Enacting inclusion: a framework for interrogating inclusive practice

Lani Florian [a] & Jennifer Spratt [b]

[a] Moray House School of Education , The University of Edinburgh , Edinburgh , UK

[b] School of Education , The University of Aberdeen , Aberdeen , UK

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Enacting inclusion: a framework for interrogating inclusive practice

Lani Florian[a]* and Jennifer Spratt[b]

[a]*Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK;* [b]*School of Education, The University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK*

This study reports on the development and use of an analytical framework for interrogating the practice of newly qualified mainstream teachers recently graduated from a one-year Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) that was informed by a concept of inclusive pedagogy. Inclusive pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning that supports teachers to respond to individual differences between learners but avoids the marginalisation that can occur when some students are treated differently. The analytical framework was based on the principles of inclusive pedagogy, which were linked to the core themes of Aberdeen University's PGDE course. Its purpose was to provide a robust and coherent framework for documenting inclusive pedagogy in action. This study describes how the framework was developed and used with new teachers in order to further understanding of how reforms of initial teacher education can impact inclusive teaching and learning. The framework was initially designed in the context of a teacher education project but has wider applicability as a research tool for exploring inclusive pedagogy in action. This is particularly relevant to the study of inclusive education in the practical setting of the classroom where there is little guidance to support systematic research on how inclusive education is enacted.

Keywords: inclusion; inclusive education; inclusive pedagogy; teacher education; teacher professional development

Introduction

Following the Salamanca statement (UNESCO 1994) educational inclusion has been accepted as orthodoxy in many parts of the world (Riddell 2007), and policy responses are evident throughout Europe (European Agency for the Development of Special Needs Education 2006). Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities demands that state parties provide an inclusive education system at all levels (United Nations 2006). Yet the development of inclusive practice within schools has proved to be challenging, not least because interpretations of the term inclusion and how it should be enacted are inconsistent, and change over time (Kozleski, Artiles, and Waitoller 2011). As Riddell (2007, 34) commented: 'Discourses are malleable and words such as inclusion can be used by different interest groups to refer to dramatically opposed concepts'. Similarly

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*Corresponding author. Email: Lani.Florian@ed.ac.uk

Slee (2006) noted that, in the absence of clear understandings of inclusion, all manner of activity can be passed off as inclusive.

In spite of an extensive literature about the attitudes, beliefs and values which should imbue inclusive education (e.g. Forlin et al. 2009), and some more focused work about the underlying pedagogical knowledge required (e.g. Hart et al. 2004; Kershner 2009) there is currently very little guidance in the literature about how an inclusive pedagogy should be enacted in a classroom setting. Consequently, the challenges associated with how to document and study inclusive education or the classroom practices associated with it remain largely unaddressed, although there some exceptions such as the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow 2011). This study demonstrates how the adherence to a set of key principles can give rise to an inclusive pedagogy and moreover provides a framework with which this can be studied systematically. As will be shown, the analytical framework presented below is a robust tool that can be used to examine how teachers draw from the principles of inclusive pedagogy in different contexts.

The framework was designed in the context of a Scottish Government funded research and development project, the Inclusive Practice Project (IPP). This initiative supported Aberdeen University's School of Education to redesign its Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programme to ensure that beginning teachers have an awareness and understanding of the educational and social problems and issues that can affect children's learning and that they develop strategies to respond to such difficulties (University of Aberdeen 2011). The PGDE is a one-year full-time course that prepares post-graduate students to be primary or secondary school teachers. Upon completion of the course, successful students are guaranteed a one-year post as a probationary teacher in a Scottish school, leading to full professional registration. The PGDE course includes 18 weeks of university-based learning, the remainder of the year being spent on two separate school placements as a student teacher. The common core of the PGDE is a course entitled 'Professional Studies', which is delivered through weekly lectures and associated tutorials, during those parts of the year when the students are on campus, between placements. Primary and Secondary students are taught together.

The IPP team sought to develop an approach to initial teacher education that encouraged a model of learning and teaching that acknowledged and responded to diversity but also avoided the negative effects of treating some children as different. Following development work involving a collaborative process engaging course tutors, colleagues with research expertise in inclusion, teachers working in partner local authorities and one newly graduated teacher, Professional Studies was redesigned around three main themes which were developed into course units: 'Understanding Learning'; 'Social Justice'; and 'Becoming an Active Professional'. By structuring the core course around a set of clear themes underpinned by theoretical and ethical principles, the students were provided with a 'cognitive map' of teaching and learning, as advocated by Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), in order to provide a lens through which the complex range of decisions that they would be required to make as teachers in diverse settings could be interrogated.

The theoretical and ethical principles underpinning the course units were intended to support student teachers to adopt a teaching approach that is aligned with the concept of inclusive pedagogy which emerged from a synthesis of studies of the craft knowledge of experienced teachers who have been able to sustain a commitment to inclusive education and high academic achievement in an

educational climate that privileges academic achievement and a policy context that specifies that inclusion should not interfere with the efficient education of others (e.g. Hart et al. 2004; Black-Hawkins, Florian, and Rouse 2007; Florian and Black-Hawkins 2011). Essentially, these principles call for a response to individual differences between learners that avoids marking some students as different. Over the course of the IPP, a number of studies and detailed accounts of this approach and the course reforms that were influenced by it have been published (see for example, Florian and Rouse 2009; Florian and Linklater 2010; Florian, Young, and Rouse 2010; Florian 2012; Young and Florian 2012).

This article reports on two aspects of a follow-up study of a sample of teachers in the year following the PGDE that was designed to explore if and how inclusive pedagogy was enacted in the teaching practice of course graduates. First is the design of the framework that was used to articulate what could as evidence of inclusive pedagogy. Secondly, the use of the framework to further understanding of the enactment of inclusive pedagogy is described.

Inclusive pedagogy

Following Alexander (2004), the word 'pedagogy' is used to mean the knowledge and the skills required by teachers to inform the decisions they make about their practice. Inclusive education requires that children are not only present in school, but that they all have opportunities to participate in meaningful learning (Kershner 2009). It is an approach that requires a theoretical understanding of the ways that children learn, and the inter-related issues of social justice that impinge upon children's experiences, which, in turn, are enacted in the choices that teachers take in their classrooms. A teacher committed to inclusive pedagogy must accept primary responsibility for the learning of all the children in the class (Jordan, Schwart, and McGhie-Richmond 2009). This concurs with Rouse (2009) who suggests that inclusion depends on teachers' 'knowing' (about theoretical, policy and legislative issues), 'doing' (turning knowledge into action) and 'believing' (in their capacity to support all children).

The inclusive pedagogical approach is based on the belief that teachers must be aware that the choices they make, and actions they take in the organisation of learning, convey messages and values reaching well beyond the formal focus of the lesson (Alexander 2001; Hart et al. 2004). For example, it has been known for at least three decades that the practice of predicting 'potential' on the basis of current achievement, and using this rationale to design different educational experiences has damaging effects including: reproducing social inequalities (e.g. Ball 1981); reifying hierarchies in the organisation of the schools (Hart et al. op cit.) and selectively undermining some pupils' sense of self-worth (Hargreaves 1982; Boaler, William, and Brown 2000). Moreover, such deterministic views of learning induce pessimism among teachers who believe they do not have the power to make a difference to the learning of children (Hart 1998). Therefore, the inclusive pedagogical approach rejects ability labelling, as a fundamental premise. Specifically, inclusive pedagogy is opposed to practices that address education for all by offering provision for most with additional or different experiences for some. Instead, it urges teachers to extend what is ordinarily available to everybody (Florian 2010).

Inclusive pedagogy draws from the work of Susan Hart and her colleagues (2004) seeking to remove limits from the expectations of both teachers and pupils

by providing opportunities for all children to learn within a classroom community that does not make judgments about ability. This accords with the perspective held by Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006, 25) who maintain that the term inclusion refers to 'the processes of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the curricula, cultures and communities of local schools'. Similarly, Black-Hawkins, Florian, and Rouse (2007) suggest that inclusion involves children learning together, in a context where each individual is valued and is actively engaged in what is learnt and what is taught. This approach favours (although is not exclusive to) social constructivist approaches to learning and teaching, following Vygotsky (for an analysis of the contribution Vygotsky's work to contemporary debates about inclusion see Daniels (2009)). Kershner (2009) suggests that inclusive pedagogy should adopt strategies based on current psychological understandings of collective learning such as situated cognition, distributed intelligence, dialogic teaching and multimodal learning. Thus, inclusion is not viewed as passive, being 'done to' certain groups of children, but as a dynamic process that involves all children in the life and learning of the school.

By adopting an approach to teaching that does not require categorising students as different types of learners, the inclusive pedagogical approach challenges some of the more traditional notions of professional knowledge and responsibility, particularly where learning support or other specialist provision is concerned. It does not reject specialist support but encourages its delivery to be more sensitive to the associated, unintended, negative outcomes. Inclusive pedagogy demands that class teachers take responsibility for all learners, including those who are experiencing difficulties. Class teachers are encouraged to view difficulties in learning as dilemmas for themselves as teachers (rather than deficits in children) and to seek new approaches to support children. Following this approach, teachers work with specialists in order to find ways of providing meaningful learning experiences for all children within the classroom community. In common with children, teachers are encouraged to learn from working with others (Trent, Artiles, and Ernst 1998).

Importantly, the notion of inclusive pedagogy is not a call for a return to a model of whole class teaching where equality of opportunity is notionally addressed by providing identical experiences for all (Florian 2010). Instead, it advocates an approach whereby the teacher provides a range of options that are available to everybody in the class rather than a set of differentiated options only for some. Within the inclusive pedagogical approach, human diversity is seen as a strength, rather than a problem, as children work together, sharing ideas and learning from their interactions with each other. Crucially, the inclusive pedagogical approach fosters an open-ended view of each child's potential to learn.

Within the IPP, the core idea of transformability (Hart et al. 2004) was central. Transformability recognises that all children's capacity to learn can change as a result of decisions and choices made in the present: that teachers can and do make a difference to what and how children learn. Achievements in learning are a result of relationships within communities (expressed through the key principles of co-agency, everybody and trust). The concept of transformability and its key principles are valuable tools for inclusive pedagogy, because they provide a structure for students' understanding that predictions often place a ceiling on what teachers think

pupils can achieve. Thus, learning is understood as inextricably linked to the choices and decisions made by teachers.

Designing a framework

Questions about what would count as evidence of inclusive practice were considered at the outset of the IPP. The initial ideas were articulated as conceptually linked and while it is clear that there was some indication of what might be observed in practice, these were impressionistic:

> Inclusive practice should reflect teaching decisions that consider how to include rather than exclude learners who experience difficulty. This will inevitably reflect an engagement with pupils that value them as partners in learning and consider their views. Classrooms will be organised in ways that offer students choices without relying solely on ability grouping. Inclusive practice will reflect actions that are collaborative, drawing on the expertise of specialists without relinquishing responsibility for teaching all learners. Most importantly it will wherever possible, aim to reduce the reliance on hierarchical ideas of 'development' that require judgements to be made about what it is possible to learn. While this is not an exhaustive list, it is a beginning. These are practices that can be observed although some of their elements, such as the thinking that informed a teacher's pedagogical decision, may be invisible. However, it is possible to discern evidence of an inclusive approach to teaching from the ethos and artefacts that characterise the classroom. Teachers' beliefs will be reflected in the ways they speak about their work and their students. (Florian and Rouse 2009, 600)

As these ideas were disentangled, three key theoretical principles emerged as foundational to the IPP approach to initial teacher education. Initially, these were tabulated alongside the actions that would need to be taken to implement the principles, and the key challenges associated with doing so (Florian 2012). Table 1 shows how the principles and actions associated with inclusive pedagogy link to the course themes, challenges and outcomes. The aim of this mapping exercise was to provide a robust and coherent framework for thinking analytically about inclusive practice. As the course redesign progressed the principles and actions were linked to the course themes, to enable a systematic study of whether and how the course reforms were embedded as planned (Florian et al. 2010). Over time the theoretical ideas that underpinned the course were linked to the pedagogical attributes that the course was intended to foster in programme graduates. These attributes were derived from an analysis of the practices of how experienced teachers do their work (Florian and Black-Hawkins 2011; Black-Hawkins and Florian 2012). Using these findings to inform the development of the framework, the practical knowledge of experienced teachers in inclusive classrooms was linked to the theoretical ideas taught on the course. As a result, the methodological approach to the follow-up study focused on what teachers informed by inclusive pedagogy actually *do* in their classrooms rather than on reports of how the course influenced their practice.

The follow-up study

Following successful applications for permission to local authority Directors of Education, or their equivalent, seven teachers, from three Scottish local authorities were recruited to this study, at the start of their probationary year. New teachers were invited to participate according to a sampling frame which sought to recruit a

Table 1. The relationship between the principles of inclusive pedagogy and the Professional Studies core themes.

Principles/underlying assumptions	Associated concepts/actions	Key challenges*	PGDE professional studies course themes	Outcome(programme graduates)
1. Difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning	Replacing deterministic views of ability with a concept of transformability	'Bell-curve thinking and notions of fixed ability still underpin the structure of schooling	Understanding learning	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. Teachers must believe (can be convinced) they are qualified/capable of teaching all children	Demonstrating how the difficulties students experience in learning can be considered dilemmas for teaching rather than problems within students	The identification of difficulties in learning and the associated focus on what the learner *cannot* do often puts a ceiling on learning and achievement Teachers must be disabused of the notion that some children are not their responsibility	Understanding social justice	Commitment to the support of all learners. Belief in own capacity to promote learning for all children
3. The profession must continually develop creative new ways of working with others	Modelling (creative new) ways of working with and through others	Changing the way we think about inclusion (from 'most' and 'some' to everybody)	Becoming an Active Professional	Willingness to work (creatively) with and through others

gender mix which was reflective of the PGDE course (predominately female), an equal proportion of primary and secondary teachers, and an even spread between the three local authorities. In total, 22 new teachers were approached and seven agreed to participate. All were female, four were primary teachers, and three were secondary teachers. While it is clear that this small sample is not representative of the PGDE graduates as a whole, the study is an exploration of how the concept of inclusive pedagogy is used in the practice of new teachers and it does not seek to make claims about all graduates.

The study was located within a social constructivist paradigm (Cresswell 2009) valuing and seeking to understand the actions and perspectives of the participants, and acknowledging the complexity of the context in which they were working. Methods were entirely qualitative. The collection of two types of data – observation followed by semi-structured interview – provided an opportunity for the participant to support the researcher's interpretation of the activities observed in the classroom. The researcher visited each participant three times over the course of the year. Research visits consisted of observation of one teaching session followed by a semi-structured interview lasting approximately 45 min.

The observations were guided by the analytical framework. In selecting what to record in a busy classroom, the researchers were guided by the themes of the framework. A detailed narrative was recorded of these activities. The following interviews were semi-structured, asking questions that allowed the discussion to develop around the teacher's perspectives of the lesson that had just been observed.

The project was subject to the scrutiny of Aberdeen University's Research Ethics and Governance Committee prior to starting. The design and delivery of the project adhered to the guidelines of the Scottish Education Research Association (2005). For example, to avoid the situation where probationary teachers might be pressurised by their seniors to participate in the study, head teacher consent was not sought until after the probationary teachers had agreed. The researcher who undertook the visits to the school was not, at the time, a member of the PGDE teaching team and had not met the participants when they were university students. Hence, the power dynamic that might have existed between a lecturer and student did not impinge upon this relationship. The probationer teachers were aware that this activity was not linked to any assessment that might be made of their performance as a new teacher, although it was notable that some commented that they found their involvement in the project to be a useful professional development activity. Participants were made aware that they were free to withdraw at any time, however none did.

Consent was sought from each participant before recording on each occasion, and transcripts were returned to them for member checking. Upon reading the transcript, participants were invited to alter or withdraw anything that they had said during the interview.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. As about two thirds of the invited probationers refused the invitation, and all the participants were females, we can make no claims that these teachers were typical. As they are a very small proportion of a cohort of over 200 students, this cannot be seen as an evaluation of the PGDE course as a whole. However, this was not our intent. We sought, within this study, to examine in detail how the principles of inclusive pedagogy can be used learning and teaching. In providing some very rich examples, we have been able to demonstrate how the principles *can be* applied in practice, but of course,

our observations do not provide comprehensive catalogue of all possible manifestations of inclusive pedagogy. However, we hope they may stimulate others to consider how the principles may be enacted in practice.

The extent to which the probationers were influenced by the presence of a researcher in the class is unknown. It is possible that they prepared slightly differently because they were expecting a visitor. However, if the teachers were putting on an especially good performance, their choices of examples reveal their understanding of the principles of inclusive pedagogy. Additionally, much the of observed behaviour in the classrooms was predicated on a history of teacher/pupil expectations, relationships and patterns of working that would be difficult to falsify for a visitor, even if all were on their 'best behaviour'. Ultimately, this study was not about the conduct of the participants throughout their entire probationary year, it was about the examples of practice that the researcher was privileged to witness and discuss at the three visits.

Making judgements about inclusive practice

A key issue for the research team was – how would we know inclusive pedagogy when we encountered it? Making observational judgements about whether a teacher has adopted an inclusive pedagogical approach is not straightforward. Teachers' responses to individual differences between learners in a classroom may be obscured because observers lack knowledge about the context of teachers' actions, such as their planning, their reasoning or the history behind a particular interaction. Equally, it is not easy for an observer to know when and how teachers are extending what is ordinarily available in classrooms to everybody in response to the particular diversity of a class group (Florian and Black-Hawkins 2011). For this reason, the paired observations and interviews were key to exploring the pedagogical principles that underpinned the practical classroom activities and to triangulating the data from two sources. This methodology allowed us to link the knowledge and beliefs, which became evident in interviews, to the action that were observed during lessons.

As noted earlier, the three principles of the framework in Table 1 were further expanded to include suggestions of the possible ways in which inclusive pedagogy might be expected to manifest in practice (Tables 2–4). The development of this framework was an iterative process, starting from the inclusive principles of the course, and the theoretical notion of inclusive pedagogy. Drawing from studies of experienced teachers as well as research conversations with colleagues on the course teaching team led to the emergence of a robust, yet responsive, model demonstrating the implications of inclusive pedagogy for classroom practice. The resulting framework represents an attempt develop a tool to analyse the complex sets of knowledge, beliefs and practice in beginning teachers. In identifying three key principles of inclusive pedagogy and associated analytical themes, it is not suggested that these are discrete and separate functions of an inclusive teacher. Clearly, a degree of overlap between themes is evident – a teacher's understanding of social justice is intertwined with her beliefs about learning as she makes choices about how to respond in the classroom.

Table 2. Course theme: Understanding Learning.

Course theme: understanding learning	
Principle: Difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development	*How might this manifest in practice? (Analytical codes)* Teaching practices which include all children (everybody) (A)
Associated concepts: Replacing deterministic views of ability with a concept of transformability	• Creating environments for learning with opportunities that are sufficiently made available for *everyone*, so that all learners are able to participate in classroom life (i)
Challenges: 'Bell-curve thinking and notions of fixed ability still underpin the structure of schooling	• 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; (ii)
Programme graduates: • 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*)	• Differentiation achieved through choice of activity for everyone (iii) Rejection of ability grouping as main organisation of working groups (B) Use of language that expresses the value of all children (C) Social constructivist approaches e.g. providing opportunities for children to participate in co-construction of knowledge (D) Interplay / interdependence between teachers and learners to create new knowledge (co-agency) (E) Using formative assessment to support learning (F) Rejecting deterministic beliefs about fixed ability and the associated idea that the presence of some will hold back the progress of others (G) • Believing all children will make progress, learn and achieve (i) • Focusing teaching and learning on what children can do rather than what they can not (ii) • Grouping children to support everybody's learning (iii)

Using the Framework

Data analysis

During analysis, the interview transcripts and observation data were initially tagged using the codes provided by the framework as identified in Tables 2–4. This process was supported by the software package NVivo 7. For example, the theme 'creating environments for learning with opportunities that are sufficiently made available to

Table 3.   Course theme: Social Justice.

Course theme: Social Justice	
Principle: Teachers must believe (can be convinced) they are qualified/capable of teaching all children	*How might this manifest in practice? (Analytical codes)* Interaction between theoretical knowledge about inclusion and experience (A)
Associated concepts: Demonstrating how the difficulties students experience in learning can be considered dilemmas for teaching rather than problems within students	Focusing on *what* is to be taught (and *how*) rather than *who* is to learn it. (B) Providing opportunities for children to choose the level at which they engage with the work (co-agency in planning learning) (C)
Challenges: The identification of difficulties in learning and the associated focus on what the learner *cannot* do often puts a ceiling on learning and achievement. Teachers must be disabused of the notion that they are not qualified to teach all children	See difficulties in learning as professional challenges for the teacher (locate problems in environment not in child) (D) Strategic/reflective responses to support difficulties which children encounter in their learning (E) Quality of relationships between teacher and pupils (trust) (F)
Programme graduates: Commitment to the support of all learners. Belief in own capacity to promote learning for all children	Interest in the welfare of the 'whole child' not simply the acquisition of knowledge and skills (observation/interview) (G) Flexible approach – driven by needs of learners rather than 'coverage' of material (H) Their *belief* in themselves will only truly be evident from the philosophical stances they reveal during interview (I)

everybody' (Table 2 theme Ai) contains 17 examples. These include, for example, mixed ability group work in which all children contributed to a whole class project, and the strategy of offering a range of options within the context of a single lesson on grammar. Similarly, the theme 'strategic responses to support difficulties which children encounter in their learning' (Table 3 theme E), contains 12 examples including the teachers' choice to work alongside children in the learning support base, and teamwork with a teaching assistant to support a boy with Aspergers Syndrome in ways which were unobtrusive.

As a result of the initial coding process, a database was created with multiple and diverse examples of how each of the themes can inform the choices made by teachers. From the outset, it was clear that the codes were not discrete – that a single activity could attract multiple codes, as the teachers' decisions were informed by many overlapping considerations. For example, one teacher's use of a wide range of visual materials in order to ensure that a hearing-impaired pupil could participate in classroom activities would be tagged with both the codes 'creating environments for learning with opportunities that are sufficiently made available to everybody' and 'strategic responses to support difficulties which students encounter in their learning'.

Whilst an analytical framework, by its very nature, seeks to fragment practice into its constituent parts, in ways that can be captured by research methods, the actual practice itself is a complex interaction between the layers identified in the framework. An analytical process that culminates with a list of isolated actions by

Table 4.   Course theme: Becoming an Active Professional.

Course theme: Becoming an Active Professional	
Principle: the profession must continually develop creative new ways of working with others	*How might this manifest in practice? (Analytical codes)* Interplay between personal/professional stance and the stance of the school – creating spaces for inclusion wherever possible (A)
Associated concepts: modelling (creative new) ways of working with and through others	• Seeking and trying out new ways of working to support the learning of all children (i) • Working with and through other adults in ways that respect the dignity of learners as full members of the community of the classroom (ii)
Challenges: changing the way we think about inclusion (from 'most' and 'some' to everybody)	• Being committed to continuing professional development as a way of developing more inclusive practices (iii)
Programme graduates: willingness to work (creatively) with and through others	In partnerships formed with teachers or other adults who work alongside them in the classroom (B)
	Through discussions with other teachers/other professionals outside the classroom (C) Shifting the focus away from differences among learners to the learning of all children. (D)
	• Seeking pupils' views (i) • Offering pupil choice (ii)

different teachers would have little meaning. For this reason, the theoretical themes were then re-contextualised into the situation in which they were observed. Hence, in the second stage of analysis, a narrative case study of each teacher was drafted from the interview and observation data, to capture the key ideas and actions illustrating inclusive pedagogy, alongside any restrictions or barriers to such an approach. While this approach to data collection was novel to the project, it was influenced by our earlier research on inclusive pedagogy (Black-Hawkins and Florian 2012). The accounts drew on the previous coding process to justify why these practices could be interpreted as examples of inclusive pedagogy. Across the case studies, the issues faced by beginning teachers in the name of inclusion were different in each setting, and the choices made by the teachers, at face value, were diverse. However, by using the framework to analyse the work in different settings, it was possible to demonstrate the philosophical commonalities across the cases (Spratt, and Florian, in preparation). Hence, the main finding from the larger study was that the principles of inclusive pedagogy provided a lens through which to interrogate practice, but the practical choices made, in the name of inclusive pedagogy were context specific, taking into account the individuality of children and the learning community of the classroom.

The summary case study presented here, from Chloe (a pseudonym), is illustrative. Examples of Chloe's work have been selected to demonstrate how the frame-

work was used as an analytical tool. While only a small fragment of the data is presented here, it demonstrates how the framework can support our understanding of the complexity of the underlying concepts that inform the inclusive pedagogy of new teachers.

Chloe

Chloe taught a Primary 6/7 class (children aged 10–12) in a rural primary school. She was absolutely committed to the rejection of deterministic practices in all its forms, saying; 'I hate the notion of fixed ability, hate it' (Interview 2), and throughout her teaching evidence was present of a pedagogical stance which did not accept a 'bell-curve' view of children's learning. On arrival in the school, she immediately set about dismantling the ability groups that had been the organisational structure of this class throughout its life in the school. This constituted a challenge to the head teacher's expectations, and those of the pupils and parents. Local authority policy demanded that children's progress in literacy and numeracy was formally assessed annually using the (now outdated) Scottish 5–14 curriculum, focussing on performance levels A to F. Until Chloe took over the class, children's work had been differentiated according to their performance levels, and working groups were based on 'ability'. All of these existing expectations created difficulties that Chloe had to face, as she began to vary the working groups for different purposes. She overcame these difficulties by persistently articulating the reasons for her choice as outlined below.

Instead of using overt teacher-led strategies for differentiation Chloe provided choice to the children, together with strategies to help them make those choices. For example, she used formative assessment to help the children understand what would be most helpful to their own learning. Thus, during the first observation, the children were asked to look at their peer-assessed work from the previous class, then to choose which aspect of grammar they felt it would be most helpful to concentrate on today. A range of tasks were made available to everybody. They were not ranked by levels of difficulty, but instead they were distinguished by the purpose of the task. Children worked in pairs that were not chosen by ability.

As a probationer teacher in her first job, Chloe's determination to adhere to her own principles rather than those of the school was a bold strategy. Thus, when her teaching was observed by the head teacher, Chloe was required to justify the absence of overt differentiation. She was aware that the sustainability of her practice depended upon her capacity to articulate what she was doing and why she was doing it. She was very clear that the PGDE course provided her both with an alternative pedagogy to the more usual deterministic approaches and with the language that she needed to justify the approaches she was choosing to take:

> 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. (Interview 2)

Chloe demonstrated a determination to share and discuss her ideas with other members of staff, and part of her continued autonomy hinged on provision of tangible evidence of improvements in the children's learning. In this way, she negotiated

the freedom to continue with her approach. By the end of the year, Chloe was able to demonstrate that measurable attainments were better than expected and that this had taken place in a classroom devoid of judgements about children's potential.

Chloe's belief in the learning of all children was exemplified in her attitude towards one boy, David, for whom she felt ability labelling, in the past, had been debilitating, and who, in her view, had made much better progress in her class. The boy's mother held that he had learning difficulties and felt that he should be educated separately in maths – something for which she apparently argued vociferously. Chloe expressed her concerns about the effect of long-standing low expectations on his own perceptions of his mathematical competence, saying:

> He has been told all the time, he can't do this, he can't do this and he believes it that he can't do it. (Interview 2)

Rather than accepting what she had been told about David's limited ability Chloe sought, over time, to bolster David's own perceptions of his capacity to learn. In the light of constant encouragement from her, she eventually saw a transformation in his attitude, as described below:

> But he **can** [do maths], And a lot of it was getting him to believe that he could do it, and trying to talk to him, and sitting down one to one. And we talked to him after school sometimes, 'well done today, you really did' … the tiniest wee thing, 'you did that really well today, I want to see if you can try this next time'. And he started off saying, 'I can't do it' and yet I have to prove to him how he's done it. 'You have done it, you've achieved it'. And then you saw him start to believe that he could do it and now he's got in level D maths … So he doesn't have to be in a separate class, he just has to believe that he can do it. (Interview 2)

Her attitude to David demonstrated her commitment to each child as an individual; a stance which was also evident in her response to another pupil, Paul, who had been a 'bit of pest' in the playground by 'calling people names'. In considering how to address this situation, Chloe was keen to amend his behaviour in a way which avoided labelling Paul as a 'badly behaved' pupil. She did this by introducing a colour-coded behaviour management strategy for everyone, rather than aiming it particularly at Paul. In keeping with her generally positive stance, there were more positive options than negatives (top green *and* bottom green lay above amber and red). She described her approach:

> I set up this behaviour traffic light thing for everybody and they start off on top green…. Top green, bottom green, amber and red and then at the end of every week they colour in what colour they are on the traffic light. … I only really reinforce that if I see that [Paul] started to play up, but I'll do it for the whole class. But it's been fine ever since I put it up, I've never really had anybody on anything lower than bottom green. (Interview 2)

In this situation, Chloe sought a response to an issue involving just one pupil in a way, which avoided marking him out as different. By introducing a behaviour intervention for the whole class, she extended what was applied to everybody rather individualising her approach. In so doing, she respected Paul's status as a valued member of the class.

In reflecting on the impact that the PGDE course had on her pedagogical stance, Chloe commented that she had always been committed to inclusion and had understood the harmful effects of ability labelling, but had not understood the alternatives. The inclusive pedagogical principles of the course had equipped her with a theoretical understanding from which to develop a tangible alternative approach that she implemented in the context of her own setting.

Throughout her work, she demonstrated an active professionalism, by creating the space for inclusion by explaining, articulating, arguing with other people, and by demonstrating success. She did not simply use a different approach when it was possible to do so without rocking the boat – she actively challenged the status quo and pushed the inclusion agenda forward.

Using the Framework to analyse Chloe's pedagogy

By cross referencing the data with the analytical codes in Table 2, it is clear throughout that Chloe's stance is one which illustrates the course theme of 'Understanding Learning' which rejects deterministic views of learning. This is evident, for example in reorganising her class, away from differentiation according to current performance, and the associated practice of grouping by ability (theme B) in favour of a more open-ended approach to learning. We see her creating learning environments with opportunities available to everyone (theme A), in the way she offers choice of learning activity to the children, based on feedback from peer assessment (theme F). Her planning for 'everybody' not 'most and some' was also evident in her response to the discipline issue relating to Paul, where she was careful not to take action which involved treating him differently from the others (theme A). In her support for David, where she refused to let his previous performance dampen her expectations for the future, we also see evidence that she does not hold deterministic views of ability, but instead she believes that all children will make progress and learn (theme G).

Simultaneously, we can see evidence of the theme 'Social Justice' in Chloe's work, by cross reference to Table 3. Her general stance towards planning for everybody indicates her commitment to the main principle of this course theme, namely the responsibility towards teaching all children. By negotiating with children about their choice of work, she is operating a relationship of 'co-agency' between teacher and pupil (theme C). The reflective response (theme E) to encourage David to develop his mathematical confidence indicates how she sees his difficulty in learning as a professional dilemma for herself, rather than a deficit in him (theme D). Upon analysis, it becomes evident that the themes of Understanding Learning and Social Justice, while theoretically distinct, are deeply interlinked in the choices and actions of a teacher committed to inclusive pedagogy. Rather than two discrete aspects of pedagogy, they act synergistically as interwoven layers within the deeply textured mix of knowledge, belief and action of a teacher.

Overlying, these two layers is the third theme of Active Professionalism (Table 4). Chloe takes every opportunity to develop new ways of working which respect the dignity of the children in her class. As a probationer, she wasted no time in creating in her classroom a physical and psychological space for inclusion of all children (theme A) in spite of the fact that this would require *post hoc* justification to parents and colleague (theme C). She constantly sought pupils' views (E) and

the vignette described above provides one example of the way in which she offered choice within learning (theme F). Chloe's professionalism is evident in the way she is keen to talk about her approach, to share it and justify it to her head teacher and other colleagues (theme A). On several occasions, Chloe commented on how valuable the PGDE course had been in helping her to articulate and enact a just and principled approach to learning and teaching.

Discussion

All too often, inclusive education has been interpreted as simply schooling all children in the same building, while continuing to provide those identified as having 'special needs' with an educational experience that is different from or additional to that which is available to others of similar age. Similar divisions can also be maintained within mixed ability classrooms, whereby teachers identify children whose abilities they believe merit different treatment from other class members and respond accordingly. In Scotland, where this project is located, the practice of setting according to 'ability' is widespread (Hamilton and O'Hara 2011). At the heart of these approaches lies a paradox. In seeking to provide education for all by differentiating for some on the basis of perceptions about 'ability' or 'need', schools often adopt a dual track model of additional or special education. However, the very act of highlighting difference exacerbates the isolation and marginalisation of those children and contributes to the social construction of disability (Grenier 2010). Such deterministic approaches have been demonstrated to perpetuate labels of 'special needs' (Riddell 2007) and to limit the learning opportunities of those identified as different, thereby aggravating rather than remedying the situation. And yet, there are students for whom additional support is needed. The inclusive pedagogical approach seeks to provide appropriate support while avoiding the stigma of marking certain children as different.

Rather than offering a 'how to' guide to inclusion, the PGDE course provided students with a means of interrogating their practice within their own context, in order to develop an inclusive pedagogy that responds to the individuality of all the children in their classrooms. It is abundantly evident, as evidenced in this article that use of the framework simply as reductionist approach, in the form of a 'tick box' exercise would be insufficient to capture the essence of inclusive pedagogy. Using a single case study as an illustration, the principles of inclusive pedagogy embedded in the PGDE professional studies course were shown to interact in the production of practice that values the learning of all children. The use of the framework has furthered understanding of what is distinctive about the decisions made by teachers committed to inclusive pedagogy and offers guidance to recognising and analysing such an approach. The framework may be useful to other researchers in the field of inclusion, but could also be used by teacher educators to support students evaluating their own inclusive pedagogy.

While it is not possible to claim that the course, alone, has brought about these practices, nor that our seven participants were typical of the programme graduates, what can be shown is a link between a theoretical idea and the enactment of it. This is an important development as inclusive education is often seen as an idea that has outpaced its practice (Artiles et al. 2006, 97). The Framework provides a helpful tool for exploring inclusive pedagogy in action.

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