For Inclusion: Towards a critical pedagogy with marginalised learners

Professor Dan Goodley

Manchester Metropolitan University
Research Institute for Health and Social Change
Division of Psychology and Social Change
Elizabeth Gaskell Campus
Manchester Metropolitan University
Hathersage Road
Manchester, M13 0JA
d.goodley@mmu.ac.uk

INTRODUCTION
This unit considers a number of key issues in relation to the concept of inclusion and its relationship with educational change:

- How can we understand 'inclusion'?
- What elements of societal and educational change are highlighted by inclusion?
- To what extent does an agenda for inclusion demand a radical rethink of pedagogy?

The unit asks you to think critically about your own educational practice, institutional context, the learners and colleagues you encounter and your views, opinions and philosophies of education. Furthermore, you will be provided with a number of activities and resources which can be used in your own practice as well as for your work on this course. This module touches upon a whole host of social, political, historical, cultural, global and economic foundations that underpin and influence educational change. Specifically, our focus is on the ways in which education can be transformed to include all learners regardless of their age, sexuality, gender, class, ethnicity and disability. Throughout this unit, our task is to theorise and promote forms of educational policy and practice that engage with the many requirements of diverse learners.

SECTION 1: How can we understand 'inclusion'?

ACTIVITY Visit the following websites:
Inclusion International
http://www.inclusion-international.org/en/
Unesco Salamanca Statement
Link: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000984/098427eo.pdf
Index for Inclusion
Link: http://inclusion.uwe.ac.uk/csie/indexlaunch.htm
Singapore Disability Awareness Public Education (DAPE)Campaign in 2005:
Link: http://www.ncss.org.sg/dape/
Special Education in Singapore
http://web.singnet.com.sg/~liewping/

> Educators … should reject forms of schooling that marginalize students who are poor, black and least advantaged. This points to the necessity for developing school practices that recognize how issues related to gender, class, race and sexual orientation can be used as a resource for learning rather than being contained in schools through a systemic pattern of exclusion, punishment and failure (Giroux, 2003, p10).

Education and schooling have long historical associations with emancipation and equality. These include:

- the massification and opening up of education to all learners;
- the linking of schooling and progressive forms of society;

- the centrality of education to modern societies and the knowledge economy;
- The making of citizens through nation states' educational programmes;
- The promotion of forms of rationality that underpin professional groupings and disciplines.

All highlight the change potential of education. A key aim of the progressive nature of educational change is to benefit all learners. This aim – in relation to Special Educational Needs (SEN) – is shared across the globe, exemplified by the 92 governments and 25 international organisations who agreed with the promotion of the 1994 Unesco Salamanca Statement. As you will have seen from the earlier , this statement included the following assertions:

- every child has a basic right to education;
- every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs;
- education services should take into account these diverse characteristics and needs ;
- those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools;
- regular schools with an inclusive ethos are the most effective way to combat discriminatory attitudes, create welcoming and inclusive communities and achieve education for all;
- such schools provide effective education to the majority of children, improve efficiency and cost effectiveness.

For many observers the word 'inclusion' is synonymous with the education of children with impairments, disabilities and special educational needs. But, inclusion is a broad category. The sociologist of education, Len Barton (2004), has argued that social and educational exclusion has many compounding forms of differing exclusions; is not a natural but a socially constructed process; has no single factor that can remove it and is in constant need of conceptual analysis. For our purposes, then, while disability and SEN analysis are important it is crucial that we keep a broad view of the kinds of learners involved in debates about inclusion.

ACTIVITY

Read the following e journal article Nind, M. (2005). Inclusive education: discourse and action. British Educational Research Journal, Volume 31, Number 2, pp. 269 275 and consider this extended review in terms of the following questions:

- What does inclusion mean to you?
- What kinds of different learners can you identify in your own educational contexts?
- What challenges do different learners pose for education?
- How could you make your teaching more inclusive?

Inclusion relates to much more than adapting education to the specific needs of particular students. It also highlights the extent to which educational policy, pedagogy and teaching practice are 'socially just' in kindergartens, schools, colleges, universities and the wider community. Inclusion demands changes at:

- the macro level: government policies and initiatives promote the social and educational inclusion of people who have historically been marginalised;
- the meso level: educational institutions develop inclusive forms of organisation, curriculum and pedagogy which include diverse learners
- The micro level: teachers look critically at their practice in order to include learners within the classroom.

It is therefore possible for us all to start asking critical questions about our educational institutions, the associated aims, policies and visions and our practices. However, in order to do so, it is important to think about those aspects of change that are implicated in debates about inclusion.

SECTION 2: What elements of change are implicated by inclusion?

Our exploration of inclusion involves an exposition of the cultures and societies in which education is enacted. For our purposes, it is important to think about the process of inclusive education as being subject to a whole host of socio-political and economic changes. Education is shaped by wider societal changes at global, national and local levels. One major change has been the increased marketisation of (inclusive) education, which is analysed by these two readings:

Saravanan, V. (2005). Thinking Schools, Learning Nations: Implementation of Curriculum Review in Singapore. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 4,* 97-113

Tan, J. (1998). The Marketisation of Education in Singapore: Policies and Implications International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft / Revue internationale de l'éducation, Volume 44, Number 1, 1998, pp. 47 63(17)

Contemporary Singaporean society, like many developed nations, can be seen to be fundamentally conceived in relation to the Neoliberal market [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoliberalism]. Tan's (1998) paper provides a critical overview of some of the impacts of Neoliberalism in the context of Singapore which include the encouragement of greater school autonomy and the fostering of competition among schools. When education is shaped by Neoliberal thought – and educational institutions enter the market – then this raises questions about the aims and philosophies of education. Clearly, this will have significant implications for inclusion and for the emancipatory potential of education.

ACTIVITY
Read the following e.journal article Lim, L. and Tan, J. (1999). The marketization of education in Singapore: prospects for inclusive education. International Journal of Inclusive Education, Volume 3, Number 4, 1 October 1999, pp. 339 351(13). As you are working through the paper consider these questions:

- What do you understand by the phrase the 'marketisation of education'?
- What are the relationships between progressive modern societies, the market and educational provision?

- What conceptions of the learner and student emerge from the discourse of marketisation?
- What elements of your day-to-day educational practices can be seen as being the produce of the marketisation of education?
- To what extent is the marketisation of education a threat or ally to inclusive practices?

Marketisation changes the roles adopted by the social actors of educational institutions. For Giroux (2003, p3), modernist, marketised forms of education risk creating schools as simply adjuncts of the workplace. Furthermore, within the culture of competition, 'technocratic rationality' is embraced and leads to the testing and sorting models of assessment that reproduce wider inequities of society, pliant workers, capitalist subjects. Education is education for accommodation and as a consequence:

> pedagogy [is] either reduced to a sterile set of techniques or dressed up within the discourse of humanistic methods that simply soften[s] the attempts by the schools to produce insidious form of moral and political regulation' (Giroux, 2003, p6).

The potential of schooling is therefore threatened by its place in the market. On a less critical note, markets can be seen to give learners – or consumers –rights to the kinds of educational experiences that they should receive. Accordingly, schools aim to raise their standards to compete for consumers while parents have more power in supporting their children to make educational choices (Khong and Ng, 2005). Processes closely tied to the market are those associated with process of globalisation [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalisation]. Mok (2003) notes that some observers view the global economy as being dominated by uncontrollable global forces in which nation states are structurally constrained and therefore the capacity of modern states eventually declines. Alternatively:

> other scholars believe even though there may be similar trends and patterns in public policy and public management domain along the line of privatisation, marketisation, commodification and corporatisation, different governments may use the similar strategies to serve their own political purposes. Hence, modern states may tactically make use of the globalisation discourse to justify their own political agendas or legitimise their inaction (Mok, 2003, p201)

Interesting questions are therefore raised about how the institutions of Singaporean society – such as education – respond to global demands and agendas. If you think back to the paper by Saravanan (2005), a key emerging challenge for Singapore resides in how it conceptualises and places itself in relation to the knowledge economy. Hence, each nation involves itself in contemplating educational policy and practice in light of global factors and national responsibilities. In conceptualising the inclusion of learners, it is therefore important not to simplistically import ideas from one nation to another. Potts (1998) suggests that too often inclusion is viewed as concept that has emerged in developed minority world economies – dominated by North America and the UK – which is then applied in other nation states. In contrast, inclusive educators in Singapore need to think critically about how such ideas can be

best practised in the national context. Here, then, global ideas associated with inclusion, the market, neoliberal views and their alternatives are considered from the position of the local: inclusion is a 'glocal' phenomenon.

A further useful resource is available as an e-book in the University of Sheffield library: Edwards, R. and Usher, R. (2001). *Globalisation and Pedagogy: Space, Place and Identity.* London: Routledge Falmer.

SECTION 3: To what extent does an agenda for inclusion demand a radical rethink of pedagogy?

In thinking through the wider conceptions of inclusion we have asked ourselves a number of questions.

- To what extent does education reproduce versions of society?
- What are the possible impacts of educational change on learners?
- What views of our learners can be advanced in ways that promote their inclusion within educational contexts?

In order to address these questions it is helpful to think about developing a ***critical pedagogy.*** Common definitions of pedagogy consider it a culturally specific way of organising formal education in institutional settings, categorised by curriculum, instruction and evaluation. Gabel (2002) asks that this definition is broadened to 'a way of being, or … living with or parenting children' (p178). Furthermore, borrowing from critical literacy analyses, Gabel (2002, p185) suggests that pedagogy is the doubting of parenting and teaching, and 'critical pedagogy's interest [is] in social transformation and the abolishment of marginalisation or oppression'. 'Critical pedagogy' is a term often associated with the radical writings of educationalists such Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, bell hooks and Paulo Friere. A commonly held conviction of these writers is associated with the transformative and emancipatory potential of education and pedagogy. For example, Giroux (2003, p11) understands pedagogy as 'a moral and political practice crucial to the production of capacities and skills necessary for students to both shape and participate in social life'. We are asked to reinvest pedagogy with criticality and hope whilst also being sensitive to the global and national markets and their potential impact upon educators.

In order to open up the possibilities for change in relation to pedagogy, it is possible to identify a number of key resources. In this section we look at four: critical literacy, feminisms, critical race and critical disability studies. By the end of this section you will have some understandings of a huge variety of transformative ideas that can be applied in reconceptualising your own pedagogy. All of these approaches share a commitment to making education an inclusive phenomenon.

i. Critical literacy
The 'Thinking Schools, Learning Nation' (TSLN) policy in Singapore demands that more time is spent on the development of critical thinking. For example, this has seen the reduction of the content of courses by 30% so that time can be spent developing the criticality of students. Koh (2002) argues for an approach to critical thinking that engages with a critical literacy approach to the analyses of texts which

include: media texts, hypertexts, visual texts as well as traditional texts of course materials. Students are asked to pose deep, complex, social, historical, cultural, global and political questions about the construction of texts. Criticality then links into wider questions of social inclusion and justice: students develop alternative reading positions, critique texts for their cultural assumptions and contest dominate views and discourses where some groups of people are included and others marginalised. Texts, ideas and knowledge are no longer treated as a priori fixed forms of truth but as constituting, creative and active phenomena.

ACTIVITY

Think about your own classroom context and consider the ways in which you could open up discussion about a particular text or texts amongst the group of students/learners you are working with. Here are some of the questions you could ask;

- What does this text say about the society in which we live?
- What understandings of knowledge are at use?
- What arguments or propositions are at play in the text
- What alternative ideas and arguments could be offered to those presented in the text?
- Who is this text produced for / aimed at?

A further useful resource is available as an e-book in the University of Sheffield library: Morgan, W. (1997). *Critical Literacy in the Classroom: The Art of the Possible.* London: Routledge.

---

ii.   Feminisms
"Gap between girls and boys widens
Just over half of boys begin secondary school with the expected skills in reading, writing and maths, compared to almost two-thirds of girls. The new figures from the Department for Education and Skills showed that the gender gap has widened. In 2005 51% of 11-year-old boys reached the expected level 4 in reading, writing and maths, compared with 63% of 11-year-old girls. There was a one percentage point drop in boys' scores compared to 2004 and a one percentage point rise for girls".

(adapted from the UK publication, Times Educational Supplement, 4.11.05, from http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/boys/genderupdate.html#begin)

Gender differentiation raises very practical dilemmas for educational professionals. A particular issue of concern and media interest has been the underperformance of boys in school settings, raising questions about how well teachers respond to supporting under-achieving boys. Indeed, in the UK, each year seems to bring with it another media panic about the failure of boys in the school setting (Gove and Watt, 2000).

In attempting to challenge these failings, various interventions have been implemented such as 'buddying up' young boys with suitable older male role models; reorganising the curriculum to make it more masculine or 'boy friendly' and

promoting the input of male teachers into the educational experiences of boys. Throughout, the emphasis is on promoting the educational inclusion of boys.

The paper by Keddie (2006) presents a feminist angle on this issue of educational failing by considering the input of feminist theories and the development of transformative pedagogies. In this analysis, Keddie makes use of the model of 'productive pedagogies' (see page 101). Drawing upon this model it is possible to interrogate the workings of a classroom and educational context by considering the questions posed in terms of the categories of 'intellectual quality'; 'connectedness'; 'supportive classroom environment' and 'recognition of difference'. The aim here is open up pedagogy to considerations of those qualities that might often be associated with femininity – emotional responsibility, nurture and community. In this sense, an agenda for inclusion is associated with a wider reading of the pedagogy; rethinking how teachers facilitate students' understandings of themselves and others; promoting a more equitable and inclusive classroom culture and sensitising teachers and students to wider social forces that enter educational institutions and the classroom.

ACTIVITY / ASSIGNMENT SUGGESTION

Think of the ways in which you could adopt the model of productive pedagogies, presented in Keddie's (2006) paper and detailed in some of the key literature in the reference section, in order to assess levels of 'intellectual quality'; 'connectedness'; 'supportive classroom environment' and 'recognition of difference' in your own educational context. Using the questions on page 101 and the subsequent discussion in the paper, plan a brief research proposal which covers the following areas:

- Literature review – identify three pieces of literature that would help ground your study of your classroom;
- Methodology – outline the number of classes to observe; how observations would be carried out; how the data could be collected and provide a timetable for the work;
- Analysis – consider how would you make sense of the data collected with reference to literature on qualitative data analysis and the literature on productive pedagogies presented in the paper and related references;
- Ethical considerations – identify and consider dilemmas that are raised by carrying out this research;
- Identify elements of recent Singaporean educational policy to which this research would relate.

You are not expected to implement the research proposal BUT INSTEAD to plan and reflect critically on the process of planning a piece of research.

A further useful resource is available as an e-book in the University of Sheffield library: Paechter, C. (1998). *Gender, power and schooling.* London: Falmer Press.

iii.   *Critical race*

Any attempt to (re)engage excluded learners with the curriculum, teaching and assessment, must be aware of culture and ethnicity. Lynn (2004) provides a useful overview of the practice of a liberatory pedagogy that aims to involve children of colour. Specifically in relation to the inclusion of Black and Afro-Caribbean children in North America, this approach aims to teach children about African culture; promote a dialogical engagement in the classroom and engage in daily acts of self-affirmation. Simultaneously, such an approach also has deeper conversations about theory. Critical Race theory is the term often used to define this approach to educational inclusion. Lynn (2004) identifies a number of tenets that guide the work of associated scholars, researchers and educators:

1. Recognising inequities in the legal system in relation to people of colour (or ethnicity);
2. Repositioning the centrality of race in contemporary society (race/ethnicity as a major defining factor in the constitution of society);
3. Rejecting West-European/modernist claims of neutrality and objectivity (with a turn to the subjective);
4. Reliance upon the experiential, situated and subjugated knowledges of people of colour (so giving voice to Black learners and teachers whose stories are often ignored);
5. Embraces interdisciplinarity and 'intersectionality' (the latter where race is considered alongside other socially constructed categories or groups marginalised by dominant forms of education)

Lynn (2004) considers critical race theory to be an epistemology of transformation and liberation and an arena for the development of theoretical constructs that ensure the cultural sensitivity of empirical work.

> **TO** paper by Lynn, M. (2004). Inserting the 'Race' into critical pedagogy: an analysis of 'race-based epistemologies'. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 36 (2),* 153 - 165

Clearly, such an approach has resonance in a multi-cultural society such as Singapore. It also raises some fascinating questions about various educational institutions' response to diversity amongst their student bodies. Critical race analyses therefore raise a number of interesting questions in relation to your own practitioner context, which might include:

- What different ethnic and cultural backgrounds are represented in your educational context?
- What kinds of knowledge are (not) shared about ethnicity in the curricula?
- To what extent does a particular curriculum you adopt recognise or ignore ethnicity?
- In what ways could learners of colour or ethnicity be included?
- To what extent has Singapore responded to multi-culturalism?

iv.   *Critical disability studies*

> **ACTIVITY**
> Read the paper by Gabel, S. (2002). Some Conceptual Problems with Critical Pedagogy *Curriculum Inquiry, 32 (2),* 177-201.

We have returned, full circle, to that group of students who are so often associated with the phenomenon of inclusion: students with disabilities or labels of SEN. The paper by Gabel and the interview with Dan Goodley will have given you some sense of the issues facing educational researchers who adopt a critical disability studies perspective. A number of issues are pertinent here. First, a critical pedagogy that includes disabled people requires a major rethink about the ways in which students' participate. Too often, when we think of involving students, we assume students to be autonomous, able, productive, skilled, accountable individuals who are ready and willing to lead developments within the classroom. In short, our students are understood to be able. Such a construction of the learner is hugely problematic for students with disabilities and or special educational needs who require the support of others. Indeed, Masschelein and Simons (2005) argue that moves towards inclusive schooling in the UK continue to fail students because they maintain a particular vision of the individual student and their relationship with (and responsibilities to) society:

> Inclusion … is linked up with entrepreneurship … the willingness to live an entrepreneurial life and to put one's capital to work. An inclusive society, therefore, is not a society of equals in a principled way, but a society in which everyone has the qualities to meet her needs in an entrepreneurial way (p127)

Such a conception of the learner mirrors the kind of individuals valued by Neoliberal societies. Students with disabilities or labels of SEN challenge this conception. Learners who require the consistent and perhaps long term support of carers and supporters disrupt the view of the learner as an autonomous learner. 'The goal' of education – academic excellence – is troubled by those learners who might never be capable of (nor interested in) such achievements. But these problems bring with them potentially exciting opportunities. Pedagogy is transformed by the presence of learners with disabilities or labels of SEN:

- Students with speech, language and cognitive impairments demand educators to be more imaginative in their teaching;
- Non-disabled and disabled learners learn about and support each other;
- An inclusive teaching session includes not only a disabled learner but all learners;
- The meanings and ambitions of education are stretched beyond a fixation with academic achievement;
- Curricula are revamped to include consideration of social and cultural exclusion;
- Group work is enhanced through the sharing of different skills – a concept we might call 'distributed intelligence'.

There are no easy answers to the inclusion of learners with disabilities or labels of SEN. Yet, inclusion opens up possibilities for thinking and learning in their broadest sense. Furthermore, we are encouraged to rethink the knowledge we use to construct versions of humanity (Goodley, 2001).

SECTION 4: Some final words…
Inclusion is a complex process often raising more questions than answers. One of the main objectives of inclusive education is to push us to think with hope about the possibilities of education. Hope allows us to start 'conceiving freedom and justice on the terrain of capacities leads beyond mere dreaming' (Giroux, 2003, p7). Our transformative pedagogies should encourage educators and students to:

> learn how to govern rather than be governed, while assuming the role of active and critical citizens in shaping the most basic and fundamental structures of a vibrant and inclusive democracy … Learning at its best is connected with the imperatives of social responsibility and political agency (Giroux, 2003, pp7-9)

References
Barton, L. (2004). Social Inclusion and Education: Issues and Questions. Paper presented at the ESRC seminar *Towards Inclusion: Social Inclusion and Education.* 19th July 2004, Institute of Education, London.

Gabel, S. (2002). Some Conceptual Problems with Critical Pedagogy *Curriculum Inquiry, 32 (2),* 177-201.

Girpix, H. A. (2003). Public Pedagogy and the Politics of Resistance: Notes on a critical theory of educational struggle. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 35, (1)* 5-16.

Goodley, D. (2001). 'Learning Difficulties', the Social Model of Disability and Impairment: Challenging Epistemologies. *Disability and Society, 16 (2),* 207-231.

Gove, J. and Watt, S. (2000). Identity and Gender. In K.Woodward (Ed.) *Questioning Identity: Gender, class and nation.* London: Sage in association with the Open University.

Keddie. A. (2006). Pedagogies and critical reflection: key understandings for transformative gender justice. *Gender and Education, 18 (1),* 99-114(16)

Khong, L. and Ng, (2005). School–Parent Partnerships in Singapore . *Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 4 (1),* 1-11.

Masschelein, J.; Simons, M. The strategy of the inclusive education apparatus. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 24 (2),* 117-138

Mok, K. H. (2003). Similar Trends, Diverse Agendas: higher education reforms in East Asia. Globalisation, Societies and Education, *1, (2),* 201-221.

Nind, M. (2005). Inclusive education: discourse and action. *British Educational Research Journal,* 31, 2, 269 275

Tan, J. (1998). The Marketisation of Education in Singapore: Policies and Implications International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft / Revue internationale de l'éducation, *44 (1),* 47-63.

Further readings
Armstrong, F., Armstrong, D. and Barton, L. (1999.) *Inclusive education: policy, contexts and comparative perspectives.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Barton, L. (1996). Politics, marketisation and the struggle for inclusive education. *Hitotsubashi journal of social studies. 1996 (July);* 28 (1), 29 42.

Clough, P. and Barton, L. (1999). *Articulating with difficulty: Research voices in inclusive education.* London: Paul Chapman.

Gills, D.S.S. (2002). Globalization of production and women in Asia. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. 2002 (May); 581*, 106 120

Hegarty, S. and Alur, M. (2002). (Eds). *Education and Children with Special Needs: From Segregation to Inclusion. (Indian perspectives).* Sage; California.

Ng, Pak Tee (2004). Students' Perception of Change in the Singapore Education System. *Educational Research for Policy & Practice. 3(1):77 92,.*

Potts, P. (1998). 'A luxury for the first world': a western perception of Hong Kong Chinese attitudes towards inclusive education. *Disability and Society, 13 (1),* 113 124.

Kang, Trivina (2004). Taking Human Capital Investment Seriously: Reflections on Educational Reform. *Educational Research for Policy & Practice. 3(1),* 63 – 76.

Miles, S. (2002). *Family action for inclusion in education.* Enabling Educaiton Network.

Muthukrishna, N.; Sader, S. (2004). Social capital and the development of inclusive schools and communities Perspectives in education. *22 (1),* 17 26

Subrahmanian, R. , Sayed, Y., Soudien, C., Carrim, N., Balagopalan, S., Vasavi, A.R.; Govinda, R.; Samuel, M. (2003). *Educational inclusion and exclusion: Indian and South African perspective.* Available from http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/

Vlachou, A. (1999). *Struggles for inclusive education.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Wright, C., Weekes, D., McGlaughlin, A. (2000). *Race, class, and gender in exclusion from school.* London: Falmer Press.