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Inclusive pedagogy: From learning to action. Supporting each individual in the context of 'everybody'

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HIGHLIGHTS

- This is a study of the enactment of inclusive pedagogy by new graduates of the University of Aberdeen.
- The paper shows how theoretical concepts informed actions in different contexts.
- The dignity of each child in the classroom community was central to inclusive pedagogy.
- The paper shows how individual difficulties were addressed through a consideration of 'everybody'.
- Teachers drew selectively and purposefully from established strategies to ensure inclusion.

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ABSTRACT

This paper draws from a novel study of graduates from a one year Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) course at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. The study explored how beginning teachers in their various contexts used the theoretical ideas of inclusive pedagogy. Observation and interview data were analysed to reveal linkages between the principles that informed the course and the practices of programme graduates. By drawing on examples from the data that illustrate inclusive pedagogy in action, questions are addressed about how teachers in diverse classrooms create learning environments with opportunities that are available to everybody.

1. Introduction

This paper explores how the theoretical concept of inclusive pedagogy is being taught and studied in a university based teacher education program. The study is of particular relevance to teacher educators around the world as the role, value and relevance of university based teacher education is being questioned and teachers are under pressure to achieve high standards of academic performance for an increasingly diverse student population. As discussed below, inclusive pedagogy is an approach that has emerged from research into the craft knowledge of teachers who are able to maintain high levels of academic attainment in diverse classrooms (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). The preparation of teachers to meet the challenges of teaching under such circumstances is of concern to teacher educators and policy makers in many parts of the world because of the significant role that teachers play in influencing student achievement (Hattie, 2009; OECD., 2005). Our work is concerned with understanding how classroom teachers can be prepared to respond to differences between individual students without perpetuating the marginalization that can occur when some are treated differently from others. This is an area of increasing interest among policy makers and teacher educators in many jurisdictions (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2011; EADSNE, 2011; OECD., 2010).

Funded by a research and development grant from the Scottish Government, in the period 2006–2010, the post-graduate initial teacher education programme at the University of Aberdeen underwent a fundamental reform that framed educational inclusion as a core concern for all students, rather than an additional component or an infusion of information about special needs (for details, see Florian, Young, & Rouse, 2010). The course as a whole was underpinned by the principles of inclusive pedagogy (Florian, 2010; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Florian & Kershner, 2009), a

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distinctive approach to educational inclusion that emphasises the responsibility of mainstream teachers to support the learning of all pupils, and promotes an understanding of inclusion as participation (Black-Hawkins, Florian, & Rouse, 2007).

This paper draws from a qualitative study of seven graduates from Aberdeen's Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programme during their first year as probationary teachers. The purpose of the study was to explore how the ideas of inclusive pedagogy were used in practice by new teachers in their various contexts. The aim was not to evaluate how 'good' the teachers were, or how successful the course had been, but to undertake a more nuanced exploration of how the beginning teachers understood and enacted inclusion in their classrooms. This novel approach to researching the programme effects was designed to generate important new knowledge about how primary and secondary classroom teachers might be better prepared to teach increasingly diverse groups of students. The examples we report reflect the linkages between the principles that informed the PGDE course reform and the practices of programme graduates. By drawing examples from the data which illustrate *inclusive pedagogy in action* we also address the related questions of how these conceptual ideas manifest in practice and how to recognise inclusive pedagogy when it occurs.

2. Inclusive pedagogy

Inclusive pedagogy is a pedagogical approach that responds to learner diversity in ways that avoid the marginalisation of some learners in the community of the classroom. It is a specific approach that has emerged from research into the craft knowledge of teachers who were committed to the principles of educational inclusion in their practice (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). The approach has been further refined by research conversations between teacher educators (Florian, Young, & Rouse, 2010), and discussions with policy makers and academics at national and international dissemination events. Thus the teacher education research and development project of which this study was part (the Inclusive Practice Project, or IPP) has involved a complex reciprocal cycle of knowledge exchange between researchers, practitioners, policy makers and teacher educators. In examining the pedagogy of new teachers, the study reported here further strengthens and consolidates the links between our theoretical ideas and the learning and teaching that occurs in the classroom when teachers are informed by these concepts. This paper provides research detail about what it is that teachers who are committed to the principles of inclusive education actually *do*.

This is important because inclusive education is a contested concept that has been plagued by definitional problems. Originally conceived as an alternative to special education for students identified as having disabilities or difficulties in learning, the idea has broadened to include any and all learners who may be excluded or marginalised by the processes of schooling. However, the term is used idiosyncratically to mean different things, from a new name for special education to a new way of thinking about mainstream education. The contested nature of the concept creates difficulties for research. Consequently, we have differentiated inclusive education from synonymous terms such as inclusive practice and inclusive pedagogy and defined them specifically for the purpose of our programme of research which focuses on improving the quality of provision for diverse groups of learners in mainstream schools (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Inclusive pedagogy challenges the deterministic practices that pervade contemporary education. For example, schools commonly base organisational decisions on the twinned assumptions, firstly that children's ability is fixed and immutable and secondly that differences between students should be addressed by offering alternative provision, whether that is through ability grouping within classrooms, setting and streaming within year groups or separate provision for 'special needs'. Thus the structures of many schools have developed in ways which exacerbate difference by providing for some individuals or groups in ways that mark out and reinforce divisions. At an individual level these practices have been shown to selectively undermine some pupils' sense of self-worth (Boaler, William, & Brown, 2000), or their willingness to persist in the face of difficulty (Dweck, 1999) whilst at a societal level they reproduce social inequalities as certain groups, for example some ethnic minorities, are over represented in special education (Harry, 2014).

The supposition that the future achievement (or 'potential') of a child can be determined from present performance also leads to pessimistic assumptions in teachers who do not believe it is in their power to bring about change (Hart, 1998). As an alternative, inclusive pedagogy draws from the work of Hart, Dixon, Drummond, and McIntyre (2004) who argue that a child's capacity to learn is transformable, when teachers remove the limits imposed by deterministic beliefs. Inclusive pedagogy is informed by a socio-cultural understanding of learning. It acknowledges that learning takes place in the context of the 'person plus' (Claxton, 2009), in other words, the individual together with the complex web of social relations which he or she inhabits. Drawing from the work of Vygotsky (1978) children are seen to grow into the intellectual and cultural life of the community through their interactions with others. Hence the capacity to learn is not seen as a solely dependent on innate factors such as intelligence, but instead the social origins of cognitive development and the idea that the capacity to learn can be enhanced by the choices that teachers make (Hart et al., 2004; Kuzolin, 2014) are fore grounded.

A socio-cultural approach also recognises that in the micro-culture of the classroom, the choices that teachers make about learning and teaching convey messages which are much wider than the formal learning focus of the lesson (Alexander, 2001). Through its unconditional recognition and acceptance of all learners, the inclusive pedagogical approach recognises that all children have much in common, whilst acknowledging that each child is unique (Alexander, 2004). Rather than denying differences between children, it seeks supportive ways of accommodating diversity (Florian, 2010). Thus, understanding how to respond to difficulties in learning, in ways which respect what Linklater (2011) has called the dignity of each child within the classroom community, is critical. Specifically, inclusive pedagogy is opposed to the practices which offer provision for 'most' alongside additional or different experiences for 'some'. Instead it demands that teachers extend what is ordinarily available to be accessible to all (Florian, 2010) by offering a range of options which are available to everybody.

The inclusive pedagogical approach, then, favours classroom practices which encourage collaboration between children in learning activities which build a sense of an inclusive community learning together. However, it is also important to be mindful what each individual brings to and gains from the complex interaction of the classroom (Kershner, 2009). Hence it is not a slavish adherence to group work at all costs, but instead asks that teachers draw on their professional judgement to choose the most appropriate approach to teaching and learning in any particular context, being ever mindful about how those choices will impact on the opportunities for all children in the class (De Valenzuela, 2014).

By refusing to categorise children according to perceptions of 'ability', inclusive pedagogy also calls for a reconceptualisation of professional partnership in the field of learning support. Classroom teachers and other specialists are urged to view children's difficulties in learning as professional dilemmas, and to constantly

work together to seek new approaches to support children, to avoid stigmatising. By placing responsibility for all learners on classroom teachers, specialists are now seen as partners with whom to explore new ways of working with children (rather than parallel workers to whom problems can be referred). In replacing older notions of consultation and advice, this model provides opportunities for professionals to co-construct knowledge by working with others (Trent, Artilles, & Ernst, 1998).

The inclusive pedagogical approach fosters an open-ended view of each child's potential to learn, consistent with Hart et al.'s (2004) 'core idea of transformability' which illustrates that what teachers choose to do (or not) can affect any child's capacity to learn. Drawing from a distinction made by Robeyns (2005) this approach rejects the ontological individualism created by repeated judging, sifting and sorting of children and replaces it with an ethical individualism which values the learning of every child. This resonates with Biesta's (2011) call that education should allow children's uniqueness to 'come into being' as the child develops, (a process he calls subjectification) rather than simply socialising children into the status quo. The inclusive pedagogical approach has the potential to disrupt the existing order of deterministic expectations to create a new type of classroom where, what Griffiths (2001) terms the 'lovely diversity' of children is expected and welcomed as an asset in the learning of all. In this paper we illustrate the concept of inclusive pedagogy by describing and discussing how it was enacted by new teachers in different settings. In particular the data show how the teachers respected the dignity of each individual through the options that were made available to everybody.

3. The PGDE course

The PGDE Professional Studies course introduced inclusive pedagogy as three core themes: Understanding Learning, Social Justice and Active Professionalism. The Understanding Learning theme offered a critique of ability labelling and an introduction to theories of how children learn. The Social Justice theme sought to develop awareness of the inequalities that are perpetuated by deterministic practices and to imbue students with a sense of their responsibility to support all learners. The Active Professionalism theme conveyed a form of collaborative professionalism whereby teachers work with and through others to find new ways of responding to the difficulties that children may face in their learning, whilst respecting the dignity of the child. The course aimed to go beyond 'what works' lists of strategies that describe what teachers should do, to introduce a deep and nuanced understanding of the philosophical, political, educational and professional issues that intersect in the pedagogical stance of a teacher. While many teacher education courses share these aims, our approach was distinctive in its focus on difference as an ordinary aspect of human development, a key assumption underpinning the inclusive pedagogical approach – something that is foundational rather than additionally covered by adding or infusing content about special or additional educational needs to the course.

4. Methods

Rouse (2009) suggests that becoming an inclusive practitioner depends on 'knowing '(theory, policy and legislation), 'doing' (turning knowledge into action) and 'believing' (in their capacity to teach all children). In essence this study examines the way in which new teachers draw from the knowledge and belief system underpinning their PGDE course to inform their 'doing' in the context of their own classroom. Following Alexander (2004) we view 'pedagogy' to mean the act of teaching and its attendant discourses. Simply by observing, a researcher cannot know why the teacher chooses the action (s)he does. Hence we adopted a methodology which allowed us to observe the practice of new teachers, and also invited them to talk to us about the rationale behind their practice.

This study followed seven new teachers: four primary teachers and three secondary teachers, employed in three different local authorities, over the course of their probationary year. Prior to starting the study, ethical approval was sought and obtained from the ethics committee of the University of Aberdeen's School of Education. Informed consent was obtained from the local authorities, the head teachers and the participating teachers. In order to ensure that we avoided participants being coerced by their managers, we ensured we had obtained full consent from the new teachers before we approached the head teachers for consent. Participants were informed of the right to withdraw at any point, without needing to give a reason. However, there was no attrition from the study. Pseudonyms were allocated to ensure anonymity.

Six of the teachers were visited by a researcher three times during the year, but one teacher (Chloe) was visited only twice owing to logistical issues in the school. Each visit consisted of an observation session – a full lesson in a secondary school, or a half-morning or afternoon session in a primary school - followed by an in-depth semi-structured interview usually lasting between 45 min and 1 h. The interviews invited the teachers to reflect on aspects of the lesson, and also to discuss more general issues relating to learning and teaching in their classes. The final interview also provided an opportunity for the teachers, as they approached the end of their probationary period, to reflect upon the content of the PGDE of the course and to identify aspects which had been particularly influential on their development of pedagogy. Interviews were fully transcribed and prior to analysis participants were invited to check the transcripts for accuracy, and also asked if they would like to add, change or withdraw any comments.

Participants were recruited by issuing invitations to graduating students based on a sampling frame which echoed the gender of the whole cohort and also accounted for option choices during the course and employing local authorities. However, the low level of uptake (25 invitations generated seven positive responses) meant that the people whom we did recruit were not typical of the cohort as a whole. Participants were all female mature students. Nonetheless, as this study was not intended to be an evaluation of the course as a whole, this does not detract from the validity of the findings. The aims of the study were to explore the ways in which inclusive pedagogy can be enacted in practice, and our theoretical model assumes that this will always vary according to the school context and the individuality of the children in each class. We offer here a detailed examination of a small number of cases which exemplify (rather than typify) the enactment of inclusive pedagogy.

Analysis of the findings was a three stage process, which drew from a framework based on the three course themes outlined above: Understanding Learning, Social Justice and Active Professionalism. The framework was developed in conversation with teachers and teacher educators over the course of the PGDE development project. Table 1 shows how the theoretical bases of each of the themes were linked to the intended 'graduate outcomes', i.e. the features we hoped to foster in the practices of our graduates. This study sought to further understand how those graduate outcomes were enacted in practice.

Full details of the analytical framework and the analytical process have been published elsewhere (Florian & Spratt, 2013), so in this paper we will illustrate the approach taken by using the theme 'Understanding Learning' as an example. From our own research (Florian, 2010), from literature and from discussions with colleagues, a list was compiled of the ways in which this theme would manifest in practice. This provided the analytical codes for the observations and for the interviews, for this theme. However, the

Table 1
The relationship between the Professional Studies core themes, the principles of inclusive pedagogy and the graduate outcomes. Adapted from Florian and Spratt (2013).

PGDE professional studies course themes	Principles/ underlying assumptions	Associated concepts	Key challenges	Outcome (Programme graduates)
1.Understanding Learning	Difference is an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning	The concept of transformability in learning replaces deterministic assumptions fixed ability	'Bell-curve thinking and notions of fixed ability still underpin the structure of schooling	Reject deterministic views of ability Accept that differences are part of human condition Reject idea that the presence of some will hold back the progress of others Believe that all children can make progress (*if conditions are right*)
2. Understanding Social Justice	Teachers must believe they are capable of teaching all children	Difficulties students experience in learning should be considered dilemmas for teaching rather than problems with students	The identification of 'learning difficulties' places a focus on what the learner *cannot* do and often puts a ceiling on learning and achievement. Teachers must be disabused of the notion that some children are not their responsibility	Commitment to the support of all learners. Belief in own capacity to promote learning for all children
3. Becoming an Active Professional	Professionals must continually develop creative new ways of working with others to support the learning of all children	Modelling (creative new) ways of working with and through others to better understand and address the difficulties children experience in learning	Changing the way we think about inclusion (from 'most' and 'some' to everybody)	Willingness to work (creatively) with and through others to develop an 'everybody' approach

analysis should not be seen simply as a deductive process involving a pre-determined framework, as the framework was refined as the study progressed, in the light of the data.

Evidence for 'Understanding Learning' might include:

- Teaching practices which include all children
  - Creating environments for learning with opportunities that are sufficiently made available for everyone, so that all learners are able to participate in classroom life;
  - Extending what is ordinarily available for all learners (creating a rich learning community) rather than using teaching and learning strategies that are suitable for most alongside something 'additional' or 'different' for some who experience difficulties;
  - Differentiation achieved through choice of activity for everyone;
- Rejection of ability grouping as main organisation of working groups
- Use of language that expresses the value of all children
- Social constructivist approaches e.g. providing opportunities for children to participate in co-construction of knowledge
- Interplay/interdependence between teachers and learners to create new knowledge (co−agency)
- Using formative assessment to support learning
- Rejecting deterministic beliefs about fixed ability and the associated idea that the presence of some will hold back the progress of others
  - Believing all children will make progress, learn and achieve
  - Focussing teaching and learning on what children can do rather than what they cannot
  - Grouping children to support everybody's learning

In the first phase of analysis, interview transcripts and observation notes were coded according to the framework, using NVivo 7 as an organisational tool. This process enabled close scrutiny of the data and provided a rich and detailed data set to illustrate each of the themes. Coding was applied where these themes were evident, but we also coded their absence, and any constraints to the enactment of the principles of inclusive pedagogy. During this process it was abundantly clear that the three themes: 'Understanding Learning', Social Justice' and 'Active Professionalism', whilst theoretically distinct were closely interwoven in practice, and it was the ways in which the teachers simultaneously paid attention to all aspects of the theoretical framework that gave rise to their inclusive pedagogies. Many actions or strategies simultaneously attracted multiple coding.

In the second stage we shaped individual descriptive case studies, using the coding generated in the first stage to illustrate how the themes of inclusive pedagogy overlap and interweave to inform the very complex practice of teachers.

Thirdly, a cross case analysis was conducted to identify the commonalities between the cases. This was particularly applied to aspects of teaching which we viewed as enacting the principles of inclusive pedagogy. Thus at this stage we were asking which examples could we confirm as being 'inclusive pedagogy', how might this have been informed by the principles of the PGDE course, and what could we learn by comparing these examples with each other?

5. Findings

The universal feature of the inclusive pedagogy which we observed was the respect for the dignity of individual children within the learning community of the classroom. It was clear from cross-case analysis that in the classrooms of those teachers who understood and enacted inclusion, each child was valued in the community. One teacher, Rachel commented on her awareness of this directly, using the term 'status'. She observed:

> *It's vitally important that you protect their status because the minute … it takes a second to lose that. .....It takes one careless comment. It could take a moment, a bad day, a wrong decision, it's so … you've got to be careful, you've got to be really careful with that. It would take the slightest of comments if said in the wrong way or meant in the wrong way or picked up in the wrong way, to ruin a child's status.*

This resonates with the observation made by Hart et al. (2004) that everything that a teacher does, or chooses not to do, matters.

The notion of status as commented on by Rachel in this excerpt depends upon the way in which the teacher relates and responds to pupils, in terms of the conversations and the teacher–pupil relationships that develop. All of our teachers were aware of the importance of fostering welcoming, accepting communities, and some spoke at length about this. Classroom relationships have long been known to be a vital component of the successful classroom (e.g. Spratt, Shucksmith, Philip, & Watson, 2006; Pomeroy, 1999). However for us they are important, since everything in the classroom takes place in the social context, but insufficient, as we are interested not only in social inclusion, but more specifically in inclusion in learning. We would argue that whilst good classroom relationships are a prerequisite for inclusive pedagogy, that inclusion in learning further enhances the relationships in and beyond the classroom. This is supported by the findings of Mamas (2011) who noted that the social status of children who were identified as having 'special needs' was higher in classes where inclusive approaches to learning and teaching were in evidence. Thus good relationships are both a context for and a product of inclusive pedagogy. Our interest lies in the strategies teachers adopt to ensure that each child is an active member of a community which learns together in ways which do not rely on the marking out of difference.

Our analysis revealed two essential overarching, but intertwined elements of the inclusive pedagogical approach. Firstly, and fundamentally, the teachers used strategies for whole class activities, which accounted for all the class members. Secondly, where individual children encountered difficulties in learning, inclusive pedagogy was characterised by responses which included a consideration of everybody (not only changes targeted at that one child). We will consider each of these below.

5.1. Whole class strategies – planning for everybody

Here we provide examples which illustrate different strategies that teachers have used to make the learning available to everybody in diverse classrooms, in ways which cater for all whilst avoiding discriminating for some. Firstly we introduce Mary who taught a composite Primary 4/5 (children aged 8–10) class in an inner city school located in an area of deprivation. Of the 22 pupils in her class, several were described by Mary as facing difficulties in their learning for a variety of reasons. The following vignette describes her approach to a lesson on grammar in which the children were learning about the articles 'a' and 'an', and exploring their different use:

> *The session began with a teacher-led class discussion of the difference between the two articles and their appropriate use. The class was arranged into four groups, each table starting with a different task. At one table the children were require to divide a pile of 'noun' cards into two piles of 'a' words and 'an' words. At a second table children were invited to write 'a' words on a large sheet of paper. The third table bore a similar sheet for 'an' words. At the fourth table children were asked to link the appropriate article to a long list of words which the teacher had written down in advance. Each task involved shared working within the group. After a short time each group moved to the next table, to contribute to a different task. By the end of the session all children had contributed to all tasks, and the end result was a class output rather than individual. Following a class discussion of the outputs, the large sheets of paper were displayed on the wall, and thus a record of the work was shared.*

Mary's approach differed from a 'most and some' approach to inclusion in that it involved all children working together on a collaborative task, in a way which did not seek to pre-determine who could do what by identifying who was responsible for each input. Instead the activity was framed as cooperative learning, involving joint exploration of the issue. Rather than taking an individualised approach where each child would have ownership only of their own efforts (some of which may be largely mistaken), the communal output was used as a resource for all members of the class. In Mary's class the correct answers were viewed as a shared achievement, the record of which was available to all for future reference.

Significantly, Mary did not rely on ability as a rationale for the groups in which she organised the class for this activity, which is often the driver for group work. She chose the groupings for this activity, with the purpose of promoting productive collaborative working, based on what she knew of the existing relationships in the class. The groups were transient, they were together only for this piece of work, and Mary tended to alter the groupings for different activities, thereby encouraging shared learning across the classroom community and avoiding stereotyping children as long standing members of particular groups.

The second example of whole class strategies is drawn from Rachel, who was a secondary teacher of Technical subjects. The department in which she worked placed constraints upon her which were different from the other new teachers in this study. What interested us was what she did within that context; how she adopted an inclusive stance in circumstances which, in some ways militated against. Our observations were made of Rachel working with a second year class in secondary school (aged 13–14) class.

The curriculum for the first two years of secondary education, in Rachel's school, was based on pupils undertaking a series of individual projects, each lasting around six weeks, at the end of which a mark was allocated to each pupil. These marks were stored and collated to produce a final grade which dictated whether the students were advised to continue with the subject in the third year. Clearly the design of the programme was predicated on a notion of ontological individuality – each child on his or her own trajectory which was monitored by the teacher. Moreover, the furniture in Rachel's classroom was designed for individual work stations, each fixed with its own drawing board, all surrounded with a class-set of computers, so it was impossible to arrange seating comfortably for collaborative working on projects. Nonetheless, on the occasions that she was observed, Rachel sought to maintain what she called 'group status' through class discussions at the beginning of the session, together with end-of session feedback. She also paid attention to the individuality of her pupils by offering an open choice of focus so that each could bring an area of interest to the work. Hence in the first observation, the topic was 'product review' where each pupil was evaluating a particular item of their own choice. The range of items under review included a drum set, roller blades, ballet shoes, hair straighteners and a tennis racket.

It was notable that Rachel herself did not see the departmental organisation as problematic. She did comment that she thought it was a 'strange' arrangement since at university or in the workplace her experience of product design had always been group based. But over three interviews, when asked if she saw any obstacles in her work to being inclusive she replied in the negative, on one occasion saying:

> *I think you create your own, I think a lot of people create their own obstacles. I think it's down to personality and at the end of the day I want the pupils in my class to do the best that they can and I'll support them in that however they do it.*

She was highly enthusiastic about her subject, and equally enthusiastic about working with children and young people. Part of

her perspective on inclusion was the desire that all children should have high quality experiences of her subject. For Rachel, a driving force was the desire to work *with* children *through* her subject. A key element in how she talked of her approach was that she always tried to 'be there' for the children, which meant that her commitment extended beyond the constraints of the timetabled lessons and the walls of her classroom. This included an open invitation to all children to come into the department at lunch times if they wanted to work on their projects, and in this way she was able to support any children who felt they needed additional time or support, in a way that did not involve her singling anybody out for 'extra help'. Evidence suggested that this opportunity was taken up on fairly regular basis, particularly around key moments of assessment, or when pupils had been absent.

The concept of 'being there' was part of her broader commitment to relationships of trust with the pupils. During the second interview she remarked on her pleasure when some pupils had confided in her that they regularly attended the Support for Learning (SFL) department. The fact that the pupils had volunteered this information was, to Rachel, evidence that they trusted her. Her response was not simply to provide work to be sent to the SFL department, but instead to go to there in person to work with the pupils, where her timetable allowed, thereby taking the unusual step of crossing the divide between 'mainstream' and 'additional support', demonstrating the new kind of collaborative working that was encouraged on the PGDE course. Rachel further commented on how this strategy had helped her improve her understanding of those pupils' learning, and had also cemented her relationship with the pupils.

These two examples taken together demonstrate how teachers in different contexts use the idea of 'everybody', not 'most and some' to inform choices when planning lessons. Taking, as a starting point, the idea that learning opportunities which are available to everybody ensure that all members of the class can participate paves the way to a multiplicity of approaches, exemplified here (but not restricted to) collaborative mixed ability group work, pupil choice, and support of everyone's learning by 'being there' beyond the confines of the classroom. The main point we make here is that the planning for learning, whilst always underpinned by a rejection of deterministic approaches, and a proactive stance towards all children learning together, must take account of the individuals and circumstances in each particular classroom setting. Our argument is that it is not which strategy teachers choose but how they use it that is the hallmark of inclusive pedagogy. In this way the idea of 'everybody' not only invites the teacher to think about their classes in new and different ways but encourages a consideration of how they can attend to the individuality of each learner without stigmatising some.

5.2. Responses to individual difficulties in learning - in the context of 'everybody'

It has long been known that identifying certain children as having 'special needs' and providing additional targeted 'learning support' which is different from or additional to the learning experience of the majority of pupils, however well meant, has the unfortunate side effect of reinforcing the divide between those who are thought to be 'less able' from the rest of the school or classroom community, and stigmatising those who are classified as 'different' (e.g. Rose, 2007). What is less well understood how else teachers can or should respond to individual difficulties. If we accept that difference is normal and inevitable we cannot revert to traditional models of whole class teaching where all are expected to do the same work. Inclusive pedagogy offers an alternative approach which asks teachers to reframe the problem, not as deficit in the individual, but as a professional dilemma for themselves as teachers. It asks teachers to take a positive view, that all children have the capacity to learn, when conditions are right, and to reject the belief that the presence of some children impedes the progress of others. The inclusive pedagogical approach addresses the issues faced by individuals by extending what is available to everybody. Thus the answer to individual problems should be sought in the modification of whole class strategies. Below we offer two examples of teachers taking an 'everybody' approach to individual difficulties.

Felicity was responsible for a first year class in primary school (age 5–6). Much of her focus in interviews concerned 'Andrew' who was severely deaf, but whose hearing had been improved to some extent with a cochlear implant. When addressing the class she wore a microphone, but nonetheless his hearing was limited. Felicity constantly sought strategies to teach in ways which were accessible to Andrew. For example all her communication with the class had a visual component, but as she explained – this had benefits for all the class:

> *We try to make things quite visual and multisensory, which benefits everybody anyway.*

She explained that when she planned for the whole class she always planned lessons with Andrew in mind, but that she did nothing different for him, other than make sure she had his full attention when she was speaking. In the second interview she reported how she had been very pleased with the use of film for story-telling, as an alternative to her reading from a book as she felt that a number of the pupils had benefitted from that experience, including Andrew. She said:

> *When we do writing and often we base it on a book and I sometimes felt like he hasn't accessed it very well because he can't remember the story, if I've just read it, even if he's seen pictures, so I [showed] a film instead of a book and that was their story and he completely got it. And it was a film with no dialogue, it was just a silent film and he had a lot to say and that was really nice because he could really get the story because it was all visual, so I'm probably going to do a bit more of that.*

Again, she pointed out how this approach had also been helpful to other children in the class who had difficulties with writing from stories.

Andrew was provided with some additional support in class from a teacher from the School for the Deaf. However, the two teachers had agreed to take a team teaching approach, so that Andrew was not isolated by the presence of an additional adult. As far as possible the visiting teacher worked with a group that included Andrew, rather than by himself. Felicity also commented on her own professional learning from working with the visiting teacher.

In the following example we can demonstrate how Chloe, a teacher of the seventh year of primary school (age 11–12) when trying to engage a reluctant learner took a whole class approach to address the individual issue. In her planning for the whole class, She spoke of one child, 'Danny', about whose disinterest in school she had been forewarned when she joined the school:

> *..when I started this job I was told that [Danny] wouldn't get involved, he would just sit out, because that's granny's fields (sic) and he works in them every day after school. And that's his field right next to the school, all them (sic) fields are his granny's and he would just sit in the window and think about how he was going to do the combining and stuff after school.*

Chloe's solution was to introduce a conservation topic based around farming for the whole class. At the time of the second

research visit the classroom houses several elaborate model farms, including a Clydesdale horse farm built by the pupils who were interested in riding. Each group had been granted a theoretical £50,000 with which to manage income, outgoings and even public liability insurance for the horse riders. The cross curricular potential was great, but the way in which the projects developed was led by the children's interests. Chloe drew from Hart et al. (2004) to use the concept of co–agency between teacher and pupils in the learning process,

> *So it was taking things that are important to them and really things that engage [Danny]. Co–agency and attaching my power to his and we work together ..... And I was trying to get him to work with people as well, so taking a topic like that and thinking how can I then use his interest and his strengths to try and steer him towards realising how this is relevant*

While the strategy of topic work is a common cross-curricular approach, our interest is in how Chloe used this strategy. By choosing topic work as a strategy to enhance learning for Danny, Chloe had refused to accept the status quo, in which there was little expectation that he would ever show any interest in learning. At the same time she sought a solution which did not mark Danny as different by providing 'special' work. In keeping with the philosophy of inclusive pedagogy Chloe found a way to invite everybody to engage in a learning experience which took into account the individuality of all the children. In presenting this example at a seminar, we have been challenged, by the suggestion that it is unfair to make everybody work on a farming topic just because Danny liked it. Supposing, the questioner asked, that some of the other children hated farming, wouldn't that be a bad choice to make? However, the point here is that Chloe, in the light of her knowledge of the children in her class looked for a topic that she felt would offer a point of interest to all, and within that offered choice in how to approach the work. It would, of course, have been the wrong choice if she knew some children hated farming. But this is the crux of the issue. Teachers must account for the diversity within their class as they plan for everybody. Therefore the farming project worked for Chloe because she understood her children, but it may not transfer to other settings. Hence inclusive pedagogy is a set of principles, which gives rise to a multiplicity of practical possibilities across different settings.

Chloe also described the way in which the principles of the PGDE course had shape her as a teacher, pointing out how it had provided her with the theoretical concepts to interrogate her practice, and with the language to justify her approaches:

> *I think [before the PGDE] I believed that people's ability is changeable, but I didn't really know how to articulate it and I certainly wouldn't have known how to translate it in practice with the sort of passion and the organisation in my own thoughts to how to bring it into the classroom. And that's what the course has helped me with*

We can see from this reflection that the concept of inclusive pedagogy underpinning the PGDE course had enabled Chloe to develop into a teacher who not only supported the *idea* of inclusion, but knew how make and enact decisions that would support the learning of all pupils in her classroom.

6. Discussion

The vignettes selected for inclusion in this paper are illustrative of the key tenets of inclusive pedagogy. Whilst the settings and the practice adopted by the new teachers are diverse, our cross case analysis reveals the same principles underpinning the teachers choices in their classrooms. The theoretical ideas which inculcated their university learning offered a common framework for thinking about the learning of all children. However, the actual choices made by the new teachers were informed by the local knowledge that they developed about the unique characteristics of the individuals in their classes. Griffiths (2001) suggests that teachers committed to fairness in education need to pay attention to 'grand narratives' and 'little stories'. In the examples the grand narratives are the theoretical principles of inclusive pedagogy, and the little stories and the lived experiences of the individual pupils in the context of the classroom community.

These vignettes also clearly demonstrate that the three distinct themes which underpinned the PGDE course had become deeply interwoven when enacted in practice. Take, for example, Chloe's decision to introduce a farming topic in order to engage Danny with the wider class activities. In refusing to accept that he couldn't or wouldn't learn, she was acting out a belief that learning is transformative (Hart et al. 2004) and that all children can learn when conditions are right (Florian, 2010). Her choices were informed by a socio-cultural understanding of learning as a shared activity. Simultaneously she was careful not to take any steps that would place Danny in deficit or offering an approach that would isolate Danny from his peers. In seeking a novel solution which was underpinned by a commitment to inclusion in learning she was demonstrating the type of active professionalism endorsed by the course. Similar overlapping themes are evident in all of the examples provided here. Thus whilst, for clarity of communication, the principles of inclusive pedagogy can be described separately, in the lived reality of classroom practice they are linked together synergistically to produce an approach which is larger than the sum of its parts.

Key also to all of the vignettes provided here is the common belief in the benefit to the whole learning community of valuing the participation of each individual. As Griffiths (2001) argues inclusion requires attention to 'the good of each and the good of all, in an acknowledgement that one depends on the other', (p. 54) and this is evident in the way that teachers believed unconditionally that all children had a valuable contribution to make, and that to undermine the status of any individual would be to the detriment of all. By informing their teaching strategies with a consideration of 'everybody' the teachers addressed both the subjectification of individuals (Biesta, 2011) and the shared commonality of their pupils. A notable feature in the data is the way in which the teachers sought an 'everybody' response to address individual difficulties. Thus, respect for the dignity of each individual within the learning community was the fundamental premise of the approach.

What we see emerging from these case studies are examples of teachers who demonstrate how a coherent set of ideas can be used as a framework to inform their approaches to classroom practice. When examining the actual techniques the teachers used we can see that inclusive pedagogy does not offer a whole new set of practices; these teachers were using, for example, collaborative group work, formative assessment, pupil choice all of which are widely recognised as useful classroom practices. However, what marks out this approach is how and when these different strategies are chosen, so that they contribute to class solidarity and minimise categorisation and determinism. Like the beginning teachers studied in United States, (Cochran-Smith et al 2009), our Scottish teachers drew selectively and purposefully from a range of established strategies to ensure inclusion of everybody in meaningful learning, a stance which Cochran-Smith et al (2009) characterise as 'good and just teaching'. These findings provide further evidence that an inclusive pedagogical approach cannot be summarised as a

simplistic list of 'how to' tips, but instead it requires teachers to make thoughtful choices, underpinned by a sound professional knowledge, in order to provide opportunities for all to participate in the learning community of the classroom. We are beginning to progress from a situation where teachers may wish to adhere to the objectives of inclusive education but are unsure what to do, to being able to offer clear guiding principles to inform the decisions which inclusive teachers continually face.

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