

# Ingredients for Inclusion: Lessons from the Literature

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores features of successful inclusion through examples found in the literature. Schools have been given the imperative to become more inclusive through various government pronouncements and initiatives, but guidance in achieving that goal has been arguably wanting. School communities that have demonstrated more inclusive practice have shared several features, or 'ingredients'. These have included: developing a shared vision and common definition of inclusion; a process of learning reflecting best evidence synthesis for professional learning and developments, and change that takes place on the cultural level (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007). Through self-reflection, planning, acting on those plans, and reflecting on the outcomes (and repeating this ongoing process) inclusive change has developed in a sustainable way. Finally, this paper describes a tool that has been successfully used throughout the world to facilitate this process of change and suggests that it may be a very effective way that New Zealand schools can develop more inclusive cultures.

## Research paper

**Keywords:** *Change, evidence-based practice, inclusion, shared vision*

## INTRODUCTION

With the introduction of *Success for All, Every School Every Child* (2012), the Ministry of Education has made it a priority to develop inclusion in Aotearoa/New Zealand's schools. A recent Education Review Office report on inclusive practices in New Zealand found that only 50 percent of the nation's schools were demonstrating mostly inclusive practice (ERO, 2010). In response to that report, the government has set a target of 80 percent by 2014. Remembering that the original aspiration of Special Education 2000, when it was launched in 1996, was to create a world class inclusive education system (Ministry of Education, 1996), the Ministry is acknowledging that we have

some way to go to achieve that noble aspiration. However, while expecting improved performance and practice, the Ministry of Education has never elaborated on how New Zealand schools are to become world class in their inclusive practices.

Despite a lack of guidance from the Ministry of Education, examples of successful inclusion do exist in the literature. This paper explores key aspects of those examples to identify what it is that has aided their success. In each example, the school underwent a process of learning that involved reflecting on deeply held and often unconscious assumptions about education, learning and difference. The exploration of inclusive values and practices was undertaken as a collaborative venture. Each successful school, discussed below, created a shared or common definition of inclusion. This paper does not seek to offer a model of inclusion, a template that can be inserted into any school setting. That would be disingenuous, as there is no such solution. The reason for this is that each school community has its own specific framework. Culture is a more appropriate term to use here. What is offered, instead of a set recipe, are ingredients, from which each school community can create their own flavour of inclusion.

This paper begins with exploring the nature of inclusion itself. How we define terms such as inclusion reflects how we think about them on deeper levels. Employing Schein's (1992) model of culture, the process of change taking place in the cultures of inclusive schools can be understood. Through the examples presented in this paper, the processes each school went through reflect best evidence for sustainable professional learning. The impetus for change was driven by a strong desire to make inclusion a reality. This paper will conclude by suggesting that through utilising a framework for change, such as that provided by the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow 2011), school communities can begin to build their model of successful inclusion.

## WHAT, AFTER ALL, IS INCLUSION?

Inclusion has proven to be hard to define, which can be seen as a strength. By the open nature of the term we can continue to explore its deeper meanings and values. It may be more useful to look at the term inclusion as more like a spectrum than a measurable goal. As the nature of inclusion is explored, the collective understanding of what it may mean is expanded. Inclusion began as a practice of integration or mainstreaming (Munoz, 2007). Now it is widely recognised that to simply 'be in' is not enough. Inclusion is concerned with the quality of participation. Inclusion has also embraced a wider interpretation which focuses on any members of our schools or communities who face barriers to their full and meaningful participation (Ballard, 2004). It is no longer just a 'special needs thing'. In trying to reshape our schools to welcome a particular type of student, we have discovered that inclusion actually involves everybody. Can we create schools that welcome and accommodate all members of our community? That is the challenge facing our schools. It is not about attaining Ministry set targets or goals, but rather about how schools can restructure their practices and values to become world class.

Many definitions of inclusion, despite varying wording, consider inclusion to be an issue of social justice (Ballard, 1999; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Aligning with the Human Rights Act (1993), the Salamanca Statement (1994), and the New Zealand Disability Strategy (2001), inclusion is seen as a concept applying to all minoritised groups. Berryman, O'Sullivan and Bishop (2010) explain that "to be minoritised one does not need to be in the numerical minority, only to be treated as if one's position and perspective are of less worth; to be silenced or marginalised" (p. 10). This notion of inclusion then, breaks away from being solely associated with children with special educational needs. It embraces larger social issues including the quality of participation in a social or educational setting. Values embedded in this social-political model of inclusion include:

- supporting everyone to feel that they belong;
- increasing participation for children and adults in learning and teaching activities, relationships and communities of local schools;
- reducing exclusion, discrimination, barriers to learning and participation;
- viewing differences between children and between adults as resources for learning;
- emphasising the development of school communities and values, as well as achievements; and

- restructuring cultures, policies and practices to respond to diversity in ways that value everyone equally (Booth & Ainscow, 2011, p. 11).

Allen (2005) sees inclusion as an ethical project. "The success of the ethical project of inclusion will depend on how far all of the people involved allow themselves to hope, accept their responsibilities, and are prepared to do the necessary work, which starts, of course, with oneself" (p. 293). Inclusion is seen as a process of cultural review and social construction (Carrington, 1999). Inclusion is not a model to replicate and judge oneself against. However, we can endeavour to embed inclusive values into our community and school cultures. Booth (1996) describes two processes in the development of inclusive cultures: increasing meaningful participation in the life and curricula of the school, and reducing exclusionary factors. In acknowledging that confusion exists around the term 'inclusion', Ainscow (2005) and Ainscow and Miles (2009) offer four elements that they argue are essential to the term inclusion:

- inclusion as a process that involves constantly searching for better ways of responding to diversity;
- inclusion as a concern with the identification and removal of barriers;
- inclusion as the presence, participation and achievement of all students. Presence here refers to where a child is educated, participation is seen as a measure of the quality of experience of all learners, and achievement is about learning outcomes across the curriculum. Finally,
- inclusion as especially focused on those children or 'groups of learners' who are "at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement" (Ainscow, 2005, p. 119).

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TRANSFORMATION

What is needed to help deepen an understanding of inclusion is the creation of space within the school in which deeply held values and beliefs can be examined and scrutinised (Ainscow, 2005). Sustainability is a central success factor in creating inclusive school cultures. The model of professional learning, or how inclusive values and practices will be developed, must be designed so that the learning that takes place over a period of time is reinforced through self-reflection. Learning that involves developing theoretical knowledge as well as the skills to enquire into practice has been demonstrated as being essential to sustaining that learning (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007).

Franke et al., (1998) refer to this as “self-sustaining, generative change”: where the teachers or participants involved need to have the opportunity to continue to learn and grow. They propose that “for change to become generative, teachers must engage in practice that serves as a basis for their continued growth” (Franke et al., 1998, p. 68).

A model or framework of professional learning is most effective when it incorporates the exploration and acquisition of theoretical understanding (Franke et al., 1998). *Teacher Professional Learning and Development Best Practice Synthesis Iteration (BES)* (Timperley, et al., 2007) indicates that to sustain improvements in practice, a theoretical base is needed which “serves as a tool to make principled changes to practice, plus with the skills to inquire into the impact of their teaching” (Timperley et al., 2007, p. 225). Research noted in the *Best Practice Synthesis* has indicated that change is more sustained when teachers, with the support of school leaders, are given time to explore ideas and integrate them into their practice.

Two important levers that have been identified by Ainscow and Miles (2009) for the transformations of school culture are:

- a common sense of purpose, and
- a common use of language.

It is vital that any space created within the school to explore this process of transformation is filled constructively with reviewing any aspects of deficit or deviant discourse shaping views of student ability, disability or potential. Skidmore (2002) referred to this as a pedagogical discourse. How teachers theorise learning (and the educability of their students) describe a ‘discourse of deviance’ or a ‘discourse of inclusion’. Skidmore explains,

‘discourse’ refers not only to the vocabulary that teachers use to describe their work, but more fundamentally to the underlying grammar of reasoning which can be inferred from their comments on the current organisation of provision in the school, and possible changes to that organisation which they desire or fear (Skidmore, 2002, p. 120).

A discourse of deviance would maintain that there is a hierarchy of cognitive ability on which a student can be placed and the source of difficulties in learning lies in the characteristics of the learner. Support for learners experiencing difficulty should then be in the form of remediation, specially trained teachers, and an alternative curriculum. The ‘fault’ lies within the learner, not the educational organisation, curriculum or pedagogy.

Around the globe, activists and policy-makers are confronting the issue of the place of children with disabilities in educational systems. The *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 1994) claimed that “regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes ... building inclusive society and achieving education for all” (Connor, Gabel, Gallagher, & Morton, 2008; United Nations General Assembly, 1994). The conference at Salamanca brought together over 300 participants representing 92 governments (including New Zealand) “to further the objective of *Education for All* by considering the fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of inclusive education, namely enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs” (UNESCO, 1994, preface). *Education for All* encompassed the Millennium Development Goal of meeting the learning needs of all children by 2015 (Rouse, 2006; UNESCO, 1990). The conference at Salamanca was called as a response to the lack of attention paid to inclusion in the EFA document produced at Jomtein in 1990. Ainscow and Cesar (2006) call the document produced at Salamanca, “... arguably the most significant international document that has ever appeared in the field of special education” (p. 231). The *Salamanca Framework* stated that the development of inclusive schools should be a priority of national governments. The mood and enthusiasm of this language were written into Special Education 2000. The aspiration was to create a world class inclusive education system. How we think about inclusion, and the nature of disability or difference, determines the depth of quality we can achieve in our efforts to build more inclusive schools.

## **SOCIAL MODEL/INTERPRETATION AND HOW WE THINK ABOUT DISABILITY AND DIFFERENCE**

In a social model of disability the focus of attention shifts from the individual to the barriers that the individual faces in their community, work place or school. Creating an inclusive education system, then, would necessitate the identification and removal of barriers. Neilson (2005) reminds us that attitudes have been shown to be one of the biggest barriers faced by people with disabilities. Creating an inclusive education system would then necessitate examining the attitudes and values in our school communities. It would necessitate building school cultures that are free of barriers to meaningful participation. This work goes beyond resource allocation; it involves the ‘how’ of creating inclusive schools. Ballard (2004) calls for a cultural transformation in ideas about disability and education in schools, a new way of thinking.

Disability is seen as an issue of oppression because individuals with disabilities need to advocate or fight for rights that are otherwise taken for granted by other members of the community, such as attendance at their local school and adequate resources to make their participation meaningful. Special Education is political in that it involves deciding who is 'special' and who is 'normal', and as Bauman (2007) implies, 'special' children belong somewhere else:

If disabled children are to be genuinely included in the mainstream of education, this cannot involve special education thought and practice. Categorising and naming children as 'special' identifies them as different from others, and different in ways that are not valued in present mainstream schools and society. What is needed for the inclusion of presently devalued disabled children is a cultural transformation in ideas about disability, about schools and about teaching (Ballard, 2004, p. 318).

The definition of disability in the New Zealand Disability Strategy reflects what has been termed a 'social model' of disability:

Disability is not something individuals have. What individuals have are impairments. They may be physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, intellectual or other impairments. Disability is the process which happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have (Ministry of Disability Issues, 2001, p. 7).

Impairments become barriers due to societal constructs. A social model of disability moves the focus away from the individual and recognises the oppressive social or political structures that exclude or marginalise that individual (Neilson, 2005). Oliver (1990) draws a distinction between impairment and disability. An impairment may be a physical condition or functional limitation, however, a disability is the social exclusion created by the way a society responds to individuals with impairments (Joseph, 2007). Some disability researchers today prefer the term 'social interpretation(s)' to more fully describe the complex societal roles in disablement, but there is general concurrence that disability is a social construct. This was asserted by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) when they began debating our inferior position and asking why we found ourselves in this situation, we confronted a crude, but fundamental choice:

- either our tragedy is that the impairments we possess make us incapable of social functioning, or

- our society is constructed by people with capabilities *for* people with capabilities and it is that that makes people with impairments incapable of functioning.

The agreed UPIAS interpretation was that, although it may be a tragedy to have an impairment, it is the oppression that characterises the way society is organised so that we are prevented from functioning (Finkelstein, 2001, p. 2).

Oliver (1990) points out that whereas disabled individuals have existed in all societies throughout history, the types of barriers faced by those individuals have varied from place to place. The extent of their disability, in other words, was based on the society in which they lived. The implication in this argument is that while physical impairments can be seen to have a random distribution, disability, in contrast, is caused by social, economic or political reasons. This is much the same way that poverty and standards of health are not randomly spread in society but are rather the deliberate effect of unequal distribution of resources, economic policies and practices, and ideology.

Slee and Allan (2001) see the need to 'deconstruct' our current ways of thinking and doing rather than simply transforming them. The development of inclusion is seen as a paradigm shift away from Special Education thinking, involving the restructuring of school culture for inclusion to succeed and preventing inclusion from being submerged in the existing regular education system. The authors posit that the current "collapse of so-called inclusion policy into a crude model of distributive justice has resulted in financially driven education settlements ... consequently, inclusive schooling is reduced to pitched battles for apparently scarce resources" (Slee & Allan, 2001, p. 179). Deconstruction is seen as "daring to think otherwise" (p. 180) and creates imaginative solutions and systems. It involves critically examining the how and why we do things the way we do, including the language we use. The use of language becomes of greatest importance if one term is merely replacing another ('inclusion' for 'special education') while underlying philosophies and practices remain unchanged (Pearson, 2012; Slee, 2011).

#### **SCHOOL CULTURE AND HOW CHANGE TAKES PLACE**

Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu (1999) link successful inclusion to school culture. Entering the field expecting to find educational practices contributing to successful inclusion, the

researchers instead discovered that such practices were only one part of a cultural context that supported inclusive values. Corbett (1999) similarly drew a correlation between cultural values of inclusion and the extent to which a programme of inclusion can be successful. Corbett recognised that changing the culture of an institution may be a necessary step in making it more responsive to difference. “It is about creating an institutional culture,” she writes, “which welcomes, supports and nurtures diverse needs” (p. 58). Prior to her work with the *Index for Inclusion* in Queensland schools, Carrington (1999) echoed this when she argued that schools needed to reflect on their values and beliefs in order to create inclusive cultures.

Culture can be seen as both the stated as well as the unwritten rules by which members of a community live and perceive their environment (Peterson & Deal, 2002). The educational sociologist Waller recognised as early as 1932 that each school has a distinctive character and culture, that it is a ‘social organism’ (Waller, 1961). Schein (1992) created a model of culture that illustrates the depth of underlying values and beliefs that guide our actions. His model can be likened to a pyramid with three levels (see Figure 1). On the top layer of this pyramid are the artefacts of culture. On this surface level, artefacts are considered to be what is seen, heard and felt. This includes physical objects such as buildings and works of art, but also the visible and verbal displays of interaction - how individuals speak and relate with one another, the language they use and the processes of routine behaviour. It is difficult to make sense of these artefacts without an understanding of deeper motivators such as values and beliefs. The middle layer of the pyramid relates to those expressed values of the culture, or in this discussion, of the school community. This middle level can be loosely described as how people talk in the staff room. Here group values and beliefs can be shared amongst each other. It is the face we show our trusted colleagues and friends. At the deepest level on this model of culture are found the assumptions on which culture is based. These assumptions are often not clearly expressed or explored. It is the common sense on which we base our culture, and could be about how we think about learning and learners, about how we identify with who is ‘us’ and who is ‘them’, and also about how we make sense of our place in our cultures.

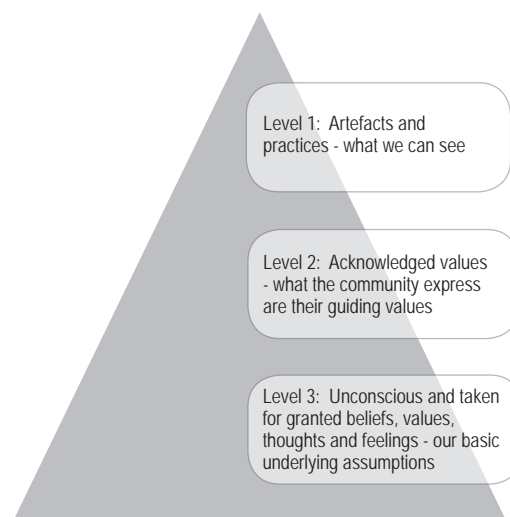


Figure 1: Levels of culture.  
Source: Adapted from Schein (1992, p. 17).

### REFLECTING ON OUR UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS AND BELIEFS—A CAUTIONARY TALE

In considering policy initiatives in Portugal, which laid a legislative basis for inclusion in that country’s educational system, Freire (2009) and Freire and César (2003) recognised that an important barrier to the development of inclusive practices were the continued existence of beliefs and practice that hindered the new principles. While the official policy changed, schools remained unchanged, changed slowly, or changed but not in the desired direction. The Portuguese experience, following the enactment of their first legislation on deaf education, was one of a policy initiative mandating new responsibilities without a framework or structure to assist schools in how to create a more inclusive environment. The authors identified several inhibitors to developing a more inclusive educational system as a result, namely the continued existence of older values and beliefs around disability and difference that were embedded in school and teacher culture.

Freire and César (2003) findings were mirrored by Paliokosta and Blandford’s (2010) study of three secondary schools in the United Kingdom. While legislation and policy directed schools to develop inclusive practices, the authors found teachers were often conceptually unprepared to understand the distinction between inclusion and integration. Their study suggested that “inclusion can work by removing the diagnostic paradigm associated with special educational needs and by creating a framework for teachers’ lifelong learning focusing on a social justice orientated pedagogy that will empower teachers conceptually and practically” (Paliokosta and Blandford, 2010, p. 179). Without

a structure or framework for guiding a school community through a transformation of cultural values, Paliokosta and Blandford (2010) found that a school's culture could remain static. In simply prescribing policy, teachers can be left feeling inadequate, threatened, insecure, not qualified enough to include learners with varying needs, and even confirmed in their beliefs that inclusion is too difficult and that those students don't belong in the mainstream.

The underlying assumptions held by the teachers above can be said to be based on a medical model of disability. How disability is defined is what contrasts this model with that of the social model/interpretation. This is from the Disability Classification Standard used by Statistics New Zealand where: "A disability is a restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being" (Education Review Office, 2003).

As with the use of the word inclusion, the above definition alters meaning significantly. The definition used individualises and medicalises disability (Neilson, 2005). It reflects a philosophical position that has been referred to as the medical model, psycho-medical model, biological paradigm and individual model (O'Brien & Ryba, 2005). The underlying assumption within this paradigm is that the deficit is located within individual students. In this model, a child receives a diagnosis of his or her impairment which can then be used to group individuals together for instructional purposes (Mitchell, 2010). It can be said that the teachers were guided by a 'discourse of deviance' as discussed above, and that the space they created to shape inclusion in their school perhaps lacked a self-reflected element where they could examine their underlying assumptions or discourses.

### CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

In her study of inclusive schools in three separate countries (the United States, United Kingdom and Portugal), Kugelmass (2006) noted distinct features of each school that reflected an inclusive culture that are worth revisiting here:

- an uncompromising commitment and belief in inclusion;
- differences among students and staff perceived as a resource;
- teaming and a collaborative interaction style among staff and children;
- willingness of staff to struggle to sustain practice;

- inclusion understood as a social/political issue, and
- a commitment to inclusive ideals communicated across the school and into the community (p. 286).

How each school developed the above features reflected each school's individual nature; however, these structures were inherently collaborative. In contrast to the experiences found by Freire (2009), Freire and Cesar (2003), Paliokosta and Blandford (2010), in the schools described by Kugelmass (2006) there was a conscious effort to create an inclusive culture, a supportive and collaborative atmosphere deliberately created to foster an exploration of deeply held values and beliefs. As these values were shared, when the inclusive nature of the school was challenged (such as through legislation to standardise instruction or assessment) the school sought alliances within the local communities or with neighbouring schools, responding in a cohesive manner to sustain their inclusive cultures. The point to emphasise is that through consciously fostering an inclusive culture, they were also equipped to defend it. Difficulty did not lead to giving up, to assigning inclusion as 'too hard', but rather led to a strengthening of networks within and around the school community.

In trying to reveal more of what inclusion may mean in the school setting, Carrington and Elkins (2002), examined contrasting school cultures in an urban setting. The authors selected two schools, one which they describe as traditional and another which they describe as inclusive, with service provision or support providing the means to discriminate between the two models. The authors acknowledge that there are no accepted clearly defined models as such; however, schools can have predominant features of one or the other. Practices in a traditional setting included streaming of classes, labelling and grouping students, use of teacher aides attached to individual students and supplementary pull-out and resource room teaching. Whereas one Special Education teacher worked in class to support students' presence, this assistance was observed as allowing the class teacher to transfer the responsibility of teaching certain children in the class to the Special Education teacher. There was then no need to adjust pedagogic practices or the curriculum to take account of diverse learners. The focus of the traditional school was on student achievement, and Carrington and Elkins (2002) differentiate between what they call a content-focused culture and a student-centred focus. The traditional school culture was content-centred in that it did not seek to restructure teaching practices or restructure the curriculum to cater for a diversity of learning styles.

The student-centred school, they identified as reflecting a more inclusive culture, or what Rosenholz (1989) terms a moving school. Carrington and Elkins (2002) sought to explore the organisational opportunities to weaken and blur the boundaries between Special Education and mainstream teaching. Within the school they termed as inclusive, there was no resource or pull-out room. The Special Education teacher role was seen as working with teachers to upskill them in effective ways of teaching all the children in their classes, collaborating widely with staff across departments. Support provided:

a broad range of alternatives for students and teachers. These included special funded programmes, teacher aide support in class, streamed classes, non-streamed classes with class teacher support, in class support from a special education teacher, small tutor groups, some students missed enrolling in one subject so that they could access extra support in literacy and many students could enrol in non-board vocational subjects (Carrington and Elkins, p. 9).

While several of these strategies were employed in the more traditionally orientated school, how they were employed and the underlying attitudes or “collective values and beliefs relating to teachers’ roles and responsibilities” (p. 13) reflected the schools’ willingness to respond to their diverse student population.

Highlighting this spectrum, or continuum of practice, Stockall and Gartin (2002) looked at relationships and practice in a self-identified inclusive school. The authors noted the importance in the school of a shared vision, or collective definition, of inclusion. This definition saw inclusion as more than physical placement, or mainstreaming, and included the active participation of students). Teachers were experimenting with in-class support arrangements, as described above, which were designed to increase participation. However, students with impairments were often seen to have marginal roles that devalued their membership in a group or activity. They may have been part of a mixed ability group of peers, for example, but their duties were relegated to collecting resources. Despite trying to implement what they held to be inclusive practice, teachers at times inadvertently reinforced perceptions of disabled children as ‘helpers’ or the one that receives help, reflecting an adherence to an idea of disability as cases of charity or personal tragedy (Macartney, 2009).

The subject school collectively negotiated a definition of inclusion, and teachers tried to (and thought they were) accommodating all students.

But how that was reflected in the culture of the school reflected deeply-held beliefs and assumptions that were not collectively explored. This includes the thinking behind choices of pedagogy, models of service delivery (such as the use of special educational provisions), the nature of disability and the meaning of empowerment. As in the case study of Carrington and Elkins (2002) above, the unexamined collective values and beliefs of the teaching staff were reflecting a willingness, but also uncritically reproducing values and beliefs of the dominant groups in their society.

### **INCLUSION IS ABOUT ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY**

Writing over fifteen years ago, Cheney and Muscott (1996) explored the concept of responsible inclusion in considering the successful placement of students with complex social, emotional and behavioural needs in inclusive schools. The authors note that “historically these students have been the first asked to leave the classroom and the last invited to return” and “present the inclusive schools movement with its greatest challenge” (p. 110). Responsible inclusion is presented by the authors as meaning the preparation that a school would undertake to lay the groundwork for effective inclusive practice and allowing for inclusion as judged by need. The authors saw the movement towards inclusion as one requiring systemic change and recognised several ‘challenges’ to inclusion: transfer of responsibility; teacher preparedness; service provision models, and differentiation of the curriculum. To effectively meet these challenges, the authors developed a seven step process implemented in two phases which included developing a shared vision or concept of inclusion, restructuring school system to meet varied needs, restructuring responsibilities and roles of school staff, and collaborating widely with the community. The term ‘responsible inclusion’ appeared and disappeared in the 1990s in the United States as educators were grappling with how to integrate students with varying needs into their classrooms. The literature reflects teacher experience and frustration (Lorna, 1997), an acceptance of a special education paradigm and medical model (Meadows, 1996), reconciling the legal concept of least restrictive environment and a largely unexplored philosophy of inclusion (Smith & Dowdy, 1998) and an identification of inclusion with special educational needs.

The work of Cheney and Muscott (1996) contributed to the thinking of inclusion as a whole school/community endeavour; however, it also reflected a lack of exploring the deeper values of social justice underpinning inclusion. Their

response was mechanistic, focused on school practices. Pivik, McComas and Laflame (2002) helped refocus their North American colleagues when they asked disabled students and their parents to identify barriers to their participation at school. While the accessibility of the physical environment was often mentioned, the main inhibitor was expressed as being intentional and unintentional attitudinal barriers. Intentional attitudinal barriers were regarded as isolation, physical bullying and emotional bullying. Unintentional attitudinal barriers related to a lack of knowledge, understanding, or willingness on the part of systems or teachers. Students in the research focus groups were quite willing to offer suggestion to enable their inclusion, notably in the social realm, such as providing disability awareness for teachers and fellow students, and allowing them to have a collaborative role in their education. Disabled students were asking for what Higgins, MacArthur and Kelly (2009) refer to as opportunities to exercise their agency and show their capability while deconstructing what is meant and understood as difference. Higgins et al. (2009) use a social justice framework to argue for a transformation of school cultures. When asked their views, disabled students were quick to point to the ethos, or the culture of the school, acting as a barrier. Implications for practice in the authors' conclusion included the responsibility of school leadership to model inclusive attitudes and behaviours, and a collective responsibility to shape school cultures to reflect inclusive values.

### USING A FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE CHANGE

Unlike the approach described by Kugelmass (2006) in her American study, other schools have employed a whole school framework to guide the community through the development process. A Canadian example is *An Inclusive School Culture - Indicators of Success* (2005), which brought together the concepts of inclusion and social justice. The lessons learned from the wide use of this tool (introduced in 132 schools in Ontario and adapted for use in other Canadian provinces) are worth noting. Their experience, using the tool, taught school communities about:

- the importance of a shared vision;
- the role of committed school leadership;
- collaboration within the school and wider community;
- inclusion as an issue of social justice that is much wider than a disability issue;
- the importance of individualised learning approaches, and
- the importance of student voice.

Recognising that the traditional model of professional development has had limited results (Carrington & Elkins, 2002; Carrington & Holm, 2005; Robinson & Carrington, 2002) Australian researchers have looked for a tool that would more sustainably and effectively meet school and teacher needs (Miller, 1995; Beall, 1999; Novick, 1996; all cited in Robinson & Carrington, 2002). Traditional or conventional professional development has been described as a one-shot or spray-paint method: brief workshops, conferences or courses with no real follow-up or long-term feedback (Robinson & Carrington, 2002). The successful introduction of inclusive policies meant the *restructuring* of existing systems. *The Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools* (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) was seen as an essential resource for school review and development. *The Index for Inclusion* was designed as a process consisting of three dimensions: producing inclusive policies, evolving inclusive practices and creating inclusive cultures (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). This framework is consistent with *Best Evidence Synthesis* for sustaining professional learning and development (Timperley et al., 2007).

*The Index* encouraged a cyclical process of review, planning and implementation that introduced sustainability to teacher professional development. Whole staff activities led to a review of school practices and cultures, highlighting strengths and exclusionary barriers which could then be addressed. Researchers developed novel means to ensure that all students had a voice in the process at a large secondary school (Carrington & Holm, 2005). In this school, Carrington and Holm (2005) used the *Index* in facilitating a student management team, which presented its views to parents and staff. Visual narrative techniques in a participatory action research model were employed to ensure that students' voice was heard and fed into the change process (Carrington, Allen, and Osmolowski, 2007).

*The Index for Inclusion* has been used in one research project in New Zealand. As part of the Enhancing Effective Practice in Special Education (EPESE), schools were asked for voluntary participation in using the *Index*. EPESE was a three year Ministry of Education initiated national professional development and research programme (Dharan, 2006). Bourke, Holden and Dharan (2007) studied the *Index* as a self-review tool for teacher professional development. Both schools in the New Zealand study used the *Index for Inclusion* "as a means to support school development and increase the inclusion for staff themselves" (p. 64). In the research this is seen as changes in practice (e.g. improving the inclusion



of teacher-aides into the staff team, targeting trouble spots in the playground during breaks, and record-keeping about playground incidents). Past experience provided a strategy 'bank' from which the school could draw for creative solutions - the depth of that pool influencing the creativity or effectiveness of responses.

## DISCUSSION

In reviewing examples of successful inclusion, a common process is seen to emerge: self-reflection followed by planning followed by acting, followed again by reflecting on the outcomes. This cyclical process is part of what made inclusive change in those schools strong and sustainable. It is a process that reflects a spiral, or koru, and it takes place on the level of culture, which is both interpersonal (between the members of the community) and intra-personal (taking place within the individual). Other ingredients - members of the school community wanted to improve: collaboration - working together for a shared purpose in a way that included students, parents and staff; exploring values and beliefs around the nature of difference, inclusion and exclusion, and creating a shared vision of where they wished to go and what kind of school they wished to create.

The *Index for Inclusion* provides a framework in which these ingredients can work together in the process of creating more inclusive schools. It is the most widely used and research validated school-wide tool for the development of inclusive cultures. *The Index for Inclusion* has been a feature of English schools for over a decade, with the government providing copies to all primary, secondary, special schools and local education authorities. The second edition of the *Index* has been given to all Welsh schools in the English or Welsh language. The *Index for Inclusion* has been used in many countries around the world and translated into thirty-seven languages as school communities try to clarify the meaning of inclusion and build inclusive school cultures and practices (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). It has been adapted for early childcare settings and employed by UNESCO in developing countries. Save the Children has used the *Index* in several programmes, such as in Morocco and Serbia, to foster self-review of culture, policies and practices, utilising the 'critical friend' to facilitate change (Save the Children, 2008). The *Index* has also been widely and effectively used throughout Europe (Williams, 2009).

Such wide usage throughout the world encouraged revisions to the *Index* to make its language and framework more accessible. Writing in 2001, *Index* developers Booth and Black-Hawkins reflect on that as being a key feature:

There isn't a version of the index which is the authorised version - an index is created in the process of translating it to a particular setting. An index is what each learning centre, or administration devises for carrying forward their own cultures, policies and practices.

We can't make this index, or any other index, carry the weight for changing our schools, and our societies. It can't do that. It's just paper. If the development of inclusive cultures, policies and practices is tricky, it's not the fault of the *Index*. There are deeper processes in all our societies which push people out, which make people prioritise the education of their group over the education of the groups which are not their group (2001, p. 45).

As such, the *Index for Inclusion* has the potential to help schools realise the original aspiration of SE2000, to create a world class inclusive education system.

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