Doing Inclusive Education Research
STUDIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
Volume 1

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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. Exclusion is however ubiquitous and has implications for all students and educational contexts. Traditionally schools have not been pressed to deal with exclusion and failure. Failing and difficult to manage 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 labour market and the call by parents, encouraged by human rights legislation, 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.
Doing Inclusive Education Research

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The field of inclusive education is one of the more highly charged areas in education and social policy. In many ways, this is positive rather than negative. Indeed, the fact that there are intense debates over ideology, politics, theories, research methods, policies, and practices is a sign of vitality. It shows that people are taking their ethical responsibilities seriously. Doing inclusive education research represents an insightful examination of the ways in which these tensions and controversies are woven into the very fabric of the field and into the lives of those researchers who have made significant contributions to it. By placing the people who have been deeply involved in these tensions and controversies - many of whom have very different positions on them - at the centre of the book’s narrative and analysis, the meaning of all of this comes alive. This is a real accomplishment, one that is helped by the authors’ own keen insights into and sensitivity to both the people and positions represented in the field.

Research on research and researchers is more than a little important. Understanding the social and personal conditions for the production of knowledge provides the grounding for more thoughtful reading of research and what it means; but it also allows for a better grasp of the political, ideological, and often intensely personal genesis of the questions, methods, and assumptions that underpin it.

Research is often intertextual. It is done with either conscious or unconscious reference to other people’s work, to a history of struggles over the traditions (the plural is crucial here) that dominate a field, and to the boundaries that are policed by those traditions. Indeed, as Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu reminded us, the organization of both knowledge and of fields of study - and the explicit and implicit hierarchies within them - are among the most powerful ways in which power is produced and reproduced (Bernstein 1977; Bourdieu 1984). As Julie Allan and Roger Slee so clearly demonstrate here, fully understanding the field of inclusive education requires a recognition of such struggles and hierarchies - and of the individuals who represent them.

The issues involved in how educators respond to ‘difference’ and how it should be understood, issues with which the field is so clearly concerned, are not new to say the least. To take just one example, from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many of the roots of what came to be called ‘special education’ were firmly grounded in the popular eugenics movement and in concerns with ‘race betterment’. The founders of so much of educational psychology, special education, and gifted education were often proponents of and leaders in eugenics organizations (Selden 1999). Thus, critical questions about ideology, epistemologies, legitimate knowledge - and how educational institutions and researchers should respond to all this - had to be raised. Equally critical questions then had to be raised as well about what happened to students when they were subjected to the norms and values that dominated our educational institutions.
Such concerns did not remain in one field. They had a major influence in the early growth of critical sociology of education and critical curriculum studies on both sides of the Atlantic. Take my own work as one instance. As early as 1979, in the first edition of *Ideology and curriculum* (Apple 1979; 2004), I argued that:

By using official categories and constructs such as those defined by and growing out of official institutional practices - examples might be studies of the ‘slow learner,’ ‘discipline problems,’ and ‘remediation’ - ...researchers may be lending the rhetorical prestige of science to what may be questionable practices of an educational bureaucracy and a stratified economic system. That is, there is no rigorous attempt at examining *institutional* culpability (Apple 1979, p. 134).

I then went on to say that:

[Hence,] in the school students are the persons expressly focused upon. Attention is primarily paid to their specific behavioural, emotional, or educational ‘problems,’ and, thus, there is a strong inclination to divert attention from the inadequacies of the educational institution itself and what bureaucratic, cultural, and economic conditions caused the necessity of applying these constructs originally (Apple 1979, p. 135).

These words could not have been written if the history of how educators construed difference and established mechanisms that then constructed student identities had not been made visible. And they could not have been written if research had not been done on labelling and on the role of dominant institutions in producing inequalities of various kinds had not been generated earlier. Thus, many of us within the extended field of critical educational studies stand on the shoulders of researchers who now would be seen as calling for a more ‘inclusive’ set of institutions. I for one am certainly in their debt and plan to remain so.

People such as Julie Allan and Roger Slee enable all of us to be more reflexive, a skill and value that is even more of a requirement today. In fact, what makes the book even more interesting is the fact that it serves as a model for the kind of reflexivity that so many critical researchers have been arguing for over the years. But even with these strengths, Allan and Slee’s book is not ‘just’ a book that is significant for those who consciously identify themselves with a (loosely) bounded field of ‘inclusive education’. It is an important volume for anyone who is concerned with the nature of inequalities in schools and other institutions. Let me give an example of why the debates within inclusive education are things to which all committed educational scholars/activists should pay attention.

All too many critical researchers see issues of ‘special needs’ as interesting, but are largely concerned with what Nancy Fraser has called a ‘politics of recognition’. To them, concerns about recognition are important, but perhaps less important than issues surrounding a ‘politics of redistribution’ (Fraser 1997). Thus, one’s first priority must be challenging capitalism and its economic, political, and cultural assemblage in all of our institutions and in daily life. I have some sympathy with parts of this argument. Yet, speaking personally, I can think of few more powerful
challenges to the profit motive than the activists within disability communities who demand that paid workplaces, housing, and so much more be redesigned to meet their specific needs. For these activists, profit cannot be the driving force when it comes to the ways in which the physical spaces and institutional norms of paid work and the entire apparatus of daily living are organized and controlled. In more technical terms, person rights become the equal of property rights (Apple 1995). Thus, in this case a politics of recognition is linked in coherent ways to a politics of redistribution. It is the joining of these two all too often seemingly disparate traditions that gives additional power to this movement.

In a time when neo-liberal impulses toward marketization, privatization, and performativity are driving all too much of the agenda in educational reform and where the struggles against them are growing in nations throughout the world (Apple 2006; Apple and Buras 2006; Ball 2007), movements such as these are essential markers. They help restore the collective memory that life could in fact be very different. They remind us that the idea of ‘TINA’ (“There Is No Alternative”) is incorrect. And they keep alive a vision of a better future for all of us by expanding the ‘we’ so that the institutions in this society are truly inclusive.

My aim in directing our attention to this element of disability rights is not simply to make a set of technical and analytic points. Rather, I want to document that the debates and controversies within the inclusive education community(ies) are not epiphenomenal. They are at the centre of issues that cut across the entire critical education community(ies). And they speak to the personal and political struggles so many researchers have when they take their tasks as seriously as they deserve. This is another of the reasons I think that Doing inclusive education research deserves a wide readership.

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REFERENCES

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Inclusive education research has become a catch-all phrase for many different kinds of enquiry. Research conducted within the troubled and troubling field of inclusive education contains a series of frequently emotive and highly charged contests. It is a research genre charged and characterised by controversy, claim and counterclaim. All too often, there is an apparent unwillingness by researchers of inclusive education to reveal their positions, where they are coming from, by specifying the foundations of knowledge and assumptions about the nature of reality on which their work is based. At the same time, however, they will work hard to defend their often deeply entrenched positions. This combination of a lack of reflexivity and rigorous defensiveness is difficult for the outsider, or even the insider, to challenge, to engage in debate or indeed to make sense of what is going on.

Those attempting to navigate the field of inclusive education research, especially those entering it as students or as novice researchers, have little to go on besides either conventional educational research texts or textbooks covering the substantive aspects of inclusive education. There have been some recent productions of research texts specific to inclusive education (Nind et al, 2005; Clough and Barton, 1995) or relating to ‘critical issues in research’ (Hood et al, 1999). These books, whether generic or specific to inclusive education, deal, in a linear fashion, with each aspect of the research and occasionally delve into issues around ethics and sensitivity in the research process (Nind et al, 2005), highlight potential problems when researching vulnerable subjects (Armstrong & Moore, 2004; Moore, 2001; Norwich, 2007) or remind prospective researchers of the importance of ‘exploring and exposing the hidden and taken-for-granted aspects of the social relations of research production’ (Barton and Clough, 1995, p. 4; Moore et al, 1998). There is little, however, to guide the researcher on ‘how to capture what is inevitably elusive and complex’ (Corbett, 2001, p. 38) or on avoiding creating or supporting exclusion in his or her own research. Nixon and Sikes (2003) and others (e.g. Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Carspecken, 1996) note that there is no consideration of the distinctive features of educational research and the challenges these present for the novice researcher. Many of the research textbooks offer platitudes about how educational research is characterised by uncertainty and ‘dilemmas’ (Somekh et al, 2005, p. 3) or underline the tumultuous nature of the
process. Zurbrugg (1993), for example, describes the emotional dimensions of research and their unpredictability:

First an initial period of apocalyptic panic, accompanied by, or succeeded by, a mood of cynical or ludic creativity. Second, a phase of substantial experimentation. Third, a phase of apocalyptic panic accompanied by, or followed by, prophetic confidence in new modes of hybrid creativity (p. 162).

Phillips and Pugh (1987), offering the alluring title, *How to get a PhD*, suggest that the process, as it is experienced by the doctoral student, is more linear. They describe how the initial enthusiasm for the research gives way to an increasing sense of isolation. As they develop more self-confidence, students become increasingly interested in their work and gradually there is a transference of dependence from the supervisor to the work. About halfway through the period of research, students may become bored, then frustrated, until they reach a point where completing the thesis is simply ’a job to be finished’ (p. 69). Whilst it may be reassuring to the student to learn that his or her panic is an inevitable part of the research process, or that they may progress through different emotional stages, these books offer little by way of advice on how to manage these encounters with panic or to monitor their progression through the various stages. The problem with these books (aside from their exaggerated promises) is that they deny both the intensely political aspect of educational research and the interwoven nature of theory, philosophy, practices and material realities (Kuhn, 1970; Shostak, 2002; Punch, 2005). The failure to acknowledge and engage with these interactions means that students part with their cash in the hope of gaining meaningful advice and instead find themselves unable to cope with the series of ‘derailments’ (Shostak, 2002, p. 5) that their research presents and enter the ‘logical graveyard where sense and nonsense fuse and meanings are loosened from their anchorage in master narratives’ (ibid).

The textbooks on inclusive education which have swamped the market of teacher education (a market which also comprises those who are likely to go on to undertake educational research) act, according to Brantlinger (2006), as ‘authoritative purveyors of technical knowledge’ (p. 67). Brantlinger sees their effects as malign because they set up expectations among novice teachers that if they follow the guidance, then teaching will be smooth. For beginning researchers who might perhaps be trying to get a hold on the concept of inclusive education, these textbooks are equally (though not intentionally) malign or problematic because they convey children’s pathologies, including cultural attributes, as fixed and uncontestable deficits. This remains a fundamental and, all too often unacknowledged, problem for inclusive educational research.

The absence of proper critical debate on the nature of inclusive education - and how it might be most appropriately researched - has led to a fuzzy conceptualisation of inclusive education as being about the physical presence of students in the mainstream or neighbourhood school and towards research that is fixed by medicalised constructions of disability (Barnes, 1997), markers of race (Artiles et al, 1997) or pathologized accounts of poverty and class (Vincent et al, forthcoming). Alternatively
researchers may elect to eschew or block consideration of aspects of cultural identity, gender or class out because they are too complex to handle (Jenkinson, 1997; Wearmouth, 2000; Ashman & Elkins, 2005). In Brantlinger’s (2006) review of what were superficially revised special education textbooks, with additional chapters on inclusion, which were being made available to students of inclusive education:

Overrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities in special education was not addressed, and there was no hint that the structure of school practice or school personnel might have an intrinsic social class and racial/ethnic bias (p. 51).

At the same time as inclusive education - and research upon it - has developed along a series of tramlines with particular borders, it has also become sloganised and turned into a cliché which is used ubiquitously because it adds a progressive gloss to what people are saying (Benjamin, 2002; Thomas and O’Hanlon, 2002). When attempts are made to get at the meaning behind inclusive education, however, little substance is found. This phenomenon was forcefully articulated by Edward Said (2000) in his essay, Travelling theory reconsidered, in which he examines the popularizing and ‘taming’ of Lukacs’s theory of reification (p. 437). Distanced from the original theoretical formulation of the human experience and historical context that generated it, later versions and misapplications have ‘degraded and subdued the theory’ (p. 436). It is little wonder that students register confusion and even fear as they find themselves trying to navigate a field which appears simultaneously treacherous, exclusionary and elusive. Paradoxically it is a broad research field that affects to describe itself as inclusive. This, we suggest, is akin to what Said (2000) refers to as the follies of orthodoxy and dogma.

The lack of transparency across the field of inclusive education research by those who practise it presents difficulties, we have suggested, for students and novice researchers trying to access and make sense of it. This may have negative consequences, not just for them, but also for the subjects of their research. The field of inclusive education research appears to be full of pitfalls into which an unsuspecting researcher can easily fall and, as a result of which, their research may become exclusionary by accident. That is, research which aspires to be inclusive, undertaken by well intentioned individuals, may get itself into trouble at particular points along the way.

TENSIONS AND STRUGGLES

To say inclusive education research is characterised by controversies and counterpoints is to demonstrate our mastery of the understatement. Since the publication of Ellen Brantlinger’s (1997) Using ideology: cases of nonrecognition of the politics of research and practice in special education, in which she ‘took on’ a number of the ‘traditional special educationists’, there has been a steady exchange of abuse between, on the one hand, the so-called ‘inclusionists’, including Brantlinger (2006), Gallagher (2004 & 2006), Ware (2004a) and Danforth (2004) and, on the
other hand, traditional special educators such as Kavale and Mostert (2004),
before that, however, there was a heated ‘discussion’ over labelling in the late
eighties and early nineties between Marten Söder (1989), Tony Booth (1991) and
Mike Oliver (1992). The abuse has generally been unpleasant and somewhat
personal and the latest series of battles have resembled a hysterical game of ping
pong, with each side batting vivid accusations and denunciations, each with their
own spin, across the table. The disputes have become particularly personal and
embodied, with accusations being traded about whether the other side is
sufficiently qualified (or disabled) to be a legitimate commentator, or, in the case
of the labelling dispute, leading to the accusation of ‘intellectual masturbation’
(Oliver, 1992, p. 20). We have found these disputes, knowing most of those
involved and indeed choosing to include some of the individuals in our research,
quite perplexing. Vehmas (2007), observing the disputes from Finland, describes
his feelings as ranging ‘from amazement to disapproval, from amusement to
sadness’ (p. 3). To those coming new to research on inclusive education, they must
be utterly mystifying and are probably exclusionary.

A recent ‘head-to-head’ within the journal Exceptionality (2006) between the
special educationists Kauffman and Sasso and Gallagher, an inclusionist, appeared
to widen the gulf between the two camps. Using venomous language, Kauffman
and Sasso denounce postmodernism, which they allege to be the position held by
inclusionists, dismissing it as ‘intellectually bankrupt’ and ‘poisonous’ (Kauffman
and Sasso, 2006a, p. 65), leaving us ‘without a moral compass’ (Kauffman and
Sasso, 2006a, p. 86). Facilitated Communication is singled out as ‘a nightmare in
the making’ (p. 83), with Kauffman and Sasso insisting, for dramatic effect, ‘No
we are not making this up!’ (p. 83; original emphasis). They accuse the proponents
of Facilitated Communication, such as Douglas Biklen, of perpetuating the ‘the
most demeaning of hoaxes’ (p. 83) because, they say, it ascribes words to those
who did not author them, and of engaging in ‘postmodern fashionable nonsense’
(p. 84). The special educationists foretell ‘catastrophic consequences … for
educational practices’ and pronounce that ‘we cannot all just get along’ (p. 69).
Gallagher (2006), in response, agrees that consensus between both camps is
probably never likely to be a possibility, but claims to be holding out for ‘calm,
respectful, deeply informed and reasoned discussions’ (p. 92). Maintaining that she
is not a postmodernist, as accused, she suggests that the elision of postmodernists,
critical theorists and hermeneuticists into one group is ‘uninformed and simplistic’
(Gallagher, 2006, p. 95). Kauffman and Sasso, in their rejoinder to Gallagher,
accuse her of ‘postmodern foppery’ (2006b, p. 109), whilst insisting this was not
personal:

People are not the same as their ideas; we are not calling Gallagher a fop, but
we see the ideas she embraces as foppery - arguments for follies, absurdities
and vanities (p. 109).

Without wishing to enter the debate surrounding Facilitated Communication, it is
worth noting that when Rosemary Crossley commenced using this with Anne
McDonald at the St Nicholas institution in Melbourne, Australia in 1977, no-one saw this as a contribution to the formulation of a postmodern theory. Indeed it would be very difficult to link the conceptualization of Facilitated Communication in the transcripts from the Supreme Court of Victoria, or indeed any of Douglas Biklen’s research into Facilitated Communication, to that body of theory and research that could be described as poststructuralism or postmodernism. This simply echoes Brantlinger’s (1997) point, drawn from Mick Dunkin, in her Using ideology essay, that there is a need to adhere to the rules of rigour that may be found wanting in others’ work.

Another recent dispute has been played out between two disabled scholars, following the publication of Tom Shakespeare’s (2006) book, Disability rights and wrongs, in which he rejects the social model of disability (Oliver, 1990) because of its reliance on ‘an overly narrow and flawed conception of disability’ (p. 9). Shakespeare points to alternative and more appropriate socio-contextual approaches which either pre-date the social model or exist outside the UK and which have been consigned to ‘the dustbin marked medical model’ (p. 19). He acknowledges the risk of alienation from the UK disability studies community that such pronouncements could provoke and this indeed appears to have occurred. The seeds of tension had been sewn over a decade ago when at a celebration conference for ten years of the journal, Disability and Society, Mairian Corker, Jenny Corbett and Tom Shakespeare called for a reconsideration of the social model in the light of contributions from feminist and poststructural researchers to understanding and researching impairment, disability and disablement (Barton & Oliver, 1997). Shakespeare argues, however, that these epistemological contests are necessary to help disability studies in the UK out of its current ‘impasse’ (p. 9) and that what has caused it to become ‘stagnated’ (p. 1), the social model, should be abandoned:

Disability studies would be better off without the social model, which has become fatally undermined by its own contradictions and inadequacies. To reject the British social model does not mean returning to the bad old days of medicalisation and individualistic approaches before the UPIAS revolution. There are many other, more robust, ways of conceptualising disability, which retain a commitment to equality and justice for disabled people, but do not base the analysis on a mistaken bracketing of disability difference (p. 28).

The journal, Disability and Society, hosted a review symposium which included a number of commentaries (Volume 22, number 2, 2007). Mike Oliver’s review of the book pronounces it ‘a mish mash of contradictory perspectives’ (Oliver, 2007, p. 230), and criticises Shakespeare’s reliance on philosophy. Furthermore, Oliver questions whether Shakespeare was qualified to comment on the social model, since he was ‘a relatively affluent person with a minor impairment who is never going to be at the sharp end of personal support services’ (p. 232). Shakespeare had offered, in his book, what he saw as his own ontological qualification - ‘the genetic condition achondroplasia, the commonest form of restricted growth or dwarfism’ (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 4) - as a disabled person, but this is insufficient for Oliver who accuses Shakespeare of ‘a lack of understanding of the realities of severe
improvement’ (Oliver, 2007, p. 232). Oliver concludes that this book had confirmed
that his decision to retire and devote himself to horses, poker, and, Bob (Dylan, of
course), a theme he develops in the interview he granted us and which features in
this book, was correct. Other commentaries welcome the broader base of socio-
contextual understandings of disability that it offers (Traustadóttir, 2007), of
particular interest to the Nordic countries which have always been somewhat
mystified about the dominance of the social model in the UK. Boxall (2007),
however, finds the ‘emphatic and forceful critique’ (p. 228) troubling especially
where people with learning difficulties are concerned and argues that what is
needed is a strengthening, rather than the abandonment of, the social model. Others
are critical of its potential use to students because it rehearses some of the debates
which Shakespeare decries (Sheldon, 2007) or fails to deliver its promise of
progressivism and risks being ‘regressive and reactionary’ (Beresford, 2007, p.
223). Sheldon (2007) suggests that the review symposium itself may give the book
an elevated status it doesn’t deserve.

Vehmas (2007), who as a Fin sees none of the leadership of disability studies
within the Nordic countries from among the disability community, but who has
observed UK debates with interest, regrets the personal nature of the insults which
feature in the review symposium, particularly between Oliver and Shakespeare.
Most of all he is disappointed that the opportunity for a proper debate about
disability has been missed. We share some of this concern and are particularly
worried that students and novice researchers will encounter this debate as outsiders
and will remain so, either because they cannot quite ‘get’ the nuances of the
arguments or see beyond the anger and emotions being played out.

Students and novice researchers who enter the field of inclusive educational
research, and who encounter disputes such as those we have referred to, must, on
one level, find them hard to decipher because of the multiply coded way in which
the different sides engage and how different strategies and tactics, which we will
discuss more fully later, are deployed. At another, more disconcerting, level,
students and novice researchers will inevitably become concerned about the
dangers of being implicated in particular camps, and the risks this will potentially
pose to them: the success of doctoral or funded research proposals, journal articles,
appointments and tenure may all be affected by the associations with one camp or
another - or at least it may seem that way. At a recent conference, one student
described publicly how a review of her article contained derogatory comments
about Deb Gallagher, whom she had drawn heavily upon. The rejection of the
article, she had suggested, might have been connected with this association.
The audience, which included Deb Gallagher, encouraged the student to read the
rejection and the association as a mark of success, but also shifted uneasily at the
implication.

These brief examples of eruptions over position represent controversies and
counterpoints within the disability studies field and across a more widely
recognised divide between traditional special education and inclusive education.
There have also been divisions over theory and method within the special
INTRODUCTION

DOING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION RESEARCH: WHAT THIS BOOK IS ABOUT

We wanted to find a way of opening up some of the controversies and counterpoints that characterise research on inclusive education. Rather than produce yet another piece of commentary, we decided to embark on a research project with individuals who had undertaken key pieces of research and/or scholarship. By researching the researchers, we were trying to get inside the research process and explore how decisions were made, for example about the questions to be addressed in the research, who was to be included, how sense was made of the data, writing and the impact of the work. In undertaking this research project and presenting our findings to students and researchers, we wanted readers to engage, albeit mediated by our emphases and interpretations, with the researchers themselves as they reflected upon specific pieces of their work. Doing inclusive education research provides an opportunity to observe and examine a range of research projects that have been described as belonging to the field of research in inclusive education and some which sit in opposition to this, within the field of special education. We have identified key figures from around the world who have undertaken research which is regarded as important by the inclusive education community. These key research projects span time, place and topic. Moreover, they also represent different foundations of thought. It is neither a book about research methods nor a treatise on inclusive education, but is about doing research in inclusive education. In this way, the book identifies very closely with the stresses experienced by students and other researchers working in a highly charged area of educational research and politics. Our hope is that this will be of more help to new, and even experienced, researchers than the conventional research books which do not alert you to where the main dangers (dilemmas and uncertainties) are, but which instead have the pretence of certainty.

In Chapter 2, we describe how our research sought to exploit the insights offered by the researchers to document the research process as a series of decisions with consequences for those being researched. Here we describe how our research project encompassed individuals whom we chose to locate across a spectrum of the different attempts to come to terms with, and investigate, inclusive education. In this chapter we describe what we identified as defining texts, pieces of work which, to us, have had an influence on the field, the selection of our sample and how individuals were approached, our interview questions and the approach to data analysis. We set out our own positioning in relation to theory and methodology and subject this to critique. We also consider the ethical issues concerned with doing a piece of work of this kind.

Chapter 3 attempts a chronicling of the development of an area of scholarship and research called inclusive education. We offer our own take on this chronicle, together with the critical readings of it by the researchers with whom we engaged. We explore how the early tensions led to turf fencing and created a
problematic - a respectable and accepted element of the education research, scholarship and policy lexicon with wildly divergent meanings. We consider how this has been exacerbated even further by the incorporation of the terminology to further the New Labour/European social inclusion rhetoric. Hence this chapter presents a truncated overview of policy developments to demonstrate the imperative for research as a social fixative.

In Chapter 4, we elaborate on the researchers’ and scholars’ positioning in relation to the field of inclusive education and their controversies and counterpoints. Their responses to direct questions about their stance are the material for this discussion and we offer our critical reflections on these, in an attempt to assist students in their own interrogations of the field. We attempt to further elaborate the stances of the researchers in relation to two ‘meta’ questions about the purpose of the work, which are posed to help students and novice researchers look behind this work and to help to determine the kinds of questions it raises for their own projects.

Chapter 5 addresses a major question posed to the researchers, concerning the extent to which their own work has responded to the discussions on the ideological intent of inclusive education research. It considers the ‘ideological warfare’ within inclusive education research and the slipperiness of ideology itself. By devoting an entire chapter to ideology, we aim to assist students and researchers in appreciating the problem of ‘unmasking’ ideology. In this chapter the debate on ideology will be considered in relation to wider debates about the nature and purpose of educational research and what counts as good science. The claim that partisan research (Troyna, 1994 & 1995), because it is open in its ideological intent, is incapable of measuring up as scientific (Foster et al, 1996), will also be examined.

Research methods texts have established that research comprises a series of decisions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Punch, 2005). These include conceptualisation, sampling, ethics, methods, data collection, analysis, writing and dissemination. Chapter 6 draws from the interviews with the researchers to highlight the complexities associated with making decisions about these aspects of research. The researchers reveal the conditions and contingencies which affected the choices that they made and reflect on how alternative options might have influenced their work. We offer commentary on their choices which we hope will assist students and novice researchers in developing their capacities in decision-making and confidence in uncertainty.

The researchers’ estimates of how their research was received and of the consequences, intended or unintended, is the focus of Chapter 7. Their perceptions of what they were attempting to do in their work are presented alongside our own critique of its impact and our understanding of its location in the field. Listening to the researchers as they consider how their research was received, and as they evaluate the consequences of their research, intended or unintended, students and novice researchers will be able to make their own judgements about the impact of the work. It is hoped that, as a consequence, they will be able to articulate in their research proposal and design the kinds of impacts that are desirable to them and acceptable to those being researched.
Chapter 8 reviews the research undertaken in the book and here we subject our own positioning in the research process and our engagement in the research to critique. We discuss our own constructions of the ideological intent of our research and recount our experience along the way. We consider our own choices and explore the implications of these for the outcomes of the research. By reflecting upon ourselves from within the research process, we aspire, not to self indulgence, but to exemplify the kind of reflexivity which is demanded of researchers in the field of inclusive education and to demonstrate what can be gained from such close scrutiny. What we hope is evident from this discussion is that there are no ‘right or wrong’ choices, but that each choice has consequences for all those involved with the research. We offer some reflections on inclusive education research. These take the form, not of advice, but of tentative propositions about how to navigate the research process and produce research which is both inclusive and responsible.
CHAPTER 2

RESEARCHING THE RESEARCHERS

INTRODUCTION

As researchers designing a project we bring our own personal and intellectual histories. Research is never disinterested or objective. We receive and interpret the world in ways that are shaped by our individual biography and, naturally enough, have strong views about what a better world looks like and about the role of inclusive education, as each of us understands it, in contributing to that better world. Reducing educational exclusion and moving towards more inclusive futures for students disadvantaged by the complex interactions of poverty, disability, race, language, geographic location, sexuality and gender with pedagogy, curriculum and the organisation of schooling is at the centre of our educational project. How we apprehend, analyse and interpret patterns of exclusion is also shaped by the interplay of personal biography and intellectual training inside and outside of the academy. In this respect we are like all of the participants in the project, though our views about education and researching it may differ and converge significantly. In this chapter, we set out our ‘baggage’ and chart the process of designing and executing the research. We also describe the somewhat disconcerting attempts to convince a publisher that this book was useful and would sell.

UNPACKING OUR OWN BAGS

The suggestion ‘that we should write a book’ came from Roger, in an e-mail, and was met with an enthusiastic response from Julie. Previous collaborations had involved a paper in the *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, a joint conference presentation and participation in the *International Colloquium on Inclusive Education*, which was inaugurated in 1994 by Alan Dyson, Alan Millward and Catherine Clark in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and has continued in various locations ever since. Julie also contributed to work within the Queensland Government during Roger’s secondment there as Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Education. One of the International Colloquium events had focused on ideology and we shared an interest in how this debate, or debacle, had played out, especially in the US. Neither of us had ever been directly involved, but had been benevolent spectators, pruriently witnessing some of our good friends giving and receiving bloody noses. Our collaborations had indicated a similar disposition towards inclusive education and a shared critical take on the development of the field (and some of its distortions in policy and school practices), but also had some different
orientations tied to our different biographies. We offer a brief account of these below in an attempt to surface the assumptions which we brought to this research.

**JULIE’S CASE**

I work as a Professor in Stirling, Scotland, as a teacher educator, Director of the Professional Doctorate and researcher, and inclusive education features heavily in each of these activities. I also supervise a large number of doctoral students. My own teacher education provided exposure to both philosophy and sociology and these disciplines have shaped my work as a researcher on several large empirical projects on inclusion, community schooling and children’s rights. Philosophy has continued to excite me and my PhD (the one I completed; the first one was abandoned) was a Foucauldian analysis of the experiences of children with special educational needs and their peers in mainstream schools. The children and young people in this research opened my eyes to the possibilities for resistance through what I came to understand, through Foucault (1977), as transgression. I have remained committed to research involving children and young people and continue to devour the surprises they spring during encounters with them. One piece of research, undertaken with a colleague John I’Anson and in partnership with Save the Children, has had a particularly lasting impact. This study centred on one school in which the headteacher was trying to take the children’s rights agenda as far as possible. A group of students which had formed a Special Needs Observation Group (SNOG) set about identifying sources of exclusion - and removing them - in their school. Their capacity to see so clearly where the problems lay and how they might be resolved, and the impact upon them of having a responsibility for others, left us, at times, speechless. Although Foucault has continued to interest me, I have also become attracted to other so-called ‘philosophers of difference’, most notably Derrida and Deleuze and Guattari, and this has informed my most recent work, *Rethinking inclusion: the philosophers of difference in practice* (Allan, 2008). Social capital, the connections between people and the forms of reciprocity, has also emerged as an interest and formed the basis of research within schools and communities.

My ‘take’ on inclusive education has been ambivalent to say the least. Although I would regard myself as an advocate of inclusive education, I can see why it has engendered such hostility, especially among teachers. It is characterised by confusion about what it is, what it should do and for whom, frustration at the current climate in schools which makes it impossible, guilt that children and their families are being let down and exhaustion with efforts that have seemed futile (Allan, 2007). I want inclusion to be realised, but fear that the cultural and structural changes to enable it to happen may be beyond schools. It is the clarity which children and young people bring to inclusion - and their absolute certainty that it is the ‘right’ thing to do - which make me inclined to search for new possibilities for making it happen.

I have learned much from my own doctoral students, both those on the Professional Doctorate Programme and those following a PhD. They have done
some fabulous studies of inclusion and related aspects such as children in care, professional practice and other less directly related, but no less relevant, aspects such as nurse education and medicine and have produced, in the best sense, original knowledge. They have also taught me to hold my nerve and to practise, as well as preach, uncertainty with them. That many of them complete their doctorates whilst holding down challenging jobs in their respective professions puts me in awe of them. Len Barton, as we will see, is much more eloquent on the influence of, and the learning from, his students than me but I can certainly say that doctoral supervision is one of the most fulfilling aspects of my working life. Every journey made with a student has a different starting point and takes different directions. I wanted, in this book, to be able to offer my own students, and others, a book that would help to conspire (rather than inspire) with students and their supervisors, and with novice researchers and their colleagues.

And finally, and it pains me to admit this, as it’s so unattractive, I have brought to this research project an ‘autograph collector’ tendency, which has plagued me since I was quite young. So I’ve travelled distances to hear Jürgen Habermas, Paulo Freire, Umberto Eco and Edward Said; I had a long conversation with the film director, Anthony Minghella at an event we were both involved in; I have a personal fax from the great grandnephew of James Joyce; Sean Connery waved back at me during the Edinburgh Festival, mistaking the funeral car I was travelling in for the limousine of somebody famous; when interviewing children I have tried to impress them with the (true) fact that my brother was a boyhood friend of Ally McCoist, who played for the football team, Glasgow Rangers. There are more examples, but I think the point has been made, even if it is not a very nice one. This project has allowed me to collect a few more ‘sculls’, and to claim the kudos: ‘I actually interviewed…’ which at times has seemed better than just knowing these individuals and their work.

ROGER’S PORTMANTEAU

My interest in disability issues and educational exclusion is not recent. As a fledgling secondary school teacher and school administrator I became particularly interested in the kids who, like my own experience of school, were getting into strife or didn’t make it through to the end. One of the schools I taught at had a legacy of having been a selective high school, much like grammar schools in the English context. At the stroke of a pen a state Labor Government had rendered it a local entry institution which meant that it acquired a uniquely mixed cohort of kids drawn from the neighbourhood multi-storey Government housing commission blocks, the increasingly gentrified housing that abutted the university over the road from the school or commuter kids. This bold experiment in educational democracy was reduced to a savage streaming exercise at the school gate. It soon became apparent for all but a few outliers that ability was a euphemism for class. Children in the higher streams had their curriculum augmented by musical instrument, work experience and drama lessons. They typically completed an uninterrupted progression through school and on to higher education across the
Lower stream children had no such variety, privilege or ease of transition. The school’s problem children came disproportionately from those lower streams. They were described, among other things, as discipline problems. The school’s obligations were never as closely scrutinized as the children’s.

Perhaps I’d been reading *Emile* at the time, but I believed that setting up a more benign alternative to school, where there could be more individual attention from the teacher and a more activity-based curriculum as an intensive experience upon which to build skills and self-esteem prior to their return to the school, seemed to be the answer. It was a stunning success! Schools found more and more discipline problems that required more and longer alternatives. Simultaneously I found that the children were being described not just as naughty, bad or troublesome. They were now accompanied by files to convince us of their social-emotional disturbance, of their behaviour disorders, of their chronic phobia, or of their defective attention genes. The language and treatment of school disruption was changing. These kids were acquiring the ‘status’ of special educational needs. At the end of the day, however, after treatments and interventions, few made it. They went back to schools that were indignant about their return and often suspended them. The kids weren’t too thrilled either and who could blame them. I didn’t need postgraduate degrees to discern that this branch of residual schooling was not just about class. There were other characteristics such as race that rendered students more vulnerable.

My postgraduate work was first a study of school suspensions. This led to a PhD where I attempted to re-theorise school discipline as an educational, as opposed to a behavioural, concept. I must also say that as a graduate student in special education I became more interested in policy studies, criminology, sociologies of schooling and difference and disability studies than in training in testing and remediation. I have long understood education as an intensely political activity and have thus been attracted to critical studies in education. If pressed to give myself a paradigmatic category I would probably mutter critical pragmatist and bestow on myself the prerogative of deploying a range of research genres and methods, structural and discursive, to gather, order, elaborate and analyse data.

The existence of disability in and around my family meant that I had long been in the company of people whom others saw as abnormal, defective and deficient. This, combined with the accelerating discovery and creation of disabilities in education, pressed my resistance to segregation and suspicions of its justifications, and encouraged me to advocate for enabling more children to succeed in education in the company of their peers. School reform became my interest. To this end I have taken jobs, including a senior post in the civil service and Faculty of Education management, to see how schooling might be conceived of differently pursuant to the dismantling of exclusion.

**WOULD YOU (DID YOU) BUY THIS BOOK?**

As the book proposal began to take shape, we became more enthused and convinced ourselves of the need for a book which would offer a kind of ‘intellectual tin
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opened’, prising open the process of researching inclusive education. We just needed to convince the publisher we had in mind that this was a book which was needed by students and novice researchers, and this was unexpectedly difficult.

We approached the education editor of a well-established publisher and her enthusiastic response encouraged us to complete the proposal and submit it. She graciously sent us some of the early reviews and met with us to help us to address some of the concerns raised by the reviewers. Our revised proposal was sent out to a further six reviewers in the UK and were almost unanimously positive about the potential market for the book. We patted ourselves on the back and assumed that the proposal would be given the blessing at the editorial management board. To our surprise, we received a very forlorn e-mail from the education editor, saying that in spite of the glowing reviews, there was not support for the proposal. She offered to send the proposal to reviewers from the US to test the wider market. A further six glowing, in some cases ecstatic, reviews convinced us that the book was viable, but following the presentation of these to the editorial management board, the education editor telephoned each of us in turn to tell us that the proposal was not being accepted. The executive director had applied the veto and was unwilling to be convinced of the book’s potential; the education editor who had believed in the book from the outset, had reached the end of the road and could do no more. It seemed that the unique selling point of the book was its fundamental flaw in his mind, and we were advised that the fact that the book was neither a textbook about how to do research nor a book about inclusive education made it unacceptable.

The biggest problem associated with the lengthy engagement with this publisher was the delay it caused; in hindsight we ought to have submitted the proposal to more than one publisher, which (Wellington, 2003) recommends. We remained convinced about the need for such a book and whilst we watched with frustration as this publisher continued to support the rising demand for more simplified and inadequate technical manuals on how to deliver inclusive education, for which there is undoubtedly - unfortunately - a market, we turned our attention elsewhere. We found Sense, literally, and Roger not only convinced its executive director of the viability of the book, but of the need for a whole series on inclusive education.

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCHERS

In establishing our ‘sample’, we wished to avoid making a hardened taxonomy of the field because of our resistance to the ways in which such rigid categorising fixes people and their work and our sense that we would, in any case, be inaccurate. We also wanted to construct a sample of researchers in relation to their work rather than to themselves as individuals. In spite of ourselves, and our good intentions, our sample of thirteen researchers located them at points on what appears to be a spectrum of research on inclusive education which went from what we termed traditional special educational research to critical research within a sociological framework. Between these two ‘ends’ we located work done by those working within a school improvement/reform paradigm and disability activists. The objective was not to construct a ‘spectrum’ as this may seem to suggest a
linear narrative of descending or ascending political and methodological value for their research. While it was necessary at the outset for us to identify different research genres or traditions across the field, we were aware that the descriptions that we imposed on the research and the categories we constructed would, through the research itself, unravel. In inviting the researchers to be interviewed, we did not reveal their position on the spectrum to them; this was because we wanted to avoid all the effects we know to be associated with the recognition of labelling and we wanted to allow them to position themselves. We were conscious that while we were talking about research in terms of traditional special education or critical research, some of those who participated in this project might describe it as scientific research at one end and soft research at the other. The table below identifies the researchers and the work which we identified as having been significant.

**Table 1: The researchers and their work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Education Research</th>
<th>School Improvement/Reform</th>
<th>Disability Activism</th>
<th>Critical Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ken Kavale</td>
<td>Mel Ainscow</td>
<td>Len Barton</td>
<td>David Gillborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alan Dyson</td>
<td>Mike Oliver</td>
<td>Ellen Brantlinger</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Suzanne Carrington</td>
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<td>Sally Tomlinson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Harris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making the writing process work (1996, with S. Graham)</td>
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<td>Kim Cornish</td>
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<td>Language and attention in Fragile X (2004, with V. Sudhalter, &amp; J. Turk)</td>
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One other researcher was interviewed, but was omitted from the analysis because of technical problems with the recording. Ten of the researchers had produced the piece of work we were concerned with in collaboration with others.
THE INTERVIEWS

The interview schedule was developed by considering the process of research, from the initial conception of the research through to the writing up, with attention also to the kinds of assumptions which the researchers held about ontology (being) and epistemology (knowing). Our ‘preamble’, which we recited at the start of each interview, sought to encourage the respondents to be as open as possible about the research process and to tell us about the political orientation of their work:

Ours is an attempt to identify key decisions made by researchers at different points of the research process. This book is intended to help students navigate the processes of research. Hence we are interested in the uncertainties and hesitations as well as in the decisions.

The particular piece of your work that we are interested in is [title of work]. We are interested in its methodological caste, its execution and findings and in the interpretive process. We are also interested in the politics of your research and in the receptions this work has had as you see it.

We started with some easy questions about the research’s beginnings, its focus and who was included in it:

- Could we start by describing how you became interested in doing this piece of research?
- What kinds of questions did the research set out to address? [Probes: why these questions? Were there any questions rejected? Audience? Sponsor? Research team?]
- Can you say something about how you decided on who you would include in this research?

We then moved on to ask about the approach to the research, how this had been determined and whether there had been any surprises when undertaking the data collection:

- How did you and others decide on your research strategy? Why this strategy in preference to others?
- When you were collecting the data were there surprises? How did you react? What did this mean for the study?

After this came a series of questions about the analysis of the data and the process of writing up:

- How did you begin to make sense of the data? [Probes: Analytical strategy; theoretical influences; impact on self]
- Tell us about the writing process. What were the most challenging aspects of this and how did you approach it? Is writing a further aspect of the analysis or research?
CHAPTER 2

Our choice of respondents was based on the significance we considered a particular piece of work to have had, but we were interested in how they judged the impact of the work and so we asked this directly, as well as asking if they would have done anything differently if they were to do it again:

- Has this research had an impact? To what extent? [Probes: nature of impact; on whom; intended/unintended consequences]
- Looking back, if you were to do this research, would you do anything differently?

We were interested in the ideological battles which had been waged between special education and inclusive education scholars and wanted to get the respondents’ take on these and how they saw themselves in relation to them. We were also interested in how they located their own work within the field:

- Research in inclusive education has been contested on the basis of a perceived ideological purpose. What do you make of this challenge?
- Finally, how would you say this research sits in relation to other research in the field of inclusive education, special needs, and disability studies?

We offered an opportunity for the interviewees to add anything which they felt had not been covered or to ask us any questions.

In most cases the individuals were well known to us and we carried out the majority of the interviews jointly. Many of these were conducted at the conference of the American Educational Research Association, which several of the respondents were attending, or by specially arranged visits. The interview with Ken Kavale was carried out via telephone conferencing, connecting Ken in the US, Roger in Canada and Julie in Scotland. We had originally invited David Gillborn to be interviewed alone, but he asked us to include his co-author, Deborah Youdell, in the interview. Others indicated that they would have preferred us to have included their co-authors or at least sought their views in additional interviews, but this was not practicable.

The participants were sent a copy of the transcripts for correction, with an invitation to embellish further if they wished and three people returned transcripts with some corrections. Inaccuracies arising from the international nature of this study, in which a Canadian transcriber found the Scottish and Australian interviewers, at times, ‘incoherent’, were mostly ironed out, although one transcriber renamed Julie ‘Susan’.

ANALYSING THE DATA

The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 3).

Analysing the data was a combination of ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ processes. That is, we brought to the data (and indeed to the framing of the research and to the questions which produced the data) theoretical perspectives which influenced what
we attended to and how we made sense of it; we also allowed themes from the data itself to emerge and these were in turn subjected to scrutiny, using the theoretical constructs that we were working with. This double process of ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ analysing is common and, Silverman (2000) argues that it is necessary to see analysis as ‘pervasive’ (p. 119), happening from the moment the research begins: ‘unless you are analysing data more or less from day one you will always have to play catch up’ (ibid). This runs against the advice contained in the how to (get a PhD or do research) books which encourage students to devote a specific period of their study to analysis and virtually guarantees that they will become frozen and very frightened when the time comes. The alternative view, that it is all analysis, spreads the fear out, but more importantly ensures a highly reflexive approach throughout the research. We will try to set out the processes of analysis we undertook from the outset.

FROM THE ‘TOP DOWN’: A POSTSTRUCTURALIST FRAMING OF THE RESEARCH

The theoretical influences which we brought to the research were largely from what would be termed a poststructuralist framework, influenced by the work of Foucault (1977; 1985; 1986) and Derrida (1988; 1992a & b). Such a framework aspires towards having ‘more to answer to in terms of the complexities of language and the world’ (Lather, 1993, p. 673) and undertakes to do research which does not offer explanations or ‘proof’. Instead, poststructuralist research looks to prise open what has previously been closed and to effect:

An unjamming effect in relation to the closed truths of the past, thereby freeing up the present for new forms of thought and practice (Bennett, 1990, p. 277).

This poststructuralist orientation to inclusive education research allowed us to see it, not as something which could be explained or empirically demonstrated, but as consisting of significant discursive formations which, following Foucault (1972), seek to produce truths and create particular forms of subjectivity. Discourse, according to Lather (1993) ‘worlds the world’ (p. 675). It shapes what we know and how we know it: we are in the discourse and we are the discourse, or as Ball (1990) points out ‘we do not speak the discourse. The discourse speaks us’ (p. 18). These discourses are, of course, not neutral but are powerful and effective, constructing individuals as objects of certain kinds of knowledge. By attending to the discourses in the research, we were concerned with the effects of what is written and spoken about in inclusive education research and the particular kinds of research, researched and researchers. We were interested in how the researchers functioned within these discourses - and with these discourses - how they spoke. So, as well as listening to what the researchers said about how they research, we also were alert to how they said what they said. We did not, however, do this from a discursively pure position since we were also speaking the discourses – and in turn being spoken by them. Our poststructuralist orientation was not something we chose explicitly to adopt: rather this had been an understanding, a commitment,
which had developed over the years in each of our work and which we recognised in ourselves. This emergence of a perspective, an orientation, is important in relation to students and new researchers entering inclusive education research and facing the ‘demand’ for a theoretical perspective. This is perhaps the most terrifying aspect of writing a proposal and the part that may seem unfair at such an early stage in the process. Setting out our poststructuralist tendencies seemed to us no less terrifying in spite of having the luxury of time. The emergence of these to us can be best described as a process of recognition of what seemed comfortable, and what seemed to give voice to our sense of the world. So Bennett’s notion of ‘unjamming’ spoke to us, providing resonances with Roger’s idea of ‘circuit breakers’ (Graham and Slee, 2006, p. 5) and Julie’s intent to ‘subvert’ (Allan, 2008, p. 101).

In addition to being orientated towards discourse and having an interest in ‘making it stutter’ (Deleuze, 1998, p. 113), we made use of a number of the poststructuralists’ concepts - particularly those of Foucault and Derrida - to help us make sense of the data. Foucault’s concepts were especially helpful, although it was his later work which we used most extensively. We were alert to Foucault’s early genealogical analyses of power, which he undertook in relation to discipline, including educational practices, and sexuality. These uncovered how the inter-relationship of knowledge and power constructed individuals as objects of knowledge and as subjects who were controlled and who controlled themselves. Foucault challenged our perceptions that in modern life we have greater freedom by showing how we are even more tightly constrained than ever before. His concept of power enabled us to explore the respondents’ own positions and what we termed their ‘power points’, the effects they sought for their work. It was also useful for trying to make sense of some of the resistance they encountered. Foucault’s framework of ethics, the aspect of his work which is much underused, (Allan, 2005), allowed us to uncover those practices through which the respondents sought to subvert and challenge the status quo and to work upon the field. Foucault describes these as ‘practices of the self’ (1985) and which had significant potential:

- the forms of relations with the self, on the methods and techniques by which he works them out, on the exercises by which he makes of himself an object to be known, and on the practices that enable him to transform his own mode of being (1985, p. 30).

Foucault outlines a framework for undertaking the practices of the self, which comprises, first of all, the ‘determination of the ethical substance’ (1985, p. 26), deciding which element of the self is to be changed or worked upon; second, ‘the mode of subjection’ (p. 27), involving analysing one’s position in relation to certain rules and learning how to practise with regard to these; third, self-practice or ‘ethical work’ (p. 27), the act of transforming oneself into an ethical being through self-practice; and finally, ‘the telos’ (p. 27), the overall goal which an individual might aspire to. These practices require the utmost scrutiny of one’s thoughts and writing through work which is ‘ethical’ (1988) and which:

""
Evokes the care of what exists and might exist; a sharpened sense of reality, but one that is never immobilized before it; a readiness to find what surrounds us strange and odd; a certain determination to throw off familiar ways of thought and to look at the same things in a different way … a lack of respect for the traditional hierarchies of what is important and fundamental (p. 321).

Foucault argues that these practices of the self have to be learned and worked at continuously, until it becomes unconscious:

You must have learned principles so firmly that when your desires, your appetites or your fears awaken like barking dogs, the logos will speak with the voice of a master who silences the dogs by a single command (1987, p. 117).

Foucault’s notion of the practices of the self had previously been used to help understand and explore the actions of children and young people caught up in inclusion and exclusion and offered a way of looking at how they pursued inclusion, by means of consistent and repeated practices upon themselves (Allan, 1999). Here, it seemed a good way to try to make sense of how the researchers tried, through their work, and through work upon themselves, to produce certain ‘effects’. Foucault’s further development, within ethics, of transgression, appeared also relevant to what might be unfolding in the researchers’ accounts of their practice. Transgression, for Foucault, is a playful type of subversion, which differs from outright confrontation, but which, nevertheless, involves challenging and subverting. Although much of his writings on transgression related to sexual practices, and in particular sadomasochism, he was also interested in the role of the academic. He urged academics to be involved in transgression, through the work on themselves and through their writing, and underlined the transformative potential of this: ‘I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face’ (1972, p. 17). Foucault (1997) describes the writing process as a form of training of the self, through which individuals participate in:

that exercise of thought on itself that reactivates what it knows, that makes present a principle, a rule, or an example, reflects on them, assimilates them, and thus prepares itself to confront the real (p. 236).

The act of transgression, through writing, for academics involved, not only the challenges that they could issue, but their act of altering their identities through the process of writing: ‘the subject who is writing is part of the work’ (1987, p. 182).

In describing his work as ‘fragments of an autobiography’ (1988, p. 156), Foucault was clearly promoting a reflexive approach to writing, whereby individuals revealed themselves through their writing and were transformed through those revelations. This perspective on the research process enabled us to understand the imbrication of the researchers in their own research and writing processes - what they sought to do and what it, in turn, did to them. This was confirmed for us in the interviews, and indeed we gained from the respondents a
clear sense, in many cases, of doing work which had a transgressive element, going against the grain and engaging in rule breaking, but which also had a profound impact upon them. This was certainly how we experienced this process of research and the production of the book.

Derrida’s concept of the ‘undecidable’ (1988, p. 116) was helpful in considering some of the uncertainties which the respondents expressed about their positions and the impact of their work. He warns us that the ‘instant of decision is a madness’ (1992, p. 26) and that it is profoundly unjust. It is the closure created by the decision, when all alternatives are removed, that produces injustice:

The moment of decision, as such, always remains a finite moment of urgency and precipitation, since it must not be the consequence or the effect of this theoretical or historical knowledge, of this reflection or this deliberation … of a reinstitution of rules (p. 26).

Derrida (1988) argues that the undecidable is a crucial aspect of any attempt at justice: ‘there can be no moral or political responsibility without this trial and without this passage by way of the undecidable’ (p. 116). It is the dissonance that is created by the undecidable which enables the political moment to be reached and it is only at this moment where justice is possible:

When the path is clear and given, when a certain knowledge opens up the way in advance, the decision is already made, it might as well be said that there is none to make; irresponsibly, and in good conscience, one simply applies or implements a program . . . It makes of action the applied consequence, the simple application of a knowledge or know how. It makes of ethics and politics a technology. No longer of the order of practical reason or decision, it begins to be irresponsible (1992b, pp. 41-45).

Derrida calls the moment of the undecidable an ‘aporia’, or double contradictory imperative, when there are at least two ways to go, and this creates a paralysis which is also a chance: not so-called ‘luck’, but something which conditions affirmation, decision and responsibility (1992a, p. 63). Too often, according to Derrida, these aporias are resolved into certainty and a decision about the way forward. Furthermore, these resolutions often involve the denial of the other. He argues that the more responsible response is to keep the possibilities open but accepts that this is itself an impossibility. Research is, of course, a series of decisions and we each constantly have discussions with doctoral students, developing their research design, in which they will ask about whether they should adopt one approach or another or about how large their sample size should be. Our response is generally: ‘you decide’: as well as, no doubt, causing frustration, we are urging closure upon the student. The decisions which the researchers in this study were required to make inevitably closed down alternatives. It is these moments of undecidability that are interesting and potentially educative for beginning researchers, but the closure effected by the decision ensures that these are generally not apparent to those reading the texts they have produced. It is a
testimony to the researchers that so many of them were prepared to reveal their engagement with the undecidable to us.

The final concept which was of use to us was Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) notion of deterritorialization, a process of changing spaces that are rigidly hierarchical into ones that are smooth:

This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum; experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times (p. 161).

By using the concepts from Foucault, Derrida and Deleuze and Guattari which we have described above, we did not necessarily commit ourselves to the perspectives of these writers, whatever that might entail. Instead, we were merely using these concepts to help recognise what was in the accounts of the researchers, to allow us to be open to the work that was being done within these accounts and to begin to analyse the significant aspects. We try to set out that analysis process, taking place from within the accounts, below.

AND FROM THE ‘BOTTOM UP’: AT, WITHIN, BEHIND

In reinforcing Silverman’s (2000) comment about the pervasive nature of analysis, we were reacting to, and trying to make sense of, the data as it came to us. After each interview, we exchanged thoughts on what appeared interesting and salient, as well as what seemed to be missing from the accounts, and recorded these. Often these initial, spontaneous, reactions survived the subsequent analysis.

Working from the written transcripts, we examined the content of what people said about the research process and also attended to how people talked, by examining the images, metaphors and positioning of themselves and others. The examination of participants’ discourses enabled us to pay particular attention to values and to issues of power and revealed to us some of the tensions, controversies and counterpoints in the researchers’ and scholars’ work. Our analysis, thus, had four strands. The first of these was the initial framing of the research to what we had termed ‘critical research’. The second strand was the formulation of the questions, which were trying to prise open the research processes and encourage the respondents to reveal what they did and thought. Strand three involved our close reading of their representations of their work and our interpretations of how, in the interviews, they had addressed two meta-questions about the nature and purpose of their work:

- What is the problem to which inclusive education has become the solution?
- What is seen as the nature of the ‘damage’ arising from the problem?

The fourth strand involved looking at, within and behind these interpretations, pulling on particular ‘threads’ and watching them unravel. All the time we were
moving between the theory and the data, trying to make sense of the data and trying to look ‘behind the data’. In some of the chapters which follow, our reporting of the research processes is rather conventional and even descriptive, following a linear structure of grouping data around particular substantive themes. When we come to discussing the researchers’ positions and their stance in relation to ideology, these are more complex and contradictory, and it is here that we make most use of the concepts of the philosophers of difference in our sense-making.

This differential level of our analysis became apparent when we produced a chapter for a collection edited by Susan Gabel and Scot Danforth (Gabel & Danforth, forthcoming; Allan and Slee, 2008). The deadline for the chapter was early on in the process of the analysis and whilst we were happy to begin the writing process as a means of developing our understanding and, in Foucault’s (1977) terms, ‘to show oneself, to make oneself seen, make one’s face appear before the other’ (p. 236) - to commit ourselves - it felt both premature, rushed and unsatisfactory. The feedback from Susan Gabel and Scot Danforth, although quite painful at the time, was hugely helpful in forcing us to re-examine those aspects of our presentation of findings which were conventional, linear and descriptive, and to distinguish between when this was necessary in order to convey some of the less complex aspects of the process, and when it represented a retreat into safe territory. Their comments also alerted us to the need to be much more explicit about the particular nature of this research project, in order to ‘second guess’ potential critics and criticisms.

RESEARCHING THE RESEARCHERS – RESEARCHING OURSELVES?

We approached the interviews, and the individuals concerned, with some trepidation, fuelled by a concern to allow them to do justice to themselves and with a suspicion of ourselves as researchers. That suspicion concerned our own positions and the values we brought to the encounters with the research subjects. The discipline we sought to maintain was to focus on the work rather than the individual, but at times we found ourselves wandering into the lives of people we had respected, and perhaps even revered, over many years. We were alert to the possibility that we might be critical of particular individuals whose positions were very different from ours and were vigilant throughout the interview process. However this was in no sense an issue and we emerged from each of the interviews with a high regard for the integrity and passion which had been displayed by all of the research participants.

In analysing the interviews, we again tried to focus on the work and its performance rather than on the researchers themselves and hope that we have produced a fair account. Ours is a very particular representation, informed by a poststructuralist perspective which refuses, or attempts to refuse, signifies and essences. At the same time, however, we were operating with a ‘sample’ which had fixed the work of these individuals onto a spectrum which was based on our estimate of their work. There may be a suggestion, here, that we are trying to have our poststructuralist cake and eat it, but we would argue that the refusal of essences
can only be achieved by engaging with them – that is from within the essences themselves. This ‘double-bind’ of identity is acknowledged as inevitable by disabled and feminist scholars (Butler, 1990; Mairs, 1986; Singh, 1995) and as a key aspect of resistance. On a more pragmatic level, we needed to find some way of deciding who to include in our research and we tried to ensure that the labels we imposed upon people remained fluid and unfixed.

We try to avoid offering judgements on the relative effectiveness of the different works, but are aware that we have read the kind of nomadic wandering qualities of the work of David Gillborn, Deborah Youdell and Stephen Ball as positive, find in the provocations of Len Barton and Ellen Brantlinger elements which are ethical and see considerable depth in the foundational work of Mike Oliver and Sally Tomlinson. Some of the alignments we have identified have troubled us, without really understanding why. Knowing and describing fields sets up particular trajectories for theorising, analysing and explaining research and our depictions fix both the intent and the performance of the work in ways which may be foreign, uncomfortable, or even irritating for the individuals concerned. Our own intent, we insist, has not been to irritate on purpose, but to open up the processes of research to scrutiny and for others to offer judgements of its quality.