As societies become more diverse, so too must they become more inclusive. In inclusive societies, all members, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, ability or disability are valued and free to participate, and there is equity of access and reward. Schools have a powerful role to play in creating inclusive societies, and this begins with the notion of inclusive schools - schools were all children belong, where all children have a place, and where difference is a natural part of what it is to be a human being.

Based on this understanding, many countries around the world are moving towards more inclusive education systems. However, working against inclusive education are forces of exclusion – factors that act to exclude and marginalize minority students from participation and learning at school. Therefore, in order to progress the principles and practices of inclusive education, an examination of the construct of exclusion is critical. Important questions to be interrogated if inclusive education is to be a reality are: What is exclusion? Why does it occur? How can it be reduced and eliminated? This book critically examines the construct of exclusion, exploring how disabled students experience exclusion both from and within school and suggesting reasons why this occurs. Finally, key foci for change are proposed as platforms for interrogating, reducing and eliminating the forces of exclusion.
Exclusion from and Within School
STUDIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
Volume 14

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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.
Exclusion from and Within School

*Issues and Solutions*

Alison Kearney
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CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE SCENE

Inclusive education is an unabashed announcement, a public and political declaration and celebration of difference...[However,] it would appear that the development of education systems has been predicated by the denial of the existence and value of difference... Turning this around is not a project for osmosis. It requires continual proactive responsiveness to foster an inclusive educational culture. Further, it means that we become cultural vigilantes. Exclusion must be exposed in all its forms; the language we use, the teaching methods we adopt, the curriculum we transmit, the relations we establish within our schools (Corbett & Slee, 2000, p. 134).

INTRODUCTION

This is a book about exclusion. It examines the factors that exclude disabled students\(^1\) from, and within schools. It is an examination of exclusion as it works against inclusive education. Inclusive education is a phenomenon that is gaining worldwide focus and attention and has been described as a social movement against exclusion in education (Slee & Allan, 2005). Inclusive education focuses on schools and their systems, and in particular, the restructuring of mainstream schools so they are better able to respond to the diversity of all students (UNESCO, 2005). It is important to note that inclusive education does not focus on the remediation of perceived deficits within students. Nor is it concerned with the integration or assimilation of diverse students into regular schools. Rather, inclusive education is concerned with overcoming the barriers to participation and learning that may be experienced by students, particularly students who have historically been excluded or marginalised from school (Mittler, 2000). A basic principle of inclusive education is that all children belong at their local school and all children are able to meaningfully participate and learn at their local school. While inclusive education is concerned with making schools more responsive to all students, disabled students are reported to be the largest group of students excluded and marginalised from quality education in the world today (UNESCO, 2005). It appears therefore that disabled students are experiencing many barriers to their presence, participation and learning at school and little is known of the specific nature of these barriers.

In many cases, the exclusion that disabled students experience is in direct opposition to the legislation that is designed to protect their rights to access mainstream education and participate and learn without discrimination. It is also in direct opposition to human rights and social justice arguments, research showing the benefits of mainstream education, and strong pressure from disabled students’ parents to include their children. Lack of inclusion in the face of such compelling legislation...
CHAPTER 1

and research indicates that strong forces are present, working against the inclusion of disabled students.

However, while there is a growing body of literature focused on inclusion and the enablers to inclusive education, only recently have researchers begun to focus on exclusion (those forces working against inclusion) as an important concept to be investigated in relation to inclusive education. A major rationale for this has been the realisation that inclusive education has only come into existence as a concept because some students experience a non-inclusive education – that is, they experience exclusion both from and within school. Therefore, to contribute to the aspiration of education for all, a greater understanding of exclusion is required; that is an uncovering and unpacking of the forces that are working against the presence, participation and learning of disabled students in mainstream schools.

CONTEXT

The last 150 years have seen significant changes in the education of disabled students. As underlying beliefs and assumptions regarding disabled students have changed, so too has the role of schools in relation to them. This has seen an evolution from little or no education provisions for disabled children and young people, to segregated systems, to systems of integration in regular schools, and more recently, towards systems of inclusive education.

In order to understand the nature of these changes, an explanation of the systems of special education and inclusive education is required. This is important, for as Armstrong, Armstrong and Barton (2000) point out, “an historical perspective in relation to the inclusion and exclusion of disabled students will be a timely reminder that current practices are neither natural, inevitable or unchangeable” (p. 3).

Special Education

The system of special education was developed to meet the educational needs of disabled children, or children who were considered to have special needs. It began from a basis of charity (Mitchell, 1987), but was later accepted by governments as their responsibility. By the middle of the 20th century, many ‘developed’ countries had a firmly established special education system made up of special schools and classes, along with specialist positions and organisations. However, in the 1960’s, the appropriateness of separate systems of education for disabled students began to be challenged, at first from the perspectives of human rights and effectiveness (UNESCO, 2005), then latterly, from a challenge to the values and knowledge base of special education as well as the social, cultural and political reasons for its existence.

With regard to the effectiveness of special education, the seminal report of Dunn (1968) showed that students with mild and moderate impairments made just as much progress, or more, in regular class settings as they did in special classes. Dunn found that the labelling of students that occurred in segregated settings had a detrimental impact on their self-concept and their teachers’ expectations for their achievement.
In addition, a disproportionate number of ethnic minority students were in special education and Dunn believed that special education was a system of segregation for ethnic minorities. Numerous studies followed, pointing to the negative effects of segregated settings and the positive outcomes of well-supported inclusive settings for students who were disabled (e.g., Brinker & Thorpe, 1984; Madden & Slavin, 1983).

Advocacy groups made up of parents, professionals and disabled people themselves was another impetus for change (Salend, 1998). Parents of disabled children began calling for equal access to regular education for their children (Lipsky & Gartner, 1996) demanding the same rights as non-disabled peers. Similarly, disability advocacy groups were formed to lobby for the rights of people who were disabled, including school age children.

Challenges to special education were also influenced by political rationales. While they were in existence, it was widely accepted that separate facilities and services were designed in the best interests of students who were disabled. However, this understanding was later scrutinised and questioned. For example Skrtic (1991, p. 24) defined special education as “the profession that emerged in 20th century America to contain the failure of public education to educate its youth for full political, economic, and cultural participation in democracy”. Ballard (2003b) reported a similarly sceptical view of the rationale for special education stating that: “special education exists to cater for children who are deemed sufficiently different that they do not belong within ordinary school settings alongside others from their community” (p. 6). Moore et al. (1999) took a similar view describing the development of special education in New Zealand as an “implicit contract” (p. 7) between regular and special education where regular education would support special education and, in return, special education would keep the troublesome students away from regular education.

Criticism of special education was also focussed on its role in protecting the interests of non-disabled people. For example, Barton (2000) describes special education as:

a means of control, a means of legitimating the dominant forms of discourse and interests of a given society, in particular a world of marketisation, competitiveness and selection. It makes sure the system continues as smoothly as possible by removing those difficult, objectionable and unwanted people to other spheres. It is however, often justified on the basis of being in their interests, of meeting their needs (p. 53).

Special education was also challenged in relation to its ideology (e.g., Ballard, 2004b; Ware, 2004). Critics pointed out that special education was constructed upon a belief system of individual pathology, ideas about what is normal and abnormal, theories of deficit, and the belief that only expert teachers can know about, and meet the needs of, students who are disabled (Ballard, 1990).

This medical model ideology was linked to the phenomenon of exclusion of disabled students. Booth and Ainscow (1998a) argued that this ideology led to exclusion and segregation because it had as its basis, the assumption that children
who were disabled were deficient and therefore required ‘special’ and ‘different’ forms of education. Corbett and Slee (2000) concurred stating that: “A great deal of theory and practice which forms the special educational tradition is essentially disablist, compounding the patterns of educational and social exclusion we witness in schools and communities” (p. 143).

Based on these criticisms and challenges, calls were, and still are, being made for an education system based on an inclusive ideology.

Inclusive Education

Early definitions of inclusive education focused on the valuing and acceptance of difference and the rights of all students to not only attend their local neighbourhood school, but also to belong as valued members. This aspect of inclusive education still remains a core feature of many explanations today. However, as the idea of inclusive education evolved, explanations broadened from purely a humanistic focus to a focus on contextual issues, at first the school context. For example Skrtic (1991) pointed out that inclusive education does not focus on the student per se, but rather the emphasis is on the regular education programme and organisation. More recently, the focus has been on the social, cultural and political aspects of education and the effect of these on the inclusion and exclusion of children and young people. For example:

I view inclusion as a social justice project that begins with understanding how exclusionary we are in schools and in society, how we are sanctioned to maintain exclusion, and how we are rewarded to remain exclusionary—all of which suggests that deconstruction would be the most useful tool for analysis (Ware, 1999, p. 43).

While many writing in the field of inclusive education would agree upon some descriptors of inclusion and inclusive education, it remains a complex and contradictory concept. One of the reasons for this is the competing discourses used to explain and describe it. One such discourse has it roots in special education and has been described by some as simply a transfer of special education knowledge, language and practice into regular education, under the guise or name of inclusive education (Slee, 2001a, 2007). Generally, this perspective still adheres to many of the principles and practices associated with special education. Corbett and Slee (2000) describe this perspective in the following way:

Inclusive schooling according to traditional special educational perspectives is seen as a technical problem to be solved through diagnosis and remedial interventions. Typically, this generates policies whereby the expert professions are called in to identify the nature and measure the extent of disability. This is followed by highly bureaucratic ascertainment processes where calculations of resources, human and material, are made to support the locating of the disabled child in the regular school or classroom (p. 143).

An alternative discourse is one that focuses on the restructuring of mainstream schools so that they are better able to respond to the diversity of all students
From this perspective, inclusive education does not focus on the remediation of perceived student deficits, or on preparing students to be able to meet the demands of the regular education system. At a school and classroom level, inclusive education implies that all students are able to attend their local neighbourhood school and that all children are the responsibility of the classroom teacher who works in collaboration with parents, caregivers and a range of professionals. It also implies that schools evaluate their values, and organisational curriculum and assessment arrangements to overcome barriers to learning and participation for all students (Mittler, 2000).

Most writers in the area of inclusive education would agree that inclusive education is not an end point; it is a process. In this book, the term ‘inclusion’ and ‘inclusive education’ will be used in line with the work of Booth (1996) who describes inclusion as “a process of increasing participation of students within and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures curricula and communities of neighbourhood centres of learning” (pp. 34–35).

Human Rights and Inclusive Education

Inclusive education has been described as an issue of human rights (Daniels & Garner, 1999), and also an issue that easily aligns itself to international human rights declarations (Artiles & Dyson, 2005). At the core of inclusive education is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which states that:

Everyone has the right to education…and that education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace (Article 26 Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there have been other important human rights declarations with specific relevance to inclusive education. The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) states that all children have a right to receive education without discrimination on any grounds. While every article in the UNCROC pertains to disabled children, specifically, article 23 states that: “disabled children should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community” (Article 23).

The 1994 Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (under the aegis of UNESCO) outlined the rights of all children to access education in the regular school environment and the responsibilities of school systems to accommodate all students. Recently, The United Nations has Developed. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This convention states that all persons, irrespective of any impairment must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

However, the access of disabled students to these human rights is often lacking. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child identified a number
of factors that impede the access of disabled children to inclusive education. These were:
– Deep seated prejudice and fear of disability, when disability is viewed as a curse, stigma or punishment. The isolation of disabled children serves to perpetuate such myths.
– A lack of understanding about the potential of all children to develop if provided with a responsive environment.
– The prevalence of discriminatory laws that fail to provide equal rights of access to disabled children.
– Persistence of the medical model of disability in which the disabled person is defined as the problem. This contrasts with the social model where a child is perceived as having an impairment, but is disabled by attitudes and the environment.
– The failure to recognise the potential economic and social benefits of inclusive education for society as a whole (Lansdown, 2001, p. 45).

There are undeniable advantages to taking a human rights approach to inclusive education. One of the advantages of this approach is that it lessens the importance, or makes immaterial, research validation about the benefits of inclusive education (Mittler, 2000). Also, it is well documented that disabled children are less able to fully realise their human rights than other social groups (Campbell, 2001; New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2004). It has long been accepted that education is a basic human right for all children and that free and open education systems are necessary for creating inclusive societies. As stated in the New Zealand Human Rights Commission (2004):

    Education is critical to the development of human potential, to the enjoyment of the full range of human rights and to respect for the rights of others. Education also acts as a protector of children’s rights. The right to education straddles civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights (p. 68).

Therefore, inclusive education is not just a way to ensure that all children and young people have their right to education fulfilled, but it is also a vehicle for ensuring that children and young people learn to respect and respond to diversity in their communities and their societies (ibid.). Education provides one of the most powerful tools in breaking down stereotypes and negative attitudes towards disabled people (Campbell, 2001).

Social Justice and Inclusive Education

As well as strong links to human rights, inclusive education is also an issue of social justice. Broadly speaking, social justice refers to giving all individuals and groups a just share of the advantages and benefits of a society. Specifically, social justice is the process that seeks to ensure the maintenance of a fair, equitable and egalitarian society. Discrimination, persecution, intolerance, prejudice and inequity
are the antithesis of the goals of social justice (University of Southern Queensland, 2007). Social justice works against marginalisation and exclusion.

Inclusive education is essentially social justice in education. It seeks a fair, equitable and egalitarian education for all students. It seeks to break down discrimination and prejudice based on difference or minority status. However, as Slee (2001a) has stated, those arguing for social justice in education have been relatively silent in regards to disabled students.

The Disability Movement and Inclusive Education

The way that societies have thought of, and conceptualised, disability has long been influenced by a medical model of disability. This model describes and defines disability as an individual deficit, a problem or illness residing within an individual that requires remediating or curing. However, over the last fifty years, the disability movement has challenged this understanding of disability, with the argument that disability is socially constructed. The challenge has come, in particular, from the work of Mike Oliver who encouraged people to think about disability from social and cultural perspectives (e.g., Oliver, 1987). Oliver challenged individual perspectives of disability which located the ‘problem’ of disability within the individual and assumed that limitations or losses arose from their impairments. Oliver purported that it is not individual limitations that are the problem, but society’s failure to provide appropriate services and take the needs of disabled people into account (Oliver, 1996).

The concept of inclusive education is a reflection of the social model of disability (Mittler, 2000). As the social model of disability concerns itself with the identification and reduction of obstacles to the participation of disabled people in regular societies, inclusive education concerns itself with the identification and reduction of obstacles to the participation of disabled students in regular schools. The disability movement, which traditionally focused on the rights of adults, is now concerning itself with children and is working alongside organisations that are campaigning for inclusive education (Mittler, 2000).

SUMMARY

Inclusive Education is gaining worldwide attention and momentum. It has been described as a system that has the potential to empower all people so that they are able to enjoy the rewards and resources of societies, and acquire the skills they need to make their own decisions and shape their own destinies (UNESCO, 2005).

From an economic perspective, inclusive education makes sense. Empowering all members of a society to participate and contribute to it has tremendous economic benefits to that society. From a human rights perspective, inclusive education cannot be ignored. Human rights imperatives alone tell us that access to education should not be determined by a person’s gender, ability, sexuality, socio-economic status or any other label seeks to classify people.
However, inclusive education is not just focused on *increasing* the presence, participation and learning of all students. It is also focused on *decreasing* the forces of exclusion that are often experienced by minority and marginalized students and groups of students (Booth, 1996). Therefore, exclusion is an extremely important construct to be interrogated if societies wish to make progress towards creating education systems for all.

**NOTES**

1 Throughout this book, the term ‘disabled student’ is used as a verb to describe the disadvantage that occurs for students who experience physical, social, intellectual or sensory difficulties.
CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS EXCLUSION?

UNPACKING THE CONSTRUCT OF EXCLUSION

The concept of exclusion is complex, contradictory and difficult to ‘pin down’. Not only is it used in a range of different disciplines, but also across disciplines, and even within each discipline, it can be used in different ways to mean different things. To add to the complexity, few writers using the term define their use of it. It is important therefore, to briefly explore some of these multiple discourses.

Outside of education, for example in social policy, the term ‘exclusion’ is commonly used. In particular, the term ‘social exclusion’ is increasingly used in the area of government social policy in Europe and the United Kingdom. The term ‘social exclusion’ originated in France and was first used to replace terms associated with poverty and underclass (Milbourne, 2002). Combat Poverty Action Group (2008) describe social exclusion as:

The process whereby certain groups are pushed to the margins of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, low education or inadequate life skills. This distances them from job, income and education opportunities as well as social and community networks. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and little chance of influencing decisions or policies that affect them, and little chance of bettering their standard of living (page not given).

The concept of social exclusion is closely related to the concept of marginalisation. Marginalisation grew out of the political struggles of people of colour, women, the poor, immigrants, the mentally ill, and children (Hall, 1999). It is tied to the notion of normality, where those who are perceived not to fall within the boundaries of normality come to be seen as outsiders by those who do (Messiou, 2006). Marginalisation is often described as a socio-political process (Hall, 1999) that results in inequality and disadvantage.

The notion of marginalisation can be conceptualised as a circle, with members of a group or society being more or less marginalised depending on their proximity to the core of the circle (McIntosh, 2006; Messiou, 2006). The core of the circle represents the heart of a society or group’s perceived and constructed normality. Those members of the group or society who are most like these notions of normality find their place easily within this core. The more different from the norm a person is perceived to be, the further from the inner core of the circle they find themselves. The further from the inner core a person or group of people find themselves, the more marginalised they are from access to social justice, power, participation, voice and worth (Tucker, 1990).
When describing the concept of marginalisation, pinning down this centre point (the place of normality) is often difficult (Ferguson, 1992). This is because it can be a very hidden place and to know that place often requires membership of the centre point. Also ideas of normality are social constructs, not direct referents. However, despite the elusiveness of the centre, the power and influence of this place is real and strong.

It is also worth noting that the power of the centre depends on it being unchallenged (Ferguson, 1992). However, if this authority is challenged and is broken down, there remains no centre point to which people can be marginalised from. As Ferguson states:

In our society, dominant discourse tries never to speak its own name. Its authority is based on absence. The absence is not just that of the various groups classified as ‘other’ although members of these groups are routinely denied power. It is also the lack of any overt acknowledgement of the specificity of the dominant culture which is simply assumed to the all-encompassing norm. This is the basis of its power (p. 11).

Ferguson’s explanation of the unchallenged nature of the ‘centre’ has direct relevance to the exclusion of disabled students. The dominant discourse of education has been shown to exclude disabled students, however, it never speaks its name as such, rather giving the impression that what occurs at schools is a natural or normal occurrence, not socially constructed by those who hold power. To challenge this ‘centre’ is to begin to break down forces of exclusion and marginalization. In doing so we also begin to reconfigure the properties and flows of power, according to Foucault.

In education, exclusion is typically a term that has been used to describe what occurs when students are formally removed from school for reasons of inappropriate behaviour and discipline. However, as well as explanations of exclusion related to school discipline, recently inclusive education research has taken up the term exclusion and used it in direct relation to the notion of inclusion. While exclusion as it relates to school discipline is an overt practice, with a focus on physical non-presence, the use of the term exclusion in the field of inclusive education differs. Here it is used to describe not only aspects of physical non-presence, but also less overt factors, and in particular, hidden forces that make it difficult for a student to have full and fair access to all the things that happen at school. In the inclusive education literature, exclusion is used to describe the process that occurs when a student is denied access to participation at school. This includes things such as access to the curriculum, access to friendship groups, access to teacher time and so forth (Booth, 1996).

Critical to this book is the idea that the term exclusion is not just associated with physical presence at school. A student may be in school, but still experiencing exclusion if they are not able to access curriculum, friendships and other experiences considered as ordinary (Kearney, 2008). Finally, exclusion can be both obvious and hidden. For example, a student may be experiencing exclusion at school, but those factors that are acting to exclude that student may be so ingrained in the structure and culture of a school that they go unnoticed and unquestioned (Slee & Allan, 2005). In the inclusive education literature, the term exclusion is used as an antonym to inclusion.
WHAT IS EXCLUSION

While there is much confusion surrounding the term and its use, Booth (1996) provides a useful explanation for use in the inclusive education field. He defines exclusion as “the process of decreasing the participation of pupils in the cultures and curricula of mainstream schools” (pp. 34–35).

WHAT PURPOSE DOES EXCLUSION SERVE?

As long as societies have existed, there have been systems (sometimes obvious, sometimes hidden) that sort its members. The sorting occurs in order to ensure that the limited resources and rewards that a society values are not spread too thinly. It has also been suggested that this sorting occurs so that groups in power or in the majority position can enhance their power and majority by excluding some groups from certain aspects of a society (Staub, 1990). Staub notes that by excluding some groups, those in power maintain their privileged status.

The ideas of ‘normal’ and ‘difference’ are important here. The concept of ‘normal’ is the socially constructed line in the sand that allows some people in, and keeps some people out. It is often used as the justification for including and excluding. On one side of the line (normal) is acceptable, worthy, valued and included. On the other side of the line (not normal) is unacceptable, unworthy, unvalued and excluded. Those excluded are often referred to as different, that is, different from the acceptable, worthy and valued people who seemly unquestionably deserve their place. This concept of difference is important to any discussion of exclusion.

The sorting process sets the perimeters for societies’ beliefs regarding who is worthy and who is unworthy, who is accepted (in) and who is not accepted (out). Historically, this been based on attributes such as ability, gender, social class and ethnicity although other attributes are now being recognized as those that can also ‘sort’ people, for example sexuality and mental health status. It is this sorting process that includes and excludes people.

Closely related to the concept of difference is the concept of ‘others’. Slee (1995) highlighted the exclusive nature of this term when recounting his involvement in a forum for teachers and parents. Here he was questioned about the other 29 students in the class who it was believed would be disadvantaged by having a disabled student amongst them. The implication was that the disabled student had the status of the outsider (Slee, 1995). The concept of ‘other’ is a complex one, particularly as it relates to the exclusion of minority student groups. Ballard (1999b) sees this concept as creating the discrimination of ‘them’ and ‘us’, and this forms the basis for exclusion. As Alton-Lee (2003) points out, teachers must consider all students as ‘us’ not ‘them’ if inclusive education systems are to be a reality.

HOW DO EDUCATION SYSTEMS CONTRIBUTE TO THIS PURPOSE?

Schools are not immune from the practice of sorting, and over the years, have developed systems, policies and practices that contribute to this purpose. These can be completely overt and accepted as just the way things are done, but also more covert and deeply embedded and hidden within the beliefs, attitudes and values of those working within education systems.
CHAPTER 2

Market Model Systems

One of the most compelling reasons cited in the literature for the exclusion of disabled students is the market model education systems. Market model education systems involve schools competing against each other to attract students. Barton and Slee (1999) note that market model education systems, encourage competition between schools with the aim of increasing and improving standards of academic achievement and behaviour. However, as research has shown, while market model systems may promote individual choice and a ‘perceived’ freedom, this model does not promote social justice or equity, particularly for minority and marginalised groups (Barton & Slee, 1999; Clark, Dyson, Millward & Robson, 1999b; Thomas, Walker & Webb, 1998). Education systems based on market model systems are particularly problematic for inclusive education. If schools have to compete for students, they want students who “add value to their school rather than invite risk” (Slee, 2001a, p. 392). Slee also reports that the competition brought about from market model systems in education has increased pressure on schools to assure parents that high standards will be maintained in schools, and that problem students will not interfere with the learning of their children (Slee, 2001a). This is proving to be a major force in the exclusion of disabled students (Ballard, 2003a; Carrington, 1999; Halpin, 1999; Slee, 2001a). As Barton and Slee (1999) note:

… there is an assumed benign quality to the selective precision of the market as it randomly picks and chooses according to ‘natural talent’. Market equilibrium defines social good. Competition as the instrument of selection will include and it will exclude (p. 5).

Corbett (1999a) concurs, noting that competition has been used as a tool of marginalisation and exclusion and that by its very nature, competition is the antithesis of inclusion.

One such system can be found in New Zealand where the concept of ‘self managing schools’ was introduced in 1989. This had the effect of making schools more aware of the need to attract students, often in competition with other schools (Gordon, 1994). A New Zealand study into the effects of a recently introduced special education policy reported that some school principals did not want their school to be known as one that attracted disabled students in case some parents were detracted from sending their bright children to the school (Bourke, et al., 2000). Similar findings have also been reported in Australia (Slee, 2001a).

Examination systems, particularly in secondary schools, are reported as a vehicle of sorting, and thus exclusion. Searle (2001) has suggested examination systems in Britain ensure thousands of young British students fail and are rejected. He points out that that the entire British school examination system has been built upon practices of exclusion as it was not designed for the majority of school age children, but rather a small minority of children (Searle, 2001).

In many countries the publication of league tables has exacerbated exclusion. For example, Searle (2001) reported that in Great Britain, during August of 1996, it was revealed that, in order to enhance their ranking in performance tables, some schools were refusing thousands of sixteen-year-olds their right to sit the General
Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. Those students who were considered likely to fail were not allowed to attempt the examination, as their results would bring down the school’s overall pass rate. By excluding these students, schools were then able to raise the percentage of students who achieved five GCSE passes between grades A and C. Approximately 50,000 students across Great Britain, mainly from working class homes, were denied access to the GCSE examination (ibid.). Milbourne (2002) reported similar findings, highlighting the practice of teachers not giving their time to help students who experienced difficulties with learning achieve national examination passes, but rather focusing on pupils who were just at the borderline of achieving.

These are just some compelling arguments showing that competition is a vehicle of exclusion. As Searle (2001) warns:

The hidden hand of the market will not deliver a morally justifiable school system. In fact the market always pushes the system towards injustice. It is inevitable that competition between schools will reinforce a division between failing and successful schools. Thus it is crucial that schools do well in school league tables: otherwise they will be set on a downward spiral of falling rolls and diminishing resources (p. 136).

Protection of Majorities

As well as the more obvious reasons for the exclusion of students from schools, some researchers have suggested more complex reasons that reach deep into the heart of societies and their cultures. Staub (1990) reports that groups in power or in a majority position can look to protect and increase this power and majority by excluding (either partially, or fully), some groups from certain aspects of a society. Staub notes that by excluding some groups, those in power maintain their privileged status.

Education has been used as a vehicle to protect the self-interest and power of majority groups, often by way of denying some minority groups access to the education that will give them the credentials to achieve social inclusion (Tomlinson, 1999). This is particularly relevant in relation to segregated special education. Those directed and confined to this education system have far less chance of gaining society’s credentials that act as the pass to a valued place in society. Some have argued that governments are at the heart of this exclusion. Governments are prone to support exclusionary forces in schools, as well as creating the catalyst for them by way of adopting policies that protect the interests of some groups of students and legitimate the exclusion of others. Examples of this include funding frameworks based on labels, promoting segregated special education facilities, and the publication of league tables (Reay, 2004; Tomlinson, 1999). Gillborn and Youdell (2000) found that education systems, including policy makers, principals and teachers, are incredibly active in remaking and strengthening inequality especially in relation to race and social class. They reported that the effort that went into reinforcing inequality was often at an unconscious level, but permeated every activity despite policies that purported to do the opposite.
It has been suggested that practices that lead to the exclusion of disabled students (e.g., segregation, streaming, labelling), occur because professionals with particular status carry them out (Tomlinson, 1996). It is the status of the professionals involved that legitimises the practices. Similarly, students can be subjected to exclusionary forces because it justifies the work and beliefs of those professionals involved in these practices. For example it has been reported that professionals and academics that work from exclusionary paradigms and within settings that segregate disabled people, do not want their positions and livelihoods taken away from them (Booth & Ainscow, 1998b). Therefore they would be unlikely to embrace any moves towards more inclusionary philosophies and practices (ibid.). Similar findings were reported by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2003). In their thirty-country study of inclusive education, they found that in some European countries, special educators felt threatened by the process of inclusive education, because they thought that it would endanger their jobs.

Disability Discourses

A discourse is a way of speaking about a reality and a way of constructing knowledge. It is through discourse that meaning and knowledge about a phenomenon are fashioned and constructed (Purdue, 2004). Discourses provide the words and symbols that allow people to produce and communicate a reality (Johnson, 2005). Discourses also determine what is important and what is not important.

A discourse can develop when there is an acceptance of certain issues and assumptions around a phenomenon or issue (Neilson, 2005). Over recent decades there has been increasing recognition that our awareness and understanding of issues and phenomenon are influenced by the language and concepts we use (Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare, 1999). Therefore, discourses are very powerful in terms of shaping ideas, norms, values and beliefs about a topic or phenomenon.

This has been the case in relation to the concept of disability, where a range of meanings has been assigned based on different discourses. Historically, three main discourses have dominated thinking about disability: (1) medical discourses, (2) charity discourses, and (3) lay discourses (Fulcher, 1989). Traditionally understandings of disability have been dominated by the medical discourse, which interprets disability as an individual problem where others perceive a person as having a deficit, an illness or problem that needs fixing or curing. Disability is not seen as ‘normal’ and social, political and cultural contexts play no part in the interpretation of disability. Medical discourses of disability often portray disabled people as ‘others’ and, therefore, legitimise discrimination against them (Purdue, 2004).

Charity and lay discourses are closely linked to medical perspectives. In regards to charity discourses, Neilson (2005) points out that disabled people are described as needy, pitiful and requiring sympathy and compensation. While able-bodied people hold the dominant knowledge discourse and set the rules based on what society regards as normal, disabled people do not. Also disabled people’s judgments and preferences are regarded as inferior to those of professionals who are working to ‘help’ them (ibid.). Similarly, lay discourses regard disability as something terrible that disabled people have been struck down with (Fulcher, 1989).
Over the last few decades, medical, charity and lay discourses have been challenged as disablist, discriminatory and repressive. The notion of disability being a problem that resides within an individual has been challenged, critiqued and found ‘wanting’. Current notions of disability present an alternative perspective, where the problems disabled people experience are attributed to society’s failure to provide appropriate services and take into account the needs of disabled people in relation to the way societies are organised (Oliver, 1996). This discourse has gathered momentum and can be seen as a major ‘way of thinking’ about disability. This socio-cultural perspective is becoming evident at government policy level. For example the New Zealand Disability Strategy (Ministry of Health, 2001) which defines disability as ‘not something individuals have … disability is the process which happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have” (p. 10). However, while this discourse is gaining momentum in relation to disability, it is not without its critics. For example Corker and French (1999) believe that socio-cultural model theories of disability still have value judgments because they dichotomise disability and impairment. Disability tends to be valued (that is, it is acceptable to be labelled disabled) and impairment tends to be silenced and marginalised (it is not talked about or valued because it is not acceptable).

The Notion of Difference

The theme of disability as ‘difference’ is often associated with exclusion. In most cases, to be different is to be excluded from access to social justice, to power, and to participation within society. The more different a person, the more exclusion they experience. However, it is important to point out that the notion of ‘difference’ is not a truth residing within individuals, but rather a social, cultural and political construction. Societies create the perimeters for understandings of ‘difference’. As Minnow (1990) states, “if we look closely at the context that defines some people as different, that difference will no longer seem empirically discoverable” (p. 22), but rather ideas about difference will be clues to problems associated with the responsibilities of people within a society and the policies of those societies (ibid.). Just as societies can construct ideas of difference, so to can they deconstruct them. However, some would argue that the likelihood of societies doing this is remote. This is because societies rely on constructs such as ‘difference’ to exclude and marginalise some groups so that scarce resources are not spread too thinly. The link between ‘difference’ and ‘comparison’ is also important. Minnow (1990) believes that ‘difference’ is a function of comparison and the effects of seeing ‘difference’ as a function of comparison can lead to dividing the world into the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’, the ‘worthy’ and the ‘unworthy’, the ‘valued’ and the ‘unvalued’ (Minnow, 1990).

All of this is of direct relevance to the exclusion of disabled students. Some studies have shown that the notion of difference is seen as a justification for excluding and marginalising disabled students from regular education. Purdue, Ballard, and MacArthur (2001), found that the teachers in their study identified disabled students as different from those students who were not disabled and therefore not the
responsibility of the classroom teacher. They found that when this did happen, those students would be considered the responsibility of an untrained teacher aide. Ainscow (1999) has reported similar findings where teachers have believed that because of the needs of some disabled students, they could not be expected to teach them. Similarly, the degree of difference can equate to the level of rights disabled children are given to be present, participate and learn in regular classrooms. MacArthur, Dight, and Purdue (2000) found that some teachers suggested to them that some disabled children are too different and too disabled to be taught in a regular classroom.

The idea of difference has been associated with medical model thinking about disabled students. In a study by Davis and Watson (2001a), teachers told researchers how different disabled children were to ‘us’. Often these ideas about difference were based on value judgments and medical model perspectives that had as their focus, children’s impairments and deficits. Davis and Watson (2001a) also found that because ‘difference’ was not something that was valued or aspired to, disabled students were often forced to act ‘normal’. Their study found that teachers believed it was their role to correct disabled students ‘abnormalities or deficits’, and this process of correction was based on developing a dependency on non-disabled people (Davis & Watson, 2001a).

Ballard (1995) argued that schools that practice exclusion do not see differentness as part of the ordinary and not being ordinary is used as a justification to exclude or marginalise these students from mainstream schools. He points out that this is often under the mistaken belief that they need special treatment that can only be given in special schools (ibid.). Recognising the power of the construct of ‘difference’ is important to understanding the inclusion and exclusion of disabled students. As Slee (2001a) points out: “the point of embarkation for the journey towards more inclusive forms of schooling is at the point of recognising the nature and legitimacy of difference and the relations of domination between different cultural groups” (p. 389).

**The Language of Exclusion**

Language has the power to include and to exclude, because values and ideologies are transported through language (Ballard, 2004b). The ideology of exclusive education has a well-established language (Mittler, 2000). If there is a desire to overcome exclusionary forces within a society (including the societies of schools), “individuals need to resist and reject the language that carries the ideology of exclusion” (Ballard 2004b, p. 103). In particular, the term ‘special needs’ has been reported as an example of language that devalues and excludes those who are assigned the label. The term ‘special needs’ presupposes that there is a clearly defined group of students who have extraordinary needs and these needs are around deficit and ‘not valued’ difference. Ainscow (2000) reports that if we categorise and name children as special, this identifies them as different in ways that are not valued in schools and in societies. Corbett (2001) concurs, stating:

the concept of special educational needs; particularly as it is seen in this country [England] becomes another barrier. I don’t think it has a productive contribution
to make to the inclusive education agenda. If anything, it is one of the major
barriers to moving forward (p. 41).

Mittler (2000) concurs stating that “even if the concept of special educational needs
was now abolished, the damage done by the use of such language will take a long
time to heal” (p. 80).

The language of medical model thinking has also been associated with the exclusion
of disabled students (Ainscow, 2000). Terms such as ‘diagnosis’, ‘therapy’, ‘dis-
orders’ all conjure up ideas of deficits and illness. These terms, which have been
commonly used in relation to special education, have been shown to target those
associated with them for “derisive humour and patronising solicitude” (Biklen, 1989,
p. 13). These terms will be avoided in this book, except where it is historically
necessary or where it is used in quotations or citations of other people’s work.
The term ‘disabled’ will be used in line with the New Zealand Disability Strategy
(Ministry of Health, 2001), which defines disability as “the process which happens
when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of
living, taking no account of the impairments other people have” (Ministry of Health,
2001, p. 10).

The language of exclusion can also be hidden. Slee (2001b) warns that those
working from traditional special education paradigms may use the language of
inclusion, but still continue to hold assumptions and values about disabled people
based on ideas of pathological defect and abnormality. While Slee does not believe
that this is done consciously or with a desire to exclude and marginalise the students
that they work with, the reality is that the language of special education has been shown
to exclude and marginalise disabled students from the experiences and opportunities
of their non-disabled peers. When this is done under the guise of inclusive educa-
tion, the ramifications are profound and have the potential to set back the process
towards inclusive education in ways that are difficult to see or measure. Examples
of the language of inclusive education used to convey and describe the beliefs and
values of special education can be seen in many aspects of education. For example,
book titles such as Inclusion Practices with Special Needs Students (Pfeiffer &
Reddy, 1999).

Similarities can be drawn here to the writing of bell hooks (1994) discussing the
issues of freedom and justice:

In retrospect, I see that in the last twenty years I have encountered many folks
who say they are committed to freedom and justice for all even though the
way they live, the values and habits of being they institutionalise daily, in public
and private rituals, help maintain the culture of domination, help create an
unfree world (p. 27).

The Curriculum

The concept of ‘curriculum’ is complex however; curriculum can be conceived of as
the subject matter, pedagogy (including assessment) and resources that are involved
in the organisation, delivery and articulation of education programmes (National
Board of Employment Education & Training, 1992). The role of curriculum in
Creating more or less inclusive schools is well documented. For example, UNESCO (2005) reports: “accessible and flexible curricula can serve as the key to creating inclusive schools” (p. 25). However, studies both in New Zealand (e.g., McArthur et al., 2005) and internationally (e.g., Davis & Watson, 2001b; Lloyd, 2008; UNESCO, 2005) report that often disabled students have limited access to the general curriculum and that the curriculum may not be designed to successfully meet the needs of all students.

Curriculum adaptation has been reported as a key practice that can reduce the exclusion often experienced by disabled students. Studies have reported that students are more marginalised and excluded from learning experiences and regular class activities when teachers do not make adaptations when required that allow access (Shevlin, Kenny & McNeela, 2002; Udvari-Solner, 1996). Also reported is the need for teachers to focus on modifying and adapting the curriculum, rather than disabled students needing to ‘modify and adapt’ themselves in order to access the curriculum (Davis & Watson, 2001b).

Carroll-Lind, Bevan-Brown, and Kearney (2007) suggest that in order to encourage teachers to think more about curriculum issues in relation to the inclusion and exclusion of disabled students, curriculum documents need to be very clear about the need for curriculum adaptation and also be very clear that it is the teachers’ role to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all students.

However, it is not just adaptation that needs to be considered in relation to the curriculum. Some have argued that the curriculum is inherently biased, whether it is adapted or not (Lloyd, 2008). Lloyd argues that this bias is focused on the needs of the academically able and that this is to the detriment of those not so able. UNESCO (2005) suggests the following strategies need to be taken into consideration if the curriculum is not to be a force of exclusion:

- Providing a flexible time-frame for pupils studying particular subjects
- Giving greater freedom to teachers in choosing their working methods
- Allowing teachers the opportunity of giving special support in practical subjects (for example orientation and mobility) over and above the periods allotted for more traditional school subjects
- Alloting time for additional assistance for classroom based work
- Emphasising aspects of pre-vocational training (p. 25).

UNESCO (2005) also suggests asking the following questions:

- What human values promoting inclusion are being fostered through the curriculum?
- Are teaching methods child-centred and interactive?
- How is feedback gathered/integrated for curriculum revision?
- How is the curriculum related to national assessment systems?
- To what extent are the education authorities responsible for monitoring the school in tune with the curriculum revisions and transactions? (pp. 25–26).

Low Teacher Expectations

Low teacher expectations are a factor reported as excluding disabled students from an inclusive education (Keary, 1998), and to be disabled in some schools equates to
low teacher expectations regarding ability. For example in an Irish study of students who were physically disabled, participants reported that their teachers expected less of them than their non-disabled peers. Teachers accepted work of a lower standard, and gave inadequate feedback (Shevlin, Kenny & McNeela, 2002). Similarly, a study by Priestley and Rabiee (2002) reported low expectations based on perceived severity of impairment. In a Norwegian study, Nes (1999) reported that teachers of a highly capable disabled student did not expect her to attain very much.

The concept of ‘self fulfilling prophecies’ is well reported in the literature (e.g., Tauber, 1997). However, Alton-Lee (2003) warns of taking a simplistic approach when it comes to the issue of teacher expectations. She maintains that while inappropriate teacher expectations can undermine student achievement, a focus on teacher expectations alone will not bring about improved outcomes for students. Teacher expectations need to be integrated into quality teacher practices. However, Alton-Lee also points out that New Zealand educators need to break the pattern of inappropriately low expectations for some groups of students, particularly disabled students (ibid.).

**Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs**

Teacher attitudes and beliefs have been shown to be important factors in the inclusion and exclusion of disabled students at school. Arguably, one of the most important teacher attitudes is a belief in the concept of inclusive education. In this regard, if teachers are not accepting of the principles of inclusive education, barriers to the participation of disabled students will be erected (King-Sears, 1997; MacArthur et al., 2005; Mentis, Quinn & Ryba, 2005; Spedding, 2008; UNESCO, 2005). However, Cook, Tankersley, Cook, and Landrum (2000) would maintain that it is teachers’ attitudes towards disabled students themselves, as opposed to their attitudes towards inclusive education in general that is the critical factor. Ainscow (1999) also identifies the teacher rejection of certain students based on their characteristics as an excluding factor.

In an extensive review of how mainstream schools respond to student diversity, and facilitate participation by all students, Dyson, Howes, and Roberts (2004) found that a strong theme running through all studies was the importance of the values and attitudes held by school staff. Important attitudes included an acceptance and celebration of difference and a commitment to providing for the social and educational needs of all students. In particular the belief that it is the classroom teacher’s responsibility to meet the needs of all students is one that is strongly linked to successful inclusive education (Ainscow, 1999; Carrington & Elkins, 2005; Educational Queensland, 2001). Research has also shown that teachers who do not believe they are responsible for disabled students are likely to hand over responsibility to teacher aides (Ainscow, 1999; MacArthur et al., 2005).

A belief in the importance of teacher self-reflection with the intention of improving practice is reported as important in facilitating inclusive education. Corbett (2001) writes that school staff who are open to learning new skills and to self-reflecting, respond effectively to students needs, and this contributes to an inclusive school environment. Similarly, The Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (Education...
Queensland, 2001) found that teachers who were engaged in productive pedagogy were more willing to talk about and reflect upon their failings and consider changes that had to be made to their teaching, than teachers who did not engage in productive pedagogy.

Closely related to teacher reflection, is recognition by teachers of the power that they as individuals hold to either include or exclude students. This recognition is reported as an enabler to inclusive education (Allan, 1999; Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Spedding, 2008). If teachers are aware of the part they play in this regard, they are more likely to modify their behaviour in areas such as use of language, expectations, and stereotyping. A belief by teachers that all children can learn and succeed is also well reported as a belief that facilitates inclusive education (Falvey & Givner, 2005).

Teacher misconceptions can also act as barriers to inclusive education. These include the beliefs that inclusion (1) is a theoretical construct, (2) is not a practical one, (3) is costly, (4) requires capacities and special skills in teachers and these are difficult to develop, and (5) will only come about when society changes to be more inclusive (UNESCO, 2005).

Given the importance of teacher attitudes to inclusive education it would seem important to know what factors affect teachers’ attitudes. A number of studies have reported on these factors which include: teachers previous experience with students who are considered ‘challenging’; their training and professional development; the support that is available to them; the size of their class; and their overall workload (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burton, 2000; MacArthur et al., 2005; UNESCO, 2005). For those school leaders and policy makers looking to increase the presence, participation and learning of all students, particularly those students historically excluded or marginalised, a focus on these important factors would seem central to this cause.

Teacher Education and Professional Development

The professional development and training of teachers is an important consideration in the exclusion or inclusion of disabled students. This is for two main reasons. First, teachers often report a lack of knowledge and skills as a factor impeding their ability to successfully include disabled students in their classes (Marshall, Ralph & Palmer, 2002). Second, research consistently shows the importance of appropriate teacher attitudes and values for successful inclusive education and that teacher training and professional development can play an important part in developing these necessary beliefs and attitudes. For example Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) and McDonald and MacArthur (2005) report that professional development in the area of inclusive education can have a positive effect on developing teacher attitudes conducive to the facilitation of inclusive education. Similarly, Praisner (2003) found a correlation between school principals’ involvement in professional development about inclusive education, and their positive attitude to disabled students. Those with positive attitudes were more likely to provide a more inclusive education whereas those with negative attitudes were more likely to provide restricted education. Praisner also found that the more content around appropriate topics, the more positive principals were in their attitude toward inclusion.
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It should be noted that this is not necessarily the widely held belief that the professional development needed is in the form of special training around special interventions for disabled students (Mittler, 2000). Thomas, Walker, and Webb (1998) report that there is no evidence to suggest that there is a separate set of practices or teaching strategies that are required to meet the needs of disabled students. Some research shows that it may be more effective if professional development provides participants with opportunities to reflect on their beliefs, values and attitudes and the relationship between these and their day-to-day practice (MacArthur et al., 2005; Mittler, 2000).

Similarly, it is reported that professional development for inclusive education, based on special education principles, may not support teacher learning. As reported by CCS Disability Action (2007), most in-service professional development in New Zealand relating to disabled students originates from the Ministry of Education’s Special Education division, Group Special Education. CCS Disability Action (2007) report that “this is generally not about inclusion, but about managing problems” (p. 5).

Marshall, Ralph, and Palmer (2002), in a study examining teachers’ attitudes towards students experiencing speech and language difficulties, recommended that professional development for teachers focus on a commitment to inclusive education and that attention be given to appropriate knowledge and skills. They found that teachers’ perceived lack of knowledge was a barrier to their ability and reduced their confidence to work effectively with students who experienced difficulties with speech and language.

Teacher development and education usually comes in the form of pre-service and in-service. In relation to pre-service, the role of initial teacher education (ITE) in creating inclusive or exclusive schools is widely reported in the literature. While some writers take a technical view, highlighting the necessity for the inclusion of teaching strategies and skills into ITE programmes (for example writing IEPS, preparing picture exchange communication systems and so forth), others call for a move away from the technical approach (Slee, 2001a). Ewing (2001) believes that many teacher education programmes have too little attention focused on the ethical, political, social and cultural dimensions of teaching whereas, it is these aspects of schooling that sustain the exclusion of some students. In particular Ewing believes that teacher educators need to reflect upon the extent to which their courses transmit, often implicitly, values and beliefs that encourage students to accept, uncritically, power and hierarchy arrangements in schools. These are the power and hierarchy arrangements that include and exclude some groups of students. In their extensive review of the literature, McDonald and MacArthur (2005) make similar recommendations highlighting the need for initial teacher education (ITE) programmes to change from traditional knowledge based models, to those based on principles of social justice and citizenship.

Kane (2005) investigated the nature and extent of ITE programmes in New Zealand around inclusive education. She found that the majority of ITE providers did not have clearly articulated policy around inclusion within their qualifications, and that there was limited evidence of the degree to which ITE programmes responded to the literature on inclusive education. She also found that the titles of many papers reflected a focus on special needs rather than inclusion.
CHAPTER 2

The question of whether inclusive education should be a separate stand alone subject in ITE programmes, or whether it is better infused into all other aspects of the programme is one that is still debated. For those stand alone courses, the question of whether it is should be compulsory or optional is also still debated. McDonald and MacArthur (2005) report that most teachers in New Zealand have attended ITE programmes that have optional papers about teaching disabled children and children who experience difficulties with learning and behaviour, and thus believe that teaching these children in their classroom is also optional.

It should also be noted that it is not just teachers that need to be involved in training and development around inclusive education. Ministry of Education officials, politicians and decision makers at local and national levels need to be involved as well (Mittler, 2000).

The School Principal

There is a growing body of research examining the role of the school principal in creating inclusive or exclusive school environments. Many studies support the notion that principals have a vital role in the success or otherwise of inclusive schools (Avissar, 2000; CCS Disability Action, 2007; Kugelmass, 2003; Praisner, 2003; Riehl, 2000). As creating inclusive schools often involves significant change for school communities, principals are in a unique position to bring about this change. Riehl (2000) points out that a principal can “influence what things mean” (p. 60), promoting appropriate meanings and situations that encourage and support inclusive education. For example at meetings, and school events and ceremonies, principals are in a position to assign inclusive meanings to actions and beliefs, for example promoting inclusive meanings around disability and difference (ibid.). Principals are also in a unique position to model inclusive attitudes, beliefs and practices, and the modelling of such behaviour has been shown to advance the acceptance and inclusion of diverse student populations (Praisner, 2003). Also, principals are in a powerful position to create a shared vision towards an inclusive school (Ainscow, 1999; Hanson et al., 2001). Similarly, principals are in a strong position to encourage the training and professional development paths of teachers (MacArthur et al., 2005). As stated previously, effective professional development has been strongly linked to inclusive schools (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000).

The attitude of school principals towards inclusive education appears to be a very important factor in the inclusion and exclusion of disabled students. Praisner (2003) found that principals with positive attitudes towards inclusive education are more likely to place disabled students in inclusive settings, whereas principals with negative attitudes towards inclusive education are more likely to include disabled students in more restricted environments. As with research into what affects teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education, Praisner found that a school principal’s attitude was affected by past positive or negative experiences with disabled students.

The leadership style of school principals has also been shown to help or hinder inclusive education. For example, Dyal (1996) found that the school principal’s ability to share leadership with others was a vital factor in creating school climates conducive to inclusion. Similarly, Education Queensland (2001) and Dyson et al.,
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(2004) reported that leadership that was strongly focused on management did not lead to improved student outcomes. Likewise, CCS Disability Action (2007) report that an inclusive school is less likely when leadership is weak, particularly in relation to encouraging a learning organisation within a school.

Principals are in a unique position to act as gatekeepers to the enrolment of students at their school. This is particularly relevant for disabled students. A New Zealand study reported that 10% of school principals surveyed indicated that they had denied enrolment to a child with a disability (Bourke et al., 2000). These principals justified this on the grounds of lack of trained personnel to work with disabled students, a lack of what was considered appropriate facilities, and health and safety concerns for other students and staff. Another group of principals indicated that while they had not actually denied enrolment, they had discouraged it. Some principals in this study also said that they had used delaying tactics in relation to a disabled students’ enrolment, hoping that the parents might enrol their child at another school. The same study reported similar findings from surveys with parents who reported that some school principals made it obvious that they did not want the child by suggesting to parents that another school would have better facilities and opportunities for their children. Parents also reported that some principals gave them the impression that the resourcing entitlements must come before the child could enrol (Bourke et al., 2000).

School Culture

While many aspects that could be considered part of a school culture (such as teacher attitudes beliefs and management styles) have already been discussed in this chapter, the topic of school culture is such an important one that it is worthy of individual consideration. School culture has been described as one of the most important concepts in education but also one of the most overlooked (Stoll, 1999). The notion of school culture has been linked to effective inclusive schools (Ainscow, 1995; Alton-Lee, 2003; Carrington, 1999; Dyson et al., 2004). It has been defined as:

the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that has built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges. This set of informal expectations and values shapes how people think, feel, and act in schools (Peterson & Deal, 1998, p. 28).

School culture is a complex phenomenon, and this complexity is in part due to the fact that there are multiple meanings assigned to the term. Often it is used interchangeably with terms such as school climate, ethos, atmosphere or character and these terms are assumed to be a common phenomenon (Prosser, 1999).

Culture within a school context, exists at different levels, some of which can be observed (for example language, rituals, symbols and customs) and some of which are not visible and deeply embedded within organisations (e.g., the values, norms and beliefs and taken for granted assumptions).

School culture has been shown to be a significant factor in the inclusion and exclusion of students. For example, in an extensive review of the literature around how mainstream schools act in ways that enable them to respond to student diversity
and facilitate participation by all students, Dyson et al. (2003) found school culture to be the critical factor. They found that the norms, values and accepted ways of doing things in schools that were focused on inclusion and inclusive principles, produced an overall improvement in participation of all students. Similar findings were reported in Carrington and Elkin’s (2005) study into the school culture of inclusive and non-inclusive schools. They found that non-inclusive schools held ideas of difference based on medical model thinking and value judgements. These schools also had rigid teaching methods and school structures, not flexible and attuned to the differing needs of students. In comparison, they found that inclusive schools did not have clearly defined groups of students, those who were disabled and those who were not disabled. Similarly, inclusive schools blurred the lines between special and mainstream provisions. There was also greater sharing and collaboration between teachers and teachers were encouraged to experiment and be flexible in their ways of working.

Management styles are a key factor in creating school culture. Henderson (1997) found that schools with high exclusion rates were characterised by a management style with a narrow definition of both the teacher’s role, and a narrow understanding of the purposes of the school. Henderson also reported that schools with high exclusion rates used very inflexible and hierarchical discipline systems. This study recommended that the ethos of schools be reviewed as it had a major influence on exclusion rates. Similarly, Alton-Lee (2003) reports that schools need to have collective perspectives (rather than ‘top-down’ management perspectives), particularly regarding curriculum, policy and pedagogy, if there are to be positive outcomes for diverse students.

It appears that it is the ‘deep’ aspects of school culture that are most influential in creating inclusive or exclusive schools. Factors such as attitudes, values, norms and entrenched practices need to be examined in order to facilitate inclusive schools. Corbett (1999b) reported that successful inclusion occurs only if the level of deep culture is examined and attended to. In this study, school principals reported that although all the planning, curriculum modification and other practices often associated with inclusive education had occurred, this was not enough to counteract exclusion, particularly from peer groups. Corbett believes that any definition of inclusive education must be located within a school’s culture if it is to have meaning. She believes that locating inclusive education within the culture of the school reduces the abstraction of the concept, thus giving it meaning to those within the school and the school community.

Bullying

While much has been published in the area of school bullying generally, little attention has been given to the area of school bullying and disabled students (Flynt & Morton, 2004). However, the UK Office of the Children’s Commissioner has found that disabled children can be twice as likely as their peers to be the victims of bullying and Mencap (a leading United Kingdom charity working with learning disabled people) reports that nearly nine out of ten people who experience difficulty with learning, also experience some form of bullying, with over two-thirds experiencing
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it on a regular basis (National Children’s Bureau, 2007). Similarly in New Zealand, MacArthur et al. (2007), found that bullying was a common feature of school life for disabled children, and the New Zealand Human Rights Commission report evidence that disabled students experience issues of bullying in regards to their impairment (New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2004). As bullying has been shown to lead to exclusion (MacArthur & Gaffney, 2001), this is an important factor associated with the exclusion of disabled students.

Teacher Aides/Paraprofessionals

The use of teacher aides (also called paraprofessionals) is a growing phenomenon in relation to the education of disabled students, however, until recently, it is one of the least studied. Also, while some studies show that there is little evidence to support the notion that paraprofessional support for disabled students improves outcomes for these students (Giangreco, Edleman, & Broer, 2001), the practice of assigning paraprofessionals to work with disabled students appears to be a growing phenomenon.

One of the themes in the literature in relation to the use of paraprofessionals is the practice of class teachers handing over responsibility for disabled learners to paraprofessionals (e.g., Broer, Doyle & Giangreco, 2005; Giangreco et al., 2001). Similarly, Ainscow, Farrell, and Tweddle (2005) found what they called surprising levels of importance placed on the work of unqualified paraprofessionals. This does raise questions of assigning the least powerful and qualified staff (paraprofessionals) to the students requiring the most skilful teachers. Not only this, but assigning paraprofessionals to disabled students in the place of the teacher perpetuates the devalued status of disabled students, both in the eyes of the disabled student themselves and in the eyes of others (Giangreco et al., 2001; Thomas Walker & Webb, 1998).

Literature also reports the potential of teacher aides to segregate students from their peers. This is most apparent when teacher aides work with disabled students in isolated areas, away from the mainstream class (Ainscow et al., 2005). This has been linked with a lack of opportunity for disabled students to form social skills and social interactions with their peers (Lorenz, 1998). However, it is likely that it is more than just the physical isolation that reduces peer interaction. Some studies have shown that if a student is thought by their peers to be the responsibility of the teacher aide, they are less likely to interact with that student than if they were not seen as the responsibility of the teacher aide (Thomas, Walker & Webb, 1998).

Some research also shows that teacher aides can act as protectors of disabled students, particularly in the playground, thus protecting them from normal experiences of childhood. Broer, Doyle, and Giangreco (2005) believe that this denies these students the opportunities for decision making and reduces the visibility of issues of bullying.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF EXCLUSION?

Because exclusion is about devaluing people (Booth, 1996), one of the major psychological effects of exclusion is students’ negative feelings of value and belonging
(Falvey & Givner, 2005). In a major synthesis of research regarding student’s need for belonging in a school community, Osterman (2000) draws a number of relevant conclusions. She maintains that a sense of belonging is an extremely important concept and as a psychological phenomenon has a far-reaching impact on human behaviour and motivation. She found that many students fail to experience a sense of belongingness at school. The results of not having this are “a range of emotional problems such as violence towards other students and teachers, drugs, depression, drop outs, eating problems, and teen pregnancy” (pp. 358–359). Baumeister and Leary (1995), in a review of over 300 citations, found that being excluded or ignored often leads to negative feelings of depression, jealousy, anxiety, grief and loneliness. They also found that when people lack belongingness, they are prone to a range of behavioural problems including criminality and suicide.

Whenever students are denied access to the culture, curricula and everyday experiences of mainstream schools, they are devalued (Booth, 1996). Devaluing people leads to feelings of alienation and isolation (ibid.) and has been suggested as a reason for crime, and many other difficulties experienced by societies (Forest & Pearpoint, 1992). Exclusion from education has also been shown to limit opportunities in later life such as employment, income and housing opportunities and it has also been linked to restricted freedoms of citizenship. (UNESCO, 2005).

Similarly, a common theme to emerge from the inclusion literature is the link between exclusion and segregation in schools spilling over to create exclusive and segregative societies (Stainback & Stainback, 1996). While schools continue to legitimise exclusion, communities that exclude particular people will continue to exist. It could also be argued that while communities continue to legitimise exclusion, exclusion in schools will continue to exist.

**SUMMARY**

Exclusion is a powerful and elusive construct. Powerful in that it is the force whereby some members of a society are denied access to the resources and rewards of that society. This reduces their power, and their voice, and denies them access to the ideals of social justice. Elusive in that it is rarely spoken of, and often deeply hidden and disguised within the so-called ‘normal’ practices, beliefs and values of society.

Exclusion is usually justified by way of a deficit model emphasis. Based on this model, the difficulties that certain members of a society experience are deemed to be individually constructed, thereby focusing not only the blame for the predicament that these people find themselves in, but also the onus for a solution to this predicament, on the individuals themselves. This deficit model understanding absolves society of responsibility for the exclusion experienced by individuals and groups of people.

Schools are powerful agents of a society and play an important role in the inclusion and exclusion of its members. However, the inclusive education movement is challenging this role, demanding that schools be for all children and young people. It is hoped that by breaking down exclusion in schools, societies will become fairer and more must places for all people.