additional topics to be explored in this course while connections were made back to the big ideas in the Sociology of Education course. Several years ago, one of our teaching colleagues introduced Lytle and Cochran-Smith's (1992) notion of teacher researcher to this course. In an assignment that has turned out to be very transformative, pre-service teachers are invited to note an incident from their field experience where a student was marginalized. To this day, students are invited to use teacher research as a way to gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon they witnessed in practicum, and to imagine how to create an inclusive environment for that student. Pre-service teachers then share their research with one another using a human library strategy, and in doing so, disseminate their newfound knowledge and understandings to each other.

The Inclusion Two course continues to be a survey course exploring the categories of exceptionalities and the process of developing Individual Program Plans for students for whom learning outcomes need to be changed. The links between the three courses varied somewhat from year to year depending on the composition of the teaching teams. When viewed historically, it appears that our Sociology of Education course has had more of a diversity focus, the Inclusion One course has had more of a focus on ability and enlarging teaching strategies, and the Inclusion Two course has focused on exceptionalities or special education.

History: Diversity and Inclusion in Canada

K–12 schooling has often approached social justice issues from two divided discourses: diversity and inclusion. Diversity is most often understood to include issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. American scholars (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Howard, 2006; Kumashiro, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2001, 2009; Lee, Menkart, & Okazawa-Rey, 2002; Neito, 2010; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012) and Canadian diversity researchers (Battiste, 1999; Cummins, 2001; Dei, 1996; Lee & Marshall, 2009) have examined the persistent and troubling differences in school achievement that are linked to particular differences (class, race, gender, sexual orientation, language difference, etc.) individually and in intersection with each other. The failed promises of multicultural education (May & Sleeter, 2010) led scholars to adopt an increasingly critical social justice approach

(Kelly & Brandes, 2001) which "recognizes inequality as deeply embedded in the fabric of society (i.e. as structural), and actively seeks to change this" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012, p. xviii).

Similarly, inclusion has focused on students with disabilities via special or exceptional education (Winzer, 2008). Although this approach to inclusion is now starting to embrace categories or groups of people usually within the diversity discourse, the language remains that of the special or exceptional (Hutchinson & Martin, 2012; Lupart & McKeough, 2009). This understanding could be seen as ableist. Put differently, despite the acknowledgment of the complex, fluid, and ever-changing intersectionality of these marginalized groups, ableism and disability studies perspectives are often absent, while psycho-educational discourse dominates under the name of "special" or "exceptional" education. DeLuca (2013) notes this. His work takes into account the presence of a "social model of special education" and an "appreciative model" of disability, as well as the use of Response to Intervention (RTI) approaches to address learning difficulties. He points to critiques of these models, stating that inclusion as special education "is limited in its redress of dualistic conceptualizations of ability and disability" (p. 313). In other words, inclusion remains premised on ableist assumptions. Harper's (1997) illuminating conceptualization of inclusion/diversity work points to a similar conclusion.

Ableism

Ableism is a form of discrimination, enacted explicitly or tacitly, that empowers those who have what is traditionally viewed as normal body functioning while simultaneously disempowering those who do not have this everyday socially constructed understanding of normal or healthy body functioning (Valle & Connor, 2011). The dual action of empowerment/disempowerment arises because a negative value is placed on those deemed less than normal, often officially described as abnormal, special, exceptional, or disabled.

One result of this discrimination is a striving to make the disabled more able-bodied. Through ableism, populations of able-bodied students and their ways of learning pre-dominate. For example, if a student uses her mouth to draw instead of her hands, an ableist assumption would be to say that the student is disabled, or less able (inherently disadvantaged) than those who can draw with their hands. The inability to use one's

hands to draw is a deficit inherent to the student, one that must be ameliorated, with programming modified or adapted in order to support the student's disadvantaged situation. Though we recognize scholarship exists which takes up inclusion as equity and social justice (Danforth, 2014; Lawrence-Brown & Sapon-Shevin, 2014; Sapon-Shevin, 2003, 2007; Porter, Smith, Timmons, Kelly, & Richler, 2011), we believe there is little in the Canadian educational context that explicitly attempts to interrupt or trouble the ableist assumptions built into discussions about inclusion, as in our example above.

We agree with Lawrence-Brown (2014): "Inclusion is not primarily a special education, or even an education, issue. It is a fundamental way of seeing and responding to the human difference for the benefit of everyone involved" (p. 4). Our aim has been to re-appropriate an understanding of inclusion to encompass all students as diverse and in need of various supports, services, and educational practices, much like diversity work attempts to do. Importantly, we believe making pre-service teachers aware of the ableist assumptions they may implicitly carry (and that they will encounter in school systems) can best serve our aim. Inclusion remains a topic for social justice action because of ableist assumptions inherent in the deficit model of disability throughout P–12 schooling. We believe awareness of one's value systems is a first, necessary step in social justice work.

Through discussion on the content of the three pre-service teacher courses we realized there was only a minor mention of ableism. Some work was done on the historical contexts of inclusion, but usually from a frame of progress through special education. There was some mention of the factory model of schooling in the Sociology of Education course but there was no mention of the Disability Rights Movement. Similarly, there was no mention of DSE perspectives, including the social model of disability. During our first year working together, after several meetings where we created whiteboard mappings of the three current courses, we began to reconceptualize the Inclusion One course into two main threads connected by one essential "turn" or pivot.

The First Thread: The Norm and Efficiency Movements

The first thread takes place over the first third of the Inclusion course. It involves a deeper critical historical exploration of the history of disability in North America, with an emphasis on the norm as it emerged with the rise of statistical analysis, specifically in its

application to standardized intelligence testing (Illich, 1977; Hacking, 2000). We question this norm using Dudley-Marling and Gurn's *The Myth of the Normal Curve* (2010) and introduce pre-service teachers to the North American Eugenics Movement drawing on the works of Dr. Claudia Malacrida (https://eugenicsnewgenics.com/).

We discuss Illich (1977) and Foucault's (2003) interpretations of the etymology and arrival of the norm, and show how this is still current practice in educational psychology via cognitive testing and the Gaussian curve. Through this analysis, we argue that inclusion remains entrenched in ableist thinking.

Soon after the arrival of intelligence testing, the Eugenics Movement arose in the United States and Canada, reinforcing the binary between normal as good and abnormal as bad. Pre-service teachers learn about this history via readings and select videos. We follow this history to the present to show the various movements toward equity, including the Disability Rights Movement (Neudel et al., 2011). The idea of progress is presented as complex and in need of critical reflection. Pre-service teachers engage in critical analysis of popular film and student literature (Connor & Bejoian, 2014), an assignment that allows them to see how ableist myths about disabilities flourish all around them. They learn of the persistence of the dual track system of education in some places while inclusion-as-integration has been re-visited in others.

F.W. Taylor is then given due credit for his efficiency work with Henry Ford's automotive production line but this is quickly interrupted when we show pre-service teachers his influence in education (Jardine, 2012). Pre-service teachers clearly see the link between the efficiency movement and P–12 schools. Many pre-service teachers share that they experienced this factory model of education. With this recognition, the day-to-day assembly line of fragmented and isolated disciplines separated by school bells and task-oriented worksheets becomes more than just "the way things are done." That our taken-for-granted structures, routines, and practices in schools are possible means they can be different from the past. This is an important message we constantly share with pre-service teachers, wanting them to see the agency they will have to adopt in new ways of looking at human difference.

The Turn or Pivot

As the historical unpacking of thread one begins to wrap up, we bring pre-service teachers to what we call "The Pivot," on which Inclusion One importantly hinges. We show them a short video segment of a conversation between Judith Butler and Sunaura Taylor in the documentary film *Examined Life* (Taylor, 2008). We ask pre-service teachers key questions, including "What does Sunaura have to say about how people perceive her body movements?" and "What does she have to say about disability?" After watching this video we explicitly discuss with the pre-service teachers differences between disability defined in the deficit model, and disability defined in the DSE model. During the following class, pre-service teachers are able to preview more than 15 activity-based centres on disability studies and disability studies in education. The centres are designed to meet a diverse array of learning preferences and are differentiated according to pre-service teacher's interests. Pre-service teachers then choose three centres to engage in and respond to by creating learning artifacts. These artifacts reflect their new understanding of how society can disable individuals. For example, one centre has students explore the university campus for accessibility issues. An accessibility guide is given to them to help facilitate this task. Students who engage in this centre are almost universally shocked to learn just how inaccessible certain spaces are on campus. We then try to connect their new understanding of *physical barriers to inclusion* with *social and learning barriers to inclusion* by discussing classroom and learning conditions. After this particular class, we believe that most pre-service teachers' perspectives on disability are challenged or transformed.

Inclusion is now released from the grip of being only one way of conceptualizing and teaching particular students, we suggest. At this point, the approaches to teaching and learning of the second thread—differentiated instruction, inquiry-based-learning, and universal design for learning—are introduced and explored throughout the rest of the Inclusion course.

Moving Forward: "An Oppositional Consciousness"

We believe we have developed a coherent path between Sociology of Education and Inclusion One. Developing a coherent path between Inclusion One and Inclusion Two is a

work in progress for our faculty. As our thinking evolves on Inclusion One, it necessarily shifts how we might envision Inclusion Two and its focus on exceptionalities. Likewise, the importance of Inclusion Two's content should not be denied. Pre-service teachers will enter school systems that use the medical, deficit model of disability. They will need to know it in order to understand how it is used and applied to students. Sometimes they will need to enter the complex play of such systems in order to support students, just as we have both done many times over in our careers within schools. Accordingly, we believe continued dialogue on the competing understandings of inclusion needs to continue in our faculty, though we struggle to find time to do this as a larger team.

A recently published and exceptional article by Danforth and Naraian (2015) on conceptual foundations of inclusive education helps illuminate and perhaps strength-en our reconceptualization of Inclusion One, especially as it fits between Sociology of Education and Inclusion Two. The authors "forward an initial collection of intellectual resources…that can accommodate such complex schooling conditions" (p. 70) in order to move away from the deficit model of special education and ableism (p. 78). While doing this, the authors give important language to the kind of political manoeuvring we once did in schools. Given multiple entrenched systems within education that work against an inclusive stance, Danforth and Naraian pointedly ask, "What kind of consciousness would enable them (educators) to straddle competing goals within the flawed material realities of their schools without invalidating their professional identities as inclusive educators?" (p. 80) Their answer is "An Oppositional Consciousness" (p. 80), derived from US Third World feminist writers (p. 81). "Teachers may actively push back against labels in one context, but may just as equally use them, if necessary, to obtain the sup-ports required by a student that are not made freely available to her…" with an aim to use "belief systems strategical[ly] and fluid[ly]" as "tactical weaponry…to fuel an ethical and moral commitment to equity and social justice" (p. 81). We understand their explication of this teacher disposition—"situated agency" (p. 81)—as a call to embrace the ambiguity and struggles that necessarily arise in trying to maintain an inclusive practice. We find similarities in the Canadian context with Kelly and Brandes (2001) who described their preferred teacher role as one of "inclusive and situated engagement" (p. 451).

This work (Danforth & Naraian, 2015; Harper, 1997; Kelly & Brandes, 2001) also reminds us of the importance of dialogue in coming to understanding. Critical theory can be taken up such that it reinforces the binary logic at play in discussions about inclusion,

thereby running the risk of counter-productively (Illich, 1977) concealing those instances where special education's supports and services are actually needed for some students. For some students to thrive in schools, educators need to make complex decisions. We are reminded of Shakespeare's position that, from a standpoint of impairment, depending on the tasks at hand, some things are harder to do, and require additional support (Sociology of Diagnosis, 2014). We wholeheartedly agree with Danforth and Naraian's claim that we are all "obliged to understand the unique needs and desires of specific groups [students] that are affected by schooling" (p. 82). Teaching about the medical model of disabilities is necessary so that pre-service teachers can know how they might need to tactfully straddle what can be easily seen as opposing positions. This straddling is a reminder to not "ignore or minimize differences" (Harper, 1997, p. 197) in efforts to be inclusive. Also, we are reminded of Greene's (1998) expression "Fairness does not mean equal or same."

Different approaches to teaching and learning can create student success. Similarly, the special education model is sometimes needed for student success. Sometimes both are needed simultaneously. As teacher educators we stress the importance of the teaching context in which we find ourselves. We caution pre-service teachers about the blind application of singular models of "best practices," as if they may be applied unequivocably and without considerable reflection to any and every teaching situation. Professional judgement is always required. When asked about what to do in a given hypothetical teaching scenario, we try to capture the importance of "it depends." To exclude the lived experiences of those for whom certain technologies and medications, for examples, were the difference between school success and failure would be to radically ignore "Nothing About Us, Without Us" (Valle & Connor, 2011). So we accept for now that we need to continue to teach the disability categories and the strategies and tools often specific (but also often overlapping) to each. We recognize that teacher education is riddled with pulls between being instrumental and being transformative. Thus, the Inclusion Two course remains important to our pre-service teacher education program, especially now that we have helped develop a critical awareness of where its content comes from and how that content is still deeply entrenched in current approaches to inclusive education in schools.

Conclusion: Practical Judgement

In the light of Danforth and Naraian's work, and while we wrote this article, we realized that another way to describe an "oppositional" and "situated consciousness" is practical judgement. We aim to help pre-service educators practically judge what is the best course of action in each particular case before them. They are better able to judge when they are able to see multiple perspectives on disability, and teaching and learning. This is what our Inclusion One course aims to do. Maxine Greene (1999) reminds us that as teacher educators, we cannot really teach pre-service teachers how to teach; we can only hope to help them think about how to make good judgements. We find ourselves often answering pre-service teachers' instrumental "how to?" questions with "it depends" followed by our own barrages of questions. This querying is intended to encourage pre-service teachers to ask further questions of the challenges before them, as a helpful means of informing their judgements and decision-making.

Thus, our work is not intended to provide solutions per se; rather, we acknowledge that inclusion is a topic that must constantly be won and re-won. We hope we are preventing hasty generalizations that fuel reductionist decision making in which student challenges are seen exclusively as the work of special education. We want new teachers to refrain from quickly "othering" students as abnormal, or special, or exceptional. Knowing about ableism and disability studies in education creates new possibilities for understanding and being with students we would otherwise categorize as special, we believe. We articulate this very clearly to our students.

Still, being inclusive is difficult, ongoing work. There is no single application or tool that can make classrooms inclusive for everyone, all the time. Inclusive education requires an ongoing questioning of the situations educators and their students find themselves in, including the power relations within their school cultures. As Harper (1997) stated, "The notion that human beings are all different ignores how power determines which difference makes a difference in the quality of [school] life" (p. 200). By troubling the commonly understood notion of inclusive education through revealing the ableist and deficit-based prejudices it is based on, we hope we have cultivated more question-asking in pre-service teachers. Through question asking—a way of sustaining important dialogue with and for students—perhaps marginalized students will begin to see themselves as belonging in, and contributing to, their classrooms. Wise, practical judgements can be

made when people work together to find helpful solutions, especially if silenced voices are given the opportunity to speak up, and are listened to and taken seriously.

The final article we share with our pre-service teachers in the Inclusion One course, "Whatever Happens to Him, Happens to Us: Reading Coyote Reading the World" (Clifford, Friesen, & Jardine, 2001), interpretively "offer(s) ways of reading differently the difficult, abnormal, troubled children who haunt the margins of educational practice and theorizing" (p. 10). The reading is not easy. It is a story of one classroom's way of living with a difficult child. How that child is understood is co-generated by, for, and with one another in that classroom via their study of Indigenous folk tales. The article enlivens the slogan "Nothing about us without us."

Earlier we claimed that we want pre-service teachers to see the agency they will have to adopt in order to facilitate new ways of looking at human difference. Some evidence that our course may have achieved this is found in comments on our course evaluations.

- "I learned about so many things, including how to look at disability in a completely different way."
- "This class allowed me to understand my own lived experience and prior knowledge of inclusion, and change my idea of the term."
- "The course really helps diversify the perspectives that I have, and has helped me explore many ways to handle situations and to learn from them."

Anecdotally, after the first set of pre-service teachers had completed our reconceptualised Inclusion One course and while taking the Inclusion Two course, they were asked to give group presentations on specific disabilities while providing at least some reference to DSE counter-narrative work. The pre-service teachers were able to—using the language of Danforth and Naraian (2015)—"straddle" these often competing positions. They demonstrated their awareness of the contested nature of inclusion by successfully sharing counter-narratives to common disability categories. This early sign of the pre-service teachers' abilities to be aware of competing approaches to inclusion might just help them help their students find increased school success.

We have told the story of how we reconceptualized our Inclusion One course. We have anecdotally shared, in general ways, our perceived successes. Recently, we gathered evidence on the impact of our work on pre-service teacher practices in their future

classrooms. We are planning to follow the pre-service teachers as they move into the first few years of their careers. We used semi-structured interviews and are now in the process of seeing what themes are emerging from the experiences of these new educators. This will be explored in a forthcoming article. We look forward to synthesizing this evidence, and learning from our former students.This research will undoubtedly further inform our ongoing conversations on inclusive education.

References

Alberta Teachers' Association. (2014). *Report of the blue ribbon panel on inclusive education in Alberta schools*. Retrieved from ATA website: http://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Professional-Development/PD-170-1%20PD%20Blue%20Ribbon%20Panel%20Report.pdf

Andrews, J., & Lupart, J. (2000). *The inclusive classroom*. Scarborough, ON: Nelson Thomson Learning.

Apple, M., & Beane, J. (1999). *Democratic schools: Lessons from the chalk face*. Birmingham, England: Open Press.

Baglieri, S., Valle, J. W., Connor, D. J., & Gallagher, D. J. (2010). Disability studies in education: The need for a plurality of perspectives on disability. *Remedial and Special Education*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/0741932510362200

Baglieri, S., Bejoian, L. M., Broderick, A. A., Connor, D. J., & Valle, J. (2011). [Re] claiming "Inclusive Education" toward cohesion in educational reform: Disability studies unravels the myth of the normal child. *Teachers College Record*, *113*(10), 2122–2154.

Baines, A. (2014). *(Un)learning disability: Recognizing and changing restrictive views of student ability*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Battiste, M. (1999). Enabling the autumn seed: Toward a decolonized approach to Aboriginal knowledge, language and education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, *22*(1), 16–27.

Bolton, G. (2014). *Reflective practice: Writing and professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brookfield, S. D. (2009). Engaging critical reflection in corporate America. In J. Mezirow, E. W. Taylor, & Associates (Eds.), *Transformative learning in practice: Insights from community, workplace and higher education* (pp. 125–135). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Butler-Kisber, Lynn (Ed.). 2014. *Learning landscapes: Inclusive education: Socially just perspectives and practices*, *7*(2). Retrieved from Learning Landscapes website:

http://www.learninglandscapes.ca/images/documents/ll-no14/ll-no14-final-lr-links.pdf

Clifford, P., Friesen, S., & Jardine, D. W. (2001). Whatever happens to him happens to us: Reading coyote reading the world. *The Journal of Educational Thought (JET)/ Revue De La Pensée Educative*, *35*(1), 9–26.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). *Walking the road: Race, diversity and social justice in teacher education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Connor, D. J. (2013). Who "owns" dis/ability? The cultural work of critical special educators as insider–outsiders. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *41*(4), 494–513.

Connor, D. (2014). Social justice in education for students with disabilities. In L. Florian (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of special education* (2nd ed., pp. 111–128). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Connor, D. J., & Bejoian, L. (2014). Cripping school curricula: 20 ways to re-teach disability. *The Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal*, *3*(3), 3–12.

Connor, D. J., Gabel, S. L., Gallagher, D. J., & Morton, M. (2008). Disability studies and inclusive education—implications for theory, research, and practice. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *12*(5–6), 441–457.

Cummins, J. (2001). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society* (2nd ed.). Ontario, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Cummins, J. (2016, August 26). *Hunger for learning: Passion for equity*. Presentation delivered at the Symposium to Honour Dr. Fiona Walton, University of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, PEI.

Danforth, S., & Naraian, S. (2015). This new field of inclusive education: Beginning a dialogue on conceptual foundations. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, *53*(1), 70–85.

Danforth, S. (2014). *Becoming a great inclusive educator*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Dei, G. S. (1996). *Anti-racism education*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Dei, G. S. (2008). Race and minority schooling in Canada: Dealing with questions of equity and access in education. In Z. Bekeran & E. Kopelowitz (Eds.), *Cultural*

education-cultural sustainability: Minority, diaspora, indigenous and ethno-religious groups in multicultural societies. New York, NY: Routledge.

Delpit, L. (1995). *Language, diversity and learning*. New York, NY: The New Press.

DeLuca, C. (2013). Toward an interdisciplinary framework for educational inclusivity. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *36*(1), 305–348.

Dinkelman, T., Margolis, J., & Sikkenga, K. (2006). From teacher to teacher educator: Experience, expectation and expatriation. *Studying Teacher Education*, *2*(1), 5–23.

Dudley-Marling, C., & Gurn, A. (2010). Troubling the foundations of special education: Examining the myth of the normal curve. In C. Dudley-Marling & A. Gurn (Eds.), *The myth of the normal curve* (pp. 9–24). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Herder & Herder. (Original work published 1970)

Foucault, M. (2003). Abnormal. In A. I. Davidson (Series Ed.), V. Marchetti, & A. Salomoni (Eds.), *Lectures at the Collège de France: Vol. 2. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–1975*. New York, NY: Picador.

Gadamer, H. (2004). *Truth and method* (J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall D. G., Trans.). New York, NY: Continuum.

Gilham, C. (2014). Inclusion's historical entanglements in Alberta. *LEARNning Landscapes*, *7*(2), 151.

Greene, M. (1999). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts and social change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Greene, R. W. (1998). *The explosive child: A new approach for understanding and parenting easily frustrated, "chronically inflexible" children*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Hacking, I. (2000). *The social construction of what?* Boston, MA: Presidents and Fellows of Harvard College.

Hamilton, M. L. (Ed.). (1998). *Reconceptualizing teacher practice: Self-study in teacher education*. London, England: Falmer Press.

Hargreaves, D. (2006). *Personalising Learning – 6* [Pamphlet]. Millbank, England: Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. Retrieved from: https://aschofield.files. wordpress.com/2011/02/personalising-learning-6-the-final-gateway-school-design-and-organisation.pdf

Harper, H. (1997). Difference and diversity in Ontario schooling. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *22*(2), 192–206.

Howard, G. (2006). *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers multiracial schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Howard, T., & Aleman, G. (2008). Teacher capacity for diverse learners: What teachers need to know. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemer, D. J. McIntyre, & K. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (3rd ed., pp. 157–174). New York, NY: Routledge.

Hutchinson, N. L., & Martin, A. K. (2012). *Inclusive classrooms in Ontario schools*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Canada.

Illich, I. (1977). *Limits to medicine: Medical nemesis: The expropriation of health*. Harmondsworth, NY: Penguin.

Jahnukainen, M. (2011). Different strategies, different outcomes? The history and trends of the inclusive and special education in Alberta (Canada) and in Finland. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, *55*(5), 489–502. doi: 10.1080/00313831.2010.537689

Jardine, D. (1992). The fecundity of the individual case: Considerations of the pedagogic heart of interpretive work. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *26*(1), 51–61.

Jardine, D. (2012). *Pedagogy left in peace: Cultivating free spaces in teaching and learning*. London, England: Continuum.

Kelly, D. M., & Brandes, G. M. (2001). Shifting out of "neutral": Beginning teachers' struggles with teaching for social justice. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'education*, *26*(4), 437–454.

Kumashiro, K. (2009). Against common sense: Teaching and learning toward social justice. New York, NY: Routledge.LaBoskey, V. K. (2004). The methodology of self-study and its theoretical underpinnings. In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton,

V. K. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices* (pp. 817–869). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2001). *Crossing over to Canaan: The journey of new teachers in diverse classrooms*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lawrence-Brown, D. (2014). Critical pedagogies, inclusive schooling and social justice. In D. Lawrence-Brown & M. Sapon-Shevin (Eds.), *Condition critical: Key principles for equitable and inclusive education* (pp. 356–364). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lawrence-Brown, D., & Sapon-Shevin, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Condition critical: Key principles for equitable and inclusive education*. New York: Teachers College.

Lee, E., & Marshall, C. (2009). *Reality check: A Review of key program areas in the BLAC Report for their effectiveness in enhancing the educational opportunities and achievement of African Nova Scotian learners*. Halifax, NS: Enidlee Consultants Inc.

Lee, E., Menkart, D., & Okazawa-Rey, M. (2002). *Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to K-12 Anti-racist, multicultural education and staff development*. Washington, DC: Teaching for Change.

Loughran, J., Hamilton, M., Laboskey, V. K., & Russell, T. (Eds.). (2004). *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Lupart, J. L. (2008). Achieving excellence and equity in Canadian schools: Can inclusion bridge the gap? *Proceedings from International Inclusive Education Research Professorial Series*. Monash University, Victoria, AUS.

Lupart, J. L., & McKeough, A. (2009). *The challenges of student diversity in Canadian schools: Essays on building a better future for exceptional children*. Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

Lytle, S., & Cochran-Smith, M. (1992). Teacher research as a way of knowing. *Harvard Educational Review*, *62*(4), 447–475.

May, S., & Sleeter, C. (2010). *Critical multiculturalism: Theory and praxis*. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.

McLaren, P. (2016). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in foundations of education* (6th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Moules, N. J. (2015). *Conducting hermeneutic research: From philosophy to practice*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Neudel, E., Fay, F. A., Gilkey, A., Schneider, B., Kusiak, J., Willis, P. A. (Directors). (2011). *Lives worth living* [Motion picture]. Natick, MA: Storyline Motion Pictures.

Neito, S. (2010). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Nova Scotia Department of Education. (1994). *BLAC Report for their effectiveness in enhancing the educational opportunities and achievement of African Nova Scotian learners*. Halifax, NS: Author.

Porter, G. L., Smith, D., Timmons, V., Kelly, B., & Richler, D. (2011). *Exploring inclusive educational practices through professional inquiry*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Sapon-Shevin, M. (2003). Inclusion: A matter of social justice. *Teaching All Students*, *61*(2), 25–28.

Sapon-Shevin, M. (2007). *Widening the circle: The power of inclusive classrooms*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2012). *Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Slee, R. (2011). *The irregular school: Exclusion, schooling, and inclusive education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sociology of Diagnosis ([Sociologyofdx](#)). (2014, July 13). *Dr Tom Shakespeare "Labels and badges: diagnosis & identity"* [Video file]. Retrieved from YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FngcyyDuONA

Taylor, A. (2008). *The examined life: Judith Butler and Saunara Taylor*. Film clip retrieved from YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0HZaPkF6qE

Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed ability classrooms* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD

Tomlinson, C. A., & Imbeau, M. B. (2010). *Leading and managing a differentiated classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Tompkins, J. (2002). Learning to see what they can't: Decolonizing perspectives on Indigenous education in the racial context of rural Nova Scotia. *McGill Journal of Education*, *73*(3), 405–422.

Tompkins, J., & Orr, J. (2009). "It could take forty minutes: It could take three days": Authentic small group learning for Aboriginal education. In C. Craig & L. Deretchin (Eds.), *Teacher learning in small-group settings: Teacher Education Yearbook XVII* (pp. 261–277). Lahnam, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishing Group.

Valle, J. W., & Connor, D. J. (2011). *Rethinking disability: A disability studies approach to inclusive practices*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Williamson, W. J., & Field, J. C. (2014). The case of the disappearing/appearing slow learner: An interpretive mystery. *Journal of Applied Hermeneutics*, Article 4. Retrieved from the JAH website: http://hdl.handle.net/10515/sy53b5wq7

Winzer, M. A. (2008). *Children with exceptionalities in Canadian classrooms*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Winzer, M. A. (2009). *From integration to inclusion: A history of special education in the 20th century*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.

Zeichner, K. M. (1999). The new scholarship in teacher education. *Educational Researchers*, *28*(9), 4–15.