Inclusion is increasingly becoming one of the policy drivers shaping educational discourse and practice. What constitutes the term “inclusion” itself and how ideas derived from the different perspectives on inclusion impact school leadership practice point to a highly contested field of enquiry. Originally embedded in discourse relating to special education, ideas relating to inclusion are attracting much broader appeal within system reforms in many jurisdictions. This book seeks to keep the consideration of inclusion firmly in its broader context and to decouple it from the discourse relating to students with special educational/additional needs. This allows the authors to position their contributions more explicitly within discourses that draw on difference and diversity as unavoidable features of schools. Within this collection we address the current political dogmas in many countries that take a purely rational, managerial approach to leadership, arguing that this is not contributing to inclusion in schools. In doing this, the book seeks to shape current discourses on leadership by exploring perspectives which are likely to enhance our understanding of inclusion. Tolerance, respect, listening, clarifying language, being comfortable with differences and ambiguity and articulating and challenging the rationale behind “the way we do things around here” are key aspects of inclusive leadership, and also fundamental imperatives for writing this book. It will be useful to those in education who are engaged in further academic study in education or in reflective practice and to anyone taking advanced programmes in educational leadership and management. The international perspectives on the issue of inclusion informing this book ensure that this book will be essential for those engaged in a comparative analysis of leadership practice in different contexts or those concerned with the complexity of ensuring inclusive models of education.
Leadership for Inclusive Education
STUDIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
Volume 18

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Scope
This series addresses the many different forms of exclusion that occur in schooling across a range of international contexts and considers strategies for increasing the inclusion and success of all students. In many school jurisdictions the most reliable predictors of educational failure include poverty, Aboriginality and disability. Traditionally schools have not been pressed to deal with exclusion and failure. Failing students were blamed for their lack of attainment and were either placed in segregated educational settings or encouraged to leave and enter the unskilled labour market. The crisis in the labor market and the call by parents for the inclusion of their children in their neighborhood school has made visible the failure of schools to include all children.

Drawing from a range of researchers and educators from around the world, Studies in Inclusive Education will demonstrate the ways in which schools contribute to the failure of different student identities on the basis of gender, race, language, sexuality, disability, socio-economic status and geographic isolation. This series differs from existing work in inclusive education by expanding the focus from a narrow consideration of what has been traditionally referred to as special educational needs to understand school failure and exclusion in all its forms. Moreover, the series will consider exclusion and inclusion across all sectors of education: early years, elementary and secondary schooling, and higher education.
Leadership for Inclusive Education

Values, Vision and Voices

Edited by

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1. LEADERSHIP FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:
SETTING THE CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to examine the constituent elements that contribute to the construct of inclusive education and to explore the implications for school leadership practice. In order to achieve this, different aspects of the discourse framing inclusion will be examined by the contributors to this collection. A key feature of the rationale underpinning this work is the recognition that inclusion is tightly bound to context; the culture and history of the different countries whose perspectives are included strongly mediate the manner in which inclusion is defined, implemented and achieved within the different systems. While there are some similarities within and between countries in terms of how inclusion is conceptualised and practiced in school systems, there are also many differences. When different perspectives and experiences of inclusion are included in the book the variegated nature of inclusive practices becomes visible. The degree of variation that delimits the practice of inclusive schools has very clear implications for school leadership and the school systems within which leadership happens. This book is not about answers or recipes – it will not add to the already substantial body of scholarship that offers a transferrable solution approach to the complexity of school leadership in pursuit of inclusive models of schooling. In short, it will not provide simple answers to complex issues.

The purpose of this contribution to the field of leadership for inclusive education is to explore inclusion from the perspective of a number of academics who work in a range of national contexts, namely Spain, Poland, England, Norway and Ireland. The book reflects their individual and collective experiences of working in the field of school leadership and inclusion in the different national contexts and also the collaborative work that arose from participation in an Erasmus Intensive Programme that focused on leadership development for inclusive education. The perspectives articulated within this book have also benefitted from engagement with Masters students from the 6 participating countries (Turkish students also participated) on the Erasmus Programme. 10 students and 2 staff from each of the countries came together for a 2 week residential programme each year in first England, then Norway and then Ireland. In the programme leadership and inclusion were put under the microscope for interrogation through reading, writing, discussion, group and plenary activities. This book is a result of this intellectual mixing, and seeks to provide a rich
and stimulating contribution to the vitally important and highly complex issue of leadership and inclusion.

In addition to the authors’ diversity in terms of their different national and cultural experiences of inclusion, an additional strength of the book is the range of epistemological perspectives represented in the different chapters. Bringing difference of this nature together within the covers of one book is a challenge. However, it is also an asset because the diversity of perspectives will help readers see their own thinking and practices in new ways. Inclusion is a highly contested construct both in terms of what constitutes the term “inclusion” and comprises the variety of attempts in various contexts to deliver an inclusive education system. It is clear from the literature that as a construct, inclusion has experienced significant difficulty in its realisation in many countries (see Allan, 2008).

Just as inclusion is a slippery term so too is leadership. Perspectives on leadership are becoming so abundant that as a concept it is in danger of losing its power to frame the work of schools. This book seeks to shape some of the discourse on leadership by exploring perspectives which are likely to enhance our understanding of leadership as applied to inclusion. Inevitably as the contributors come from different cultures and contexts there are different views on leadership as is relates to inclusion. We see these differences as a positive and indeed the process of writing the book across nations challenged our own practice of inclusion. Tolerance, respect, listening, clarifying language, being comfortable with differences and ambiguity and articulating and challenging the rationale behind “the way we do things around here” are all of prerequisites for creating this book and indeed are a key aspects of inclusive leadership. We acknowledge that leadership is important in terms of the child’s (and adult’s) experience of school, but relationships are complex rather than simplistic. But throughout the book we also address the current political dogmas in many countries that take a purely rational, managerial approach to leadership, arguing that this is not contributing to inclusion in schools. High stakes accountability has given birth to formulaic approaches to leadership that rests on a belief in “one best way” to run a school and this way is often more autocratic than democratic. In this book we take a holistic view of people and recognise that a slow pace of sustainable change will have a lasting effect on improving education. The market place demands quick fixes often driven by the governing politicians’ priority to drive policy reform for a variety of reasons. Inclusion and leadership are both slippery as eels. In this book we seek to wrestle them to the ground (at least intellectually) and hold them still for a while in order to encourage and enable those who run schools to do so as well.

The volume will be useful for educational leaders in primary and second level schools as well as academics, leadership consultants and those who want to engage with the task of promoting inclusion in the education sector. The international perspectives on the issue of inclusion informing this book ensure that it will be essential for those engaged in a comparative analysis of leadership practice in different contexts or those concerned with working towards ensuring inclusive models of education in practice.
The book is divided into three sections. The first three sections are based on a rationale developed by the contributors proposing that in order for school leaders to develop inclusive schools there are strong imperatives to ensure that each of the domains are developed in the context of leadership development programmes (See figure 1). Many leadership training or education programmes available in different countries fail to deal with the complexity of the issues associated with developing this type of school system (see chapter 5). Focusing on a narrowly based set of skills and competencies without addressing the complex and intersectional nature of pupil difference and diversity future leaders will not be adequately prepared for any forms of systemic change that will deliver a more equitable school system.

Key to all of this leadership development work is the need to develop leaders as organic intellectuals whose purpose it is not only to understand but to transform schools and education systems (Gramsci, 2000). Ongoing engagement with the knowledge base in each of the domains outlined is key to the nature quality direction of this transformation. In its original iteration, this model had a fourth component – a pedagogical domain. While working on this book the editors felt that this was a field of enquiry that is already well developed by writers such as Florian, Barton, Ainscow and Booth (among others) Arguably, the development of methods and strategies within the dominant SEN paradigm of inclusion has contributed significantly to the level of this scholarship. Consequently, it was decided to focus on the other three domains in full recognition of the premise that leaders also need to have significant professional development in the area of pedagogy and instruction.

Figure 1. Overview of framework: leadership for inclusive schools.
Essentially, this book identifies issues that challenge our understanding of inclusive education. We aim, in a Socratic manner, to stimulate the readers’ own thinking, more than provide ‘right’ answers. In doing so, we include a variety of voices in the volume. By engaging with the positions and propositions of the different authors, we hope to incite the readers to reflect on what must be done in order to create more inclusive schools. There are implications in what is proposed for leadership development programmes and how they are structured. What is called for is an explicit emphasis on acquiring a sound knowledge of the concepts related to inclusion, looking at the context in terms of policy and finally exploring models of leadership practice that mediates these two domains in very specific ways. Working towards leading an inclusive model of schooling, in the current climate in particular, requires acts of agency and advocacy. This requires that leaders’ learning is facilitated so that criticality, reflection and trust (see chapter 9) are key elements of this process of development. Leadership development needs to be a learning journey that disrupts thinking, challenges previously held value-based positions, creates ambiguity and dissonance and attunes leaders to the how and why of inclusive leadership in schools.

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LEADERSHIP FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: SETTING THE CONTEXT


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SECTION ONE

SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

The notion of an inclusive model of schooling has evolved over time and in order to understand current perspectives and discourses certain features of that evolutionary process require explication. In the first instance, inclusion draws on a range of ideas and concepts developed in other domains and in other cognate disciplines i.e. it is draws on discourses within fields such social justice, diversity, equality, democracy, citizenship and identity. Consequently, it could it could be accused of exhibiting high levels of conceptual borrowing which contributes to a degree of eclecticism creating some difficulty when offered as a rationale or framework upon which to base and shape a system of schooling. Secondly, what inclusion means in different school systems is very varied, the different system interpretation of inclusion included in this book will attest to that. This diversity is derived from how inclusion is filtered through different national cultural and socio-historical context on the pathway to practice. The manner in which many of the discourses that serve to construct the idea of inclusion are contested within their own fields also contribute to the variation in interpretation. It is not surprising therefore that the sum of the parts at times becomes overwhelming resulting at times in confusion and contradiction. In essence the discourses that frame what inclusive schooling looks like are formed of many different contested concepts mediated by very specific and deeply rooted sedimented (Layder, 1997) models of schooling.

It is beyond the scope of this book to offer a comprehensive trawl of the different cognate fields referred to above. However, it is essential to bear in mind that a fundamental principle underpinning this collection is the centrality of leadership development programmes that include significant engagement with the constituents of the socio-cultural context. By focusing on the socio-cultural context within which inclusion is framed and delimited this book takes as a key principle the need for leaders as inclusion workers to take full account of this socio-cultural context. The development of ‘inclusion leaders’ therefore could be described as a process of developing or fine-tuning a mindset – a deliberative and critical way of looking at the world thereby impacting very decisively the way one acts in the world. Essentially this process is ideological ‘based upon alternative views of the world and the nature and form of schooling that will build that world’ (Slee, 2011 p. 25). Striving for inclusion and inclusive schooling explicitly requires a particular value base and a very clear sense of vision for a particular type of education system that
SECTION ONE

will contribute to a much more broadly experienced common good. It cannot be assumed that this value base is a naturally occurring attribute of all leaders and consequently all dimensions of the socio-cultural field as they relate to inclusion need to be problematised. This section seeks to do this provide some key areas for reflection into the broad context for inclusive schooling. Chapter 2 explores some of the broad issues that relate to inclusion. Chapter 3 focuses very explicitly on special education context to which inclusion has been very tightly coupled from the outset. Exploring how special education and inclusion fit together to enrich student learning and student experience of schooling is vital. In this way it is possible to critique current models of practice and the misinterpretations of inclusion that prevail in many school systems. Both these chapters argue for a more overt and proactive critical engagement with the field at the level of professional practice. Chapter four turns its attention to links between leadership, identity, and inclusion while the final chapter in this section takes context to a more localized level i.e. the school as an organization. The manner in which inclusion is mediated by the culture of the school is a key element in the drive towards inclusion. It is important to recognise and explicate particular practices, processes and images of culture that facilitate and nurture this type of school.

REFERENCES

2. INCLUDING WHO? DECONSTRUCTING THE DISCOURSE

INTRODUCTION

The idea of inclusion is ‘generally understood around the world as part of the human rights agenda that demands access to, and equity in, education’ (Florian, 2008, p. 202). As a concept it was originally aligned to the developments within special education when thinking shifted from the idea of integration to the more challenging idea of inclusion and mainstreaming of special education provision (Warnock, 1978). From the outset the idea was tightly coupled to the notion that inclusion of children with SEN should replace integration because integration had produced a reductive mechanism of measuring students disability with a view to calculating the resource required to make the student fit into the mainstream system. The extent of the reductionism inherent in this policy is articulated clearly in the formulae of practice outlined by Slee where Equity [E] is achieved when you add additional resources [AR] to the disabled student [D] with the result that E = AR+D (Slee, 2001). Despite the time span between Warnock’s call for the inclusion, it is interesting to note how much of the present day discourse continues to draw on this type of mathematical calculation (see chapter 3 on the review of national policy trends and directions).

The move towards inclusion, as yet framed within the field of SEN, as a bedrock of policy was given added impetus by a range of international developments which strongly supported this model of schooling (see for example the World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000). The Salamanca statement presented inclusion as a two-dimensional process of increasing participation and removing barriers. Despite this broad support, an examination of current practice and much of the scholarship in the field reveals that inclusion has not been achieved for students with SEN with many agreeing that what happened was a recalibration of inclusion so that in effect what emerged in policy and practice was at best a model of integration (Dyson, 2001).

From 2005 onwards, the concept of inclusive education was broadened to include the diversity of learners (Opertti, 2010). UNESCO’s defined inclusion as ‘a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the...’
G. M. RUAIRC

appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.’ (UNESCO, 2005 p. 13). Developments in the field of social justice and equality contributed to the nature of the discourse surrounding inclusion. Legislative changes in some countries added a legal imperative to the drive towards inclusion. In the Republic of Ireland for example The Equal Status Acts (Government of Ireland, 2000–2004) named 9 grounds where discrimination was prohibited in the provision of goods; accommodation and education (see Lodge and Lynch, 2003). In this framework disability was included alongside others including race and ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation, gender etc. UNESCO’s 48th International Conference on Education in 2008 (ICE) strongly reaffirmed ‘a broadened concept of inclusive education can be viewed as a general guiding principle to strengthen education for sustainable development, lifelong learning for all and equal access of all levels of society to learning opportunities’ (ICE, 2008 cited in Opetti 2011 pp. 21–22). All of these have implications for schools and in all cases schooling is mentioned explicitly in documentation.

INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS

Inclusion as a construct is a highly contested area in education both in terms of what is encompassed in the term inclusion and in the variety of attempts in various contexts to deliver an inclusive education system. It is clear from the literature that as a construct inclusive education (IE) has experienced significant operational/implementation difficulties in many countries and most notably in those who have a long track record in pursuing the inclusion agendas (see Allan, 2008). Within the context of Special Educational Needs (SEN) inclusion has been challenged from a number of scholars cited in this collection – see for example the works of Allan, Florian, Graham and Slee. Teacher unions cite ‘strain on teachers and the damage done to children and young people by inclusion’ (Allan, 2008, p. 9) questioning ‘teachers capacity to keep up with the demands of inclusion’ (Allan, 2008, p. 1) It has also been critiqued within the special education field with some dismissing it as ‘an ideological and unproven bandwagon’ (ibid). Julie Allan in her seminal review of the idea of IE begins her analysis be mapping out what she calls territories of failure with respect to inclusion; ‘there is little doubt that inclusion has a troubled existence and that it is being written off, at least in some quarters, as an abject failure (Allan, 2008, p. 9). The exclusion of certain children from mainstream schools has become legitimate especially if it can be argued that they would have a potentially negative effect on the majority of children within the mainstream (Slee, 2011; Allan, 2008) Originally the instigator of the drive towards inclusion, Baroness Warnock has changed her views on the notion pointing to the traumatic nature of school experience for many children with SEN (Warnock, 2005).

One of the key problems for the construct of inclusion may be that it is largely constructed within the domain of special education needs. In this context, all too often, special means exclusionary (Mittler, 2008) and needs signals dependency
Including Who? Deconstructing the Discourse

(Corbett, 1996). In this way the idea of inclusion constructs winners and losers delineated by the normative and competitive nature of our schools (Benjamin, 2002). It is here that there is considerable evidence of problematic practice especially for children who have moderate to severe profound difficulties and very often children who exhibit moderate or severe emotional and behavioural problems. This results in these areas being prioritized in much of the discourse in relation to inclusion. The broader field seems to get less of a hearing, even when the idea of equality and social justice are mentioned there are either linked directly to SEN (Florian, 2008) or the argument quickly slips back to the consideration of SEN. This book seeks to keep the consideration of inclusion firmly in the broader context and to decouple the discussion from SEN or at least to hold is static while consideration is given to the broader remit of the construct. Approaching inclusion from the perspective and politics of difference rather than the deficit focus of SEN may begin to facilitate alternative thinking and allow the reality of diversity in all its forms into the debate.

It is unlikely, one would hope, if approached in this way that a school would be required to build up a case for additional resource hours’ teaching time to deal with an A-stream, well behaved, LGBT student. This is not in any way to deny the specific issues of resource that are absolutely essential to deliver robust SEN support, it is rather to move us away from an impasse that seems to have prevented the idea of inclusion developing to any great extent in praxis. It may also serve as a challenge to the orthodoxy of the standard, the normal curve and the tyranny of outcome focused accountable models of schooling that have framed the broader discussion of education and the manner in which SEN is supported in schools for far too long. It is arguable that this pursuit of diagnosis and the practice of labelling associated with it have resulted in the reification of the individuals’ special educational need which sometimes resulted in the individual being, recognisable to others and even to themselves primarily by their special need. This in itself is problematic but also neglects the idea of multiple areas of difference or the intersectionality of gender, race, class, ethnicity etc. (Anthias, 2008). The single axis framework associates with SEN diagnose and treatment (Crenshaw, 1994, p. 40) and the legislation framing the field has precluded the idea of intersectionality and the fundamental question of the correct approach to take to the individual in order for them to be included as individuals. It may well be that the source of the reading problem of a working class boy with a diagnoses of dyslexia may be culturally located with the result that the boy may not see any purpose or meaning in reading. All the phonic programmes in the world targeting at fixing the child may well fail as they do not address the root cause of the problem (Mac Ruairc, 2009).

Within the context of the broader notion of inclusion, some attempts have been made to include students from the diversity of society more proactively. The recent variation in practice in Ireland relating to the inclusion of difference with respect to race and ethnicity is a case in point (Devine, 2012). While there is some evidence of good practice in this regard, in many cases, at times the form inclusion takes is a type of tokenistic lip service to difference where an acknowledgement of race
and ethnicity often involves a fetishized international day or international week. This 4 f mode of inclusion family, food, fashion and festivals (Banks 2002 and for an Norwegian example see Andersen and Ottesen, 2011) does little to address the fundamental exclusionary thrust of issues such as school curricula, cultural norms and expectations or the benignly perceived but powerfully exclusionary notion of ‘tradition’. Some fundamental traditional views in relation to patterns of participation in education prevail either tacitly in terms of assumptions or explicitly in terms of particular forms of practice that continue to exist in schools. In summary, it is clear from the breadth of scholarship and the range of different discourses that feed into a consideration of inclusion, and the number of stakeholders involved that is a very contested terrain. Tinkering at the edges produces little real change. A more systemic consideration is necessary in order to map out the main issues that are contested. The remainder of this chapter will focus on this by problematizing the construct of inclusion itself (Graham and Slee, 2008), challenging the focus on the exceptional (Allan, 2008) as well as critiquing the deeply seated patterns of practice that continue to exclude certain groups from the maximum benefits of the emancipatory power of education broadly defined.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

In order to fully appreciate the complexity of the idea of inclusive schooling it is necessary to examine the term itself. It is argued that the term inclusion implies a bringing in and therefore carries within it a presupposition of a centre / an ideal centre or a place worthy of being brought into. Whether this is viewed as a tightly bound spatial metaphor or a more loosely formed patterned space, particular patterns of prestige and privilege are identifiable. Inclusion within the perspective can be viewed as a discursive strategy that constructs a range of positions and the rules by which the borders and limits are conceived (Graham and Slee, 2008). What is required is a making visible and a deconstruction of the centre from which the different forms of exclusion and exclusionary practices derive. It can be said that inclusive education invites the denaturalisation of normalcy to arrive at a ground zero point from which we banish idealisations of the centre (Graham and Slee, 2008). This essentially draws on Derrida (1982) who argues that there is no centre but an absence of centre for which infinite substitutions are made. Essentially a postmodern perspective, it challenges truth claims among those who attempt to attest that they have a legitimate claim on the centre. The centre is therefore contestable but not often fully contested or exposed because of the manner in which power and position functions to produce discourses that function as a substitution for the centre while making attempts/ claims to be the one true centre. When this view acquires legitimacy it privileges those who are aligned to the predicated social norms. Through the normalisation of these culturally specific performances particular ways of being are naturalised. It is thus that particular discourses and practices become conflated with a social imaginary centre, human essence, human nature and a whole range of
tactical statements (Graham and Slee, 2008). The imperative for maintaining the centre is derived from this view that humanity needs a centre, that it needs a cohesive system. The idea that this cohesive centre privileges and has continued to privilege particular social groups is somehow decentred from this fundamental truth and it order to ensure that this is not disturbed it become necessary to appear to be active in the pursuit of the ideal while at the same time doing very little to challenge the status quo.

Two imperatives for consideration arise from this position. Firstly it is necessary to seek an alternative approach to the underpinning philosophy which frames thinking in the field in order to create a space for difference as a point of departure for practice rather than the search for the exception or the hunt for disability (Baker, 2002). This on its own will help but its impact will be severely limited unless accompanied by a much more systemic reworking of current thinking at a political and policy level in order to impact practice and outcomes.

An essential component in the examination of inclusion is the need to make explicit and interrogate the normative assumptions that lead us to think that we can even talk of including. To do this it is necessary to deconstruct the norm (Foucault, 1977, 1980), the construction of which has provided the context for the differentiation, categorisation and spatialisation of individuals (Foucault, 1972). Within this Foucauldian framework used by other scholars in relation to inclusion (Graham, 2006; Graham and Slee, 2008) the norm is viewed as a fiction. A fiction which attributes value to culturally specific performances (Graham and Slee, 2008) and in doing this privileges particular ways of being and stigmatise others. This is an uncomfortable perspective and one which challenges particular accumulations of power, privilege and forms of capital and risks the disruption of these patterns if challenged and any fundamental level. In order to understand how it functions we need to examine the manner in relations of power circulate through discourses to define not the law but the norm so that the norm actually appropriates law like qualities which extend to a sense of inevitably, a position that precludes the notion of an alternative norm so that is functions in a hegemonic way to define one true reality (Bourdieu, 1986). This is a form of power that makes individuals subject to the discursive dividing practice that categorises the individual by marking them out by their own individuality. In education contexts, particularly with respect to SEN, this results in a compartmentalisation of students, constructed primarily through psychological and SEN discourses and knowledge claims which result in the identification of a range of target groups – all of which are defined against the centre where the centre is not challenged but reproduced. In fact in the SEN field the norm acquires an additional legitimacy as its functioning as a statistically derived construct serves to rank rate and classify with notable regularity and credibility. What we have is on the one hand statements of desirable ways of being and statements of deficit, conceptualisations of those other than the norm. Within this centre we have the privileged notion of the normal outside of which but always within relation existence to it is the negative, deficit, exterior other (Graham and Slee, 2008).
Some scholars have focused on a much more empowering alternative to this perspective citing the work of Derrida and Deluze to enable a broader more open understanding of the field of enquiry. This has been a very worthwhile application of the work of the philosophers of difference to the field of inclusion and this has much more empowering potential than the more traditional trajectories of enquiry. Although, the arguments here are complex and the detail is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is possible to see clear implications for practice from this line of enquiry. Essentially what is required is a shift in perspective that takes on board the concept of a Derridian type of deconstruction with all the associated lack of closure in terms of definitions, ‘the right way’ and ‘the best method’. The ambiguity inherent in the workings of deconstruction prevents the development of a totalizing system. This is at the essence of good practice in relation to inclusion and the process whereby the reading of texts (here I include practice as texts) always involves a double reading. This always ‘seeks to locate a point of otherness and opens up a discourse on the other: (Critchley cited in Allan, 2008, p. 79) thereby ‘showing the flows of thought and assumptions which direct it and what it excludes’ (ibid). In this way there is always space for an alternative, the mindset is always reflective and never fixed. There is a tolerance for ambiguity which creates a natural space for a multiplicity of norms (Graham, 2006). However, this is not an easy task and it is acknowledged that it can be particularly difficult for schools where norms and uniformity so often define the way school works and where moral closure and (sometimes) the tyranny of the right answer/correct approach so often prevail in both the tacit and explicit assumptions that so often inform practice.

It is possible to argue that this broader idea of inclusion and the associated the removal of barriers so that all can participate on his or her own terms is very persuasive. In practice, however, it became clear in some contexts that in effect could be viewed as a broadly utopian idea that took little account of the reality of schools in context or the extent to which schools are part of an overall state apparatus that functions to reproduce patterns of privilege in society. In this regard the idea was underpinned by a benign view of power and the manner in which power is used to shape and appropriate forms of educational capital to suit the needs of dominant social groups (Bernstein, 1996; Bourdieu 1984, 1986, 1990; Brantlinger 2003; Giroux and McLaren 1989; Lareau 2003; Willis 1977, 1990 among others). Although it was derived from sources demanding a more equal society with much greater systems of equal opportunity underpinned by greater degrees of social justice, and an increasing range of legislative attempts prohibiting discrimination (Thomas and Vaughan, 2004), it can be argued that the attempts at achieving inclusion exhibit a lack of a conceptualisation of schools in the broader societal framework; a factor which presents a fundamental flaw in the overall thinking. The extent to which schools can ‘do it alone’ and sort out all society’s ills is widely contested (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). The transfer of learning experience from school to outside school setting is by no means guaranteed. The fundamental functional correspondence underpinning the
idea that if schools function as inclusive units, the learning and experience therein will contribute to a more inclusive world is by no means conclusive. Fundamental to the perspective underpinning this paper is that in its original iteration there were aspects of the construct that were very attractive to people who were striving to articulate and argue for a more egalitarian model of society. It called for a radical rethinking of education, a call that is still implicit in the construct. However the extent of the radical reappraisal required became clear the more the concept was interrogated. What was needed was a fundamental rebuilding of a school system and the broader society from the core out – and this is in all probability is unlikely to happen. In the absence of this we are left with a utopian idea which relies for its very existence on many problematic components some of which have been referred to here. Instead of this rethinking what happens. What follows is clearly identifiable in educational practice in many countries. Many systems now have a proliferation of a range of initiatives, programmes and policies to support SEN students, students from ethnic minorities and students of particular social class groups; No Child Left Behind (US); Every Child Matters (UK); DEIS (Ireland, see Precey, 2011, current volume). All initiatives targeted to ensure that the semblance of proactive policy and practice is identifiable while the cause/centre remains unchallenged. When for instance literacy initiatives and programmes targeted at particular underachieving groups fail – it has to be poor teaching, a badly designed programme, lack of parental interest and/or little home support for literacy etc (Freebody, 2007; Gee, 2004, 2008; Luke, 1998; Street, 1995). The search begins for another programme to produce a quick fix which rarely translates into sustainable improvements in the real meaningful literacy standards of the target groups. At no point are the fundamental patterns of inequality which produces different cultural circumstances and perspectives with respect to literacy as a cultural and social practice considered (Smagorinsky, 2001). To do this is the real dangerous stuff. Instead the naturalised centre, in this case the school type literate culture, continues to efface. It exists beyond interrogation ‘a ghostly centre which eludes critical analysis and thus recognition of the power relations embodied within notions of normalcy which exert influence over other ways of being’ (Graham and Slee, 2008, p. 287).

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP?

In the Irish context there have been considerable developments in relation to the manner in which schools support the diversity in the student population in recent years (Drudy, 2009). Notwithstanding this work, there are many exclusionary factors embedded in systems, structures and practices leading directly to the marginalisation, non-recognition and ‘othering’ of certain groups of students in schools (O’Higgins et al, 2010). Bernstein’s reference to the stratifying function of social class in education can be extended within the debate around inclusive schooling to a range of other dominant cultural and social constructed categories that penetrates schools so
as to ‘position pupils differently and insidiously... legitimising the few invalidating the many’ (Bernstein, 1996: 98). Without challenging how these patterns of dominance are constructed and reproduced within and through education, following a nominally inclusive policy trajectory alone may always privilege the centre. This pathway will most likely continue to view difference in terms of its distance from the centre thereby ensuring that the range of diversity within the student population remains fragmented and marginalised. When the habitus and hegemony (Bourdieu, 1986) of the dominant and the privileges that ensue are not challenged they continue to be reaffirmed. Similarly when key systems such as education continue to seek out and label difference the power of the norm is re-established. Leadership is central to changing the model, articulating alternatives and moving closer to a more inclusive society. This begs two key questions; What leadership and Where is leadership needed? It is now widely recognised that schools alone cannot solve the problems of society. What is clearly required is leadership at a societal/ governmental level committed to the broad values of an equal society. However, education, as a very significant component of state systems and economic apparatuses occupies a central role in the future development of societies. It stands to reason that high quality leadership within the sector is vital. But how can one school leader in one school make a difference to the overall bigger picture? In dealing with this issue, articulating different models of leadership is sometimes the focus of scholarship. This can be worthwhile because it provides a range of perspectives on school leadership that can enrich and inform improved practice. There is another more critical dimension to this field of enquiry; it is possible to produce scholarship relating to the manner in which leadership functions with negative consequences by highlighting the impact of some practices, at local school level, which contribute to patterns of exclusion in individual schools – a focus on what is sometimes called the darker side of leadership practice. In this way particular aspects of practice can be overtly challenged by scholarship in order to deliver a better outcome for all students. In Ireland, the practice of overt and covert selection of certain types of students and the resulting commodification of children leading directly to patterns of chosen and unchosen’ schools (Mathews, 2010, p. 107) has existed for years. The patterns of practice contributing to this reproduction of privilege are not accidental requiring very specific and distributed patterns of leadership in order to ensure that it functions in the interest of dominant/middle class groups. The manner in which students are assigned to ability groups in streamed/ banded classes sometimes at very young ages (8 or 9 in some disadvantage primary schools) also requires the specific action on the part of school leadership at many levels (McGillacuddy, 2005). This type of leadership practice which, although localised, is not exceptional and is repeated in a range of contexts with the result that these forms of practice collectively contribute to school cultures and patterns of discourse within which exclusion prevails and is justified. Little has been done at the level of the state or the academy to challenge this type of practice and meanwhile the asymmetrical pattern in the distribution of the benefits of education persist.
INCLUDING WHO? DECONSTRUCTING THE DISCOURSE

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