
RADICAL INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

CONNECTING DISABILITY, EDUCATION AND ACTIVISM

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In loving memory of my father

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ABSTRACT

This thesis combines ideas from disability studies and inclusive education debates, as well as critiques of mainstream schooling from critical pedagogy (e.g. Freire, 1972a; McLaren, 2009) and progressive education approaches (e.g. Darling & Nordenbo, 2002; Holt, 1983) to suggest a framework of radical inclusive pedagogy. The imperative for developing this framework is based on two main arguments; firstly, I argue for the understanding of education as a political process that can serve to reify or challenge the social order (Freire, 1972b; Giroux, 1981; McLaren, 2009). This view shifts debates about (inclusive) education from technical issues of resources and teaching methods to political and value-laden questions about the goals and aims of education (Slee, 1997). Secondly, adopting the social model assertion that disability is not an individual trait but rather the result of social processes of disablement (Oliver, 1990a; Thomas, 1999), I argue that educational theories and practices that are geared towards social justice and inclusion need to recognise and value the diversity of human embodiments, needs and capacities, and to foster pedagogical practices that promote rhizomatic relations of interdependency (Allan, 2008; Goodley, 2007a; Kittay, Jennings, & Wasunna, 2005), rather than focusing on independence and rationality.

A key aspect of the thesis is its prefigurative approach, which stresses the need to simultaneously resist the social order and build alternatives from within (Gordon, 2008). This leads to the argument that the disabled people's movement is in itself a site of radical inclusive pedagogy, as it supports disabled people in analysing social structures in order to resist their oppression. Further, the insistence on prefigurative research meant looking for ways to engage with disabled students in ways that resist the adult-child hierarchies of the school. The use of playful creative methods (including art, drama and comics) in workshops that were aimed at designing "the best school in the world" allowed for more flexible power relations, and provided an accessible context to foster participants' engagement in reflexive discussions about social norms and values, thus transgressing the primacy of language and rationality in educational research.

Findings from interviews with activists in the disabled people's movement and from the ethnographic work in a "special needs unit" within a mainstream school were synthesised to suggest four key aspects of radical inclusive pedagogy: the need to value difference and resist practices that seek to make all students follow a uniform, linear and predefined educational path; the need to understand education as a complex and on-going relational process that values interdependence rather than independence; the need to contextualise learning in diverse aspects of experience as a way of supporting conscientization and accessibility; and the need to promote dialogue between teachers and students and resist authoritarian school practices.

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LIST OF OUTPUTS AND DISSEMINATION

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2010 -Disability Studies Conference, Lancaster University *Children and vulnerable adults: Risk, responsibility and exclusion in the life of disabled people*

2011- Theorising Normalcy and the Mundane, 2nd International conference, MMU
Keynote presentation: *‘Ideal world full of freaks and unusual women’: playing with contradictions in “special” education research.*

2011- Transformative Difference: Disability, Culture and the Academy, Liverpool Hope University *Including or Belonging? Moral conflicts in the ‘Special Needs’ Unit*

2011- RIHSC Conference, MMU *Making space for place: The role of the physical environment in educational relationships*

2012- Theorising Normalcy and the Mundane, 3rd International conference, University of Chester *Burning the blackboard: the important role of conflict and resistance in inclusive education*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A long time ago in a place far far away...

All good stories start like that and so does this one. It was June 2002 in Israel/Palestine and I was about to complete my first year as a speech and language therapist. From a very young age, I have always wanted to change the world and make it a better place. In my youth that commitment had translated into political activism in anti-occupation, anti-militarist and feminist movements, but when the time came to choose a professional career path, I did not want to make activism the source of my livelihood. Choosing to work with disabled children seemed like a good option for having a “practical” profession, while still making the world a better place and supporting people to live a full life.

Yet, a year into my practice in a mainstream school with an “inclusion” programme for students with the label of autism, I was growing increasingly uncomfortable. Initially I was impressed with the level of service available in the school to facilitate students’ participation in mainstream education. A special educational needs (SEN) teacher and a teaching assistant (TA) were constantly available to support autistic students during lessons, as well as a special after school provision dedicated to developing students’ social, cognitive and communication skills. On top of the SEN teachers and TAs the staff also included a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist and a psychologist. One day during an arithmetic lesson, the teacher asked the students to skip over some pages in their work books, and answer the questions on page 65. Jonathan, one of the autistic students in the

classroom, was enraged by this instruction. He wanted to go through the work book page by page without skipping any questions. ‘You must say - open your work books on page 61!’ he yelled at the teacher, ‘say that IMMEDIATELY!!’ Screaming and kicking, Jonathan was taken out of the classroom. Later that week the team had discussed the incident, attributing the behaviour to Jonathan’s “autistic” tendency to rely on rigid rules and structures. To ameliorate this we decided to use a *Social Story*, an intervention often used with autistic students to explain social conventions and expectations through clearly and explicitly depicting scenarios of familiar social situations. As the speech and language therapist on the team it was my job to write a story that will explain to Jonathan that it is the teacher’s prerogative to set out the work, and that it is the student’s role to complete the work without arguing. In other words, I had to spell out in accessible language what Illich (1971) calls *the hidden curriculum* – comply with authority, don’t question it. That experience made me question my role in the school; was I really making the world a better place by facilitating the integration of disabled students into an authoritarian and oppressive system? While I still believe “inclusion” rather than segregation is what we should all be fighting for, I was asking with Allan (2008, p. 48) ‘*inclusion into what?*’

It was precisely that question that motivated the current research. Being a political activist made it easy for me to understand schools as political institutions, involved in disciplining subjects into becoming productive and governable citizens of the market economy (Foucault, 1977; Rose, 1996), and I left the school at the end of the year. It took a few years of changing jobs and provisions (going between an out of school educational provision and a child development clinic) to understand that disability was a political issue as well. Working as a speech and language therapist, in both health and educational settings, often required adjusting children’s behaviour and thinking to the system’s needs rather than the other way around. It also required adherence (or at least acquiescence) to an individual

model of disability. This model conceptualises disability as the result of physical or mental impairment, an inherent trait located in the disabled person's body and mind. The difficulties experienced by the disabled person, as well as chances for future achievements, are seen as a direct outcome of the impairment (Oliver, 1990b). Several years into my practice as a speech and language therapist I was increasingly frustrated with the oppressive nature of my profession. The unbridgeable gap between my political values of diversity, emancipation and solidarity and my day to day practice of training and adjusting individuals to fit narrow norms of personhood, independence and rationality was haunting me, and I was anxiously searching the internet for new ideas that will enable me to use my skills to support disabled people without re-enforcing their exclusion and marginalisation, and sometimes even de-validation of their personhood. Encountering the *social model of disability* (Oliver, 1990b), which looks at how social structures and environments enable certain people to participate while disabling others, was for me a "light bulb" moment filled with many possibilities for combining activism with providing support to disabled people.

Understanding both disability and education as political, I knew what I wanted to do – I wanted to start a radical inclusive school that will abandon the pursuit of norms and standards in favour of supporting children to better understand themselves, the world, and their relations with others in the world. Embarking on this PhD project was an opportunity to explore through the literature and through dialogue with others what such *radical inclusive pedagogy* might mean. Specifically, I draw on theoretical ideas from disability studies to explore notions of difference, interdependency, and social exclusion/inclusion; and on ideas from various critiques of education, particularly those associated with the field of critical pedagogy, to rethink the meaning of education and the role of schools (chapters 2-4). In the second part of this work (chapters 6-8) I draw on analytical accounts from activists in the disabled people's movement and inclusive education campaigns, as well as on the views,

experiences and practices of students and staff in an innovative “special needs unit” in a secondary school, to explore how these theoretical ideas may be enacted in practice. In that I take *a stance of inspiration* to research (explored in chapter 5), meaning that as a researcher I do not seek to arrive at accurate representation of any existing practice, but rather try to create thick and rich descriptions of what education might look like if we imagined it under radically different conditions. This thinking starts with recognising and valuing the endless diversity of human embodiments, many of which are classified as impairments under current social and medical discourse, rather than understanding inclusion as the integration of disabled students into an already thought out system. In the coming chapters I try to answer the following questions

1. What are the possibilities and obstacles in adapting radical pedagogy perspectives on inclusive education?
2. What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the analytical accounts of activists in the disabled people’s movement and in campaigns for inclusive education?
3. What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from looking at the educational practices in a “special needs” unit in an innovative secondary school?
4. What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the process of conducting playful research workshops with a group of students in a “special needs” unit?
5. How can we construct a framework of radical inclusive pedagogy that is sensitive to the experiences and positions of students with varied abilities and to ideas from disability studies and the disabled people’s movement?

First, however, I will briefly explore and justify my choice of terminology and the theoretical perspectives that informed it. The last section of this chapter will provide an overview of the thesis.

RADICAL PEDAGOGY – THINKING WITH CRITIQUES OF MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

I would like to begin my discussion by distinguishing between education and schooling, two concepts that are often used interchangeably. As Watkins and Mortimore (1999) note, the word pedagogy, which is often used in Europe to denote a wide range of educational relationships in and out of schools, is seldom used in British educational discourses. This, they suggest, is due to the narrow view of education as comprised mostly of classroom instruction of curriculum subjects. In this work I use the terms education and pedagogy not as synonyms to schooling and teaching; rather, I argue with Fielding and Moss (2011, p. 46) for an understanding of '*education in its broadest sense*', a relational process that stresses development and wellbeing in all aspects of community life. Education is the process by which we become a part of society. It is through education that we learn what is expected of us and what we can expect of others, what we can achieve and to what we may aspire. Through education we also learn who we mustn't be, what is forbidden and what is unspeakable. We learn to distinguish between what is exceptional and admirable and what is perverted and foul. Education takes place in many contexts and in different institutions such as families, communities, schools and workplaces (Wallace, 1961). Schooling, on the other hand, is one specific institutional context in which education takes place, which has only become synonymous with education at the turn of the previous century. In chapter 3, I explore how functionalist and "scientific" discourses of schooling, which were framed

through macro-social changes in modes of production and governmentality, have come to dominate our thinking about education.

Thus, education is a deeply political process that can serve to reify or challenge the social order. It is shaped by political and economic demands, and often serves as a form of disciplinary power working to construct individuals as governable subjects within the social order (Foucault, 1977), but can also serve as a transformative power, supporting learners to connect their personal experiences with the social circumstances in which they occur, identify mechanisms of exclusion and oppression, and collectively take action against injustice (Freire, 1972a). The question of what kind of education we should have, is therefore inextricably connected to question what kind of society we want to live in (Suissa, 2010).

As an anarchist feminist, I am politically committed to visions of egalitarian, anti-authoritarian society, in which power and resources are horizontally shared, and solidarity is fostered within communities that value difference and interdependency. I explore these values in chapter 5, where I outline my ‘*researcher’s template*’ (Goodley, 1999). These values are in striking contrast to ideals of independence, competition, and the increasing marketisation of every aspect of life, that are underpinning neo-liberal global capitalism (Ball, 2008; Burman, 2006). Thinking about education that embodies those values, therefore, requires more than fighting for policy reforms, it means a *radical* change, both in the ways we think about and practice pedagogy, and in the social structures in which such pedagogy is embedded. As Slee (1997, p. 412) puts it

*Are we talking about where children are placed and with what level of resource provision?
Or, are we talking about the politics of value, about the purpose and content of curriculum,
and about the range and conduct of pedagogy?*

The questions phrased by Slee are often explored by theorists of what I broadly call radical critique of education, including critical pedagogy (e.g. Apple, 2004; Darder, Baltodano, &

Torres, 2009; Freire, 1972a; Giroux, 1981; hooks, 1994), and democratic education approaches (Fielding & Moss, 2011; Holt, 1982; Neill, 1968), and thus the engagement with such theories may benefit our thinking about inclusive education. In chapter 3 I explore some of the main ideas proposed by these approaches, arguing that while these provide some exciting ideas, we still need to carefully and explicitly articulate the place of students with a range of cognitive, sensory and physical needs within such pedagogies.

Further, working towards radical inclusive pedagogy means engaging, publicly and collectively, in debates about questions such as – what kind of society we want? What kind of education system (if any) would exist in this society? What are the barriers for achieving this, and what do we need to do to get there? These are precisely the kind of questions that get debated (and acted upon) in social movements (Barker & Cox, 2002; Cox & Flesher Fominaya, 2009). Social movements, particularly those often referred to as *New Social Movements* (Habermas, 1981), are spaces where members engage in political conscientization through sharing experiences and analysing them in the context of social structures, and build on this process of politicisation to take action for change. This process is described by Freire (1972a) as *praxis*, which stands at the heart of ‘*pedagogy as the practice of freedom*’ (Freire, 1998, p. 2). It is fair to say then, that social movements are sites of radical pedagogy, and that the disabled people’s movement, as a social movement comprised of people with a variety of embodiments, cognitive styles and impairment labels, and which explicitly addresses the social processes of their disablement, deprivation and exclusion, is a site of radical inclusive pedagogy. These arguments are explored in chapter 4. It was for these reasons that I chose to explore my vision of radical inclusive pedagogy in dialogue with activists in the disabled people’s movement and inclusive education campaigns, and my thinking along with their ideas is discussed in chapter 6.

In the previous section I have argued that radical critiques of education that question the taken for granted assumption of the social order and the role of education within this order, are necessary for developing inclusive pedagogy. In this section I will explore what is meant by inclusive education, and why it is necessary to consider disabled students in our thinking about radical pedagogy.

Educational policies that support the “inclusion” of disabled students or students with SEN in mainstream education have come under attack in the last years. In 2005 Baroness Warnock, who is considered “the architect of inclusion”, published a book in which she had argued that the ideal of inclusion has been carried too far and had to be reconsidered. The legal imperative to place children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools unless that is incompatible with the efficient provision of education or the wishes of their parents (Education Act, 1996), she argues, had made it difficult for schools to exclude disruptive students, thus hampering the education of their peers. Further, she suggests, many students with SEN who struggle academically and socially in mainstream schools would benefit from a place in special school. The Lamb Inquiry report (DCSF, 2009) identified serious problems with SEN provision within schools, with a large number of parents feeling they need to battle the system to get support for their child needs, and made a series of recommendations to make mainstream schools more responsive to the needs of students with SEN and their families. The Coalition government’s green paper on SEN provision (Department for Education, 2011), while accepting some of the recommendations of the Lamb Inquiry, sought to ‘*remove the bias towards inclusive education*’ (p.5), arguing that a wide range of special schools and academies would better support disabled students and their families. While this statement was removed from the Children and Families Bill (2013),

official government data show that since the Coalition government has come to power in 2010 there has been a steady increase in the percentage of children with statements of SEN in special schools (Department for Education, 2013).

Many proponents of inclusive education share the concerns about the incompatibility of the ideal of inclusion and the reality of mainstream school provision (e.g. Barton, 1997; Lloyd, 2008; Slee, 1997). They point to the '*repetition of exclusion*' (Allan, 2008, p. 65) and disablement that many students face in schools, due to a system of norms and practices that pathologizes difference and makes disabled students particularly vulnerable to social exclusion and even violence (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2011), and call for the development of radically different set of values and educational practices. Inclusive education is more than about students' school placement. As Gabel (2002) argues, we cannot ignore the material and cultural reality of today's schools in our campaigns for inclusion. Under those conditions forced "inclusion" is just as coercive as forced segregation. Inclusive education, for Gabel, is not about a "one size fits all" provision, but is about supporting students and families in constructing their own meanings and goals by adjusting the material environment as well as by engaging in a dialogue to mutually (re)define pedagogies and cultures in the classroom.

Ideas from the discipline of disability studies can provide a useful starting point for such redefinition of pedagogy and culture. In chapter 2 I argue that too often social theory starts with a model of adult independent agents pursuing their own conception of the good life (Kittay, 2005). Even those theories that have sought to challenge the pathologisation of gender, race and sexual orientation under such a model, have often done so by insisting on a difference between themselves and the "disabled" or "mentally defective", thus inadvertently positioning disability as the "real" deviance, a category in which they take no part (Mitchell & Snyder, 2000). Instead of a social and educational model that is based on the assumption of

independent subjects, clearly separated from other such subjects and from the world, I argue alongside writers in disability studies for models that value interdependency and connection. By this I mean accepting the social model's assertion that disability is the result of social organisation and not of individual bodies or minds, while going beyond it by arguing that the very ways by which we come to experience and understand our bodies and ourselves are also socially constructed. Feminist ethics of care with its emphasis on interdependency and relationality, and Deleuzian philosophy with its ontology of rhizomes – assemblages of humans, machines and environments that are engaged in a constant process of connection and separation between different nodes – have been often used by disability studies writers as a starting point for social and philosophical theories that affirm and celebrate difference, rather than aim to categorize and control it.

Such ideas provide a starting point for thinking about radical inclusive pedagogy as a process of 'becoming-in-the-world-with-others' (Price & Shildrick, 2002). The point here is not that disabled students are unique in their interdependence and connectivity to others, and are therefore in need of some specialised pedagogy. Rather, I argue, if we are to think about radical pedagogy that seeks to resist the reification of neo-liberal capitalism, it is necessary that we start with the recognition of human dependencies and connections that are not easily masqueraded through pervasive relations of disciplinary power in the case of disabled students. As Hardt and Negri (2000, p. 216) succinctly put it:

The will to be against really needs a body that is completely incapable of submitting to command. It needs a body that is incapable of adapting to family life, to factory discipline, to the regulations of a traditional sex life, and so forth. (If you find your body refusing these 'normal' modes of life, don't despair – realize your gift!)

So far I have argued that we cannot think about inclusive education without radically examining social and educational taken for granted assumptions, and that in so doing we can draw on educational approaches that resist the functionalist view of mainstream schooling. I

have also argued that any attempt to radically challenge the exclusionary and oppressive effects of such functionalist approaches to education has to be thought through with attention to the needs, desires and preferences of *all* students (and their families), rather than assuming a narrow range of acceptable embodiments. This is important not only because it resists the continued exclusion of disability within discourses of critical pedagogy (Erevelles, 2000), but also because valuing interdependency, relationality and connectivity may loosen the grip that enforced normalcy (Davis, 1995) has over all of us.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

As its name suggests, this thesis is an attempt to develop a vision of radical inclusive pedagogy through connecting disability, activism and education. It is also an attempt to explore the connection between my personal experience and values around those issues, and those of others involved in disability activism and education. In this sense the work does not seek to “give voice” to participants, or apply a theoretical model to their experiences and practices, but rather, to engage in a dialogue with participants, seeking inspiration in possibilities of connecting ideas from different theoretical and analytical perspectives, what Hughes et. al (2012, p. 316) call ‘*plunder as method*’. Thus, the thesis is structured as a series of readings of disability, education and activism through and with each other. In the first section of the thesis (chapters 2-4), I contextualise my discussion of disability and normalcy, education, and activism respectively by drawing on a variety of theoretical sources, including critical pedagogy, disability studies, feminism, poststructuralism and New Social Movements literature. In chapter 5 I introduce my *researcher’s template* (Goodley, 1999), the set of values developed through personal experience and theoretical engagement with the literature and that had guided me in the choice of research questions and methodology, and explore the settings of the field work. The main sources of data were interviews with 12 activists in the

disabled people's movement and in inclusive education campaigns, and an ethnographic research in an innovative special needs unit in a secondary mainstream school in a socially deprived area of the UK. Conducting research within the "natural environment" of the school, which is based on strict adult-child hierarchies, made it difficult to interact with students openly and reciprocally. Developing a series of playful and creative workshops aimed at designing "the best school in the world" allowed for ways of bending those hierarchies and supporting students through varied methods in discussing abstract and complex ideas. As such they can be seen as a form of *prefigurative research*, a method that is not only a tool for getting information to support social change, but also embodies within it some aspects of the desired social change. Those workshops then, are in themselves a site of radical inclusive pedagogy and the analysis of the process and relations enacted through them, and not just the verbal content produced by participants, had much to offer my discussion. Chapters 6-8 explore how experiences and insights from these different research contexts can expand our thinking around issues identified in the researcher's template and inform our thinking about radical inclusive pedagogy. In the conclusion chapter I draw the findings together to provide a loose and complex framework for radical inclusive pedagogy. This is not meant as a "user manual" or a blueprint that can be easily followed, indeed, a central point of radical inclusive pedagogy is its view of education as a unique, open ended and relational process for which no such blueprint can exist. Instead, the framework suggests issues, tensions and questions that we might want to consider when engaging in and fighting for more just and inclusive education.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

In chapter 2 – *Interrogating Disability and Normalcy*, I explore how the ideal of normalcy as the imperative for human existence has come to dominate our thinking in the past two

centuries (Davis, 1995). I draw on the Foucauldian concept of *disciplinary power* to discuss the ways in which the “scientific” discourses of medicine and psychology work to *produce* individual subjects that are willing and able to govern themselves, and render those who fail to satisfy these demands as pathologically deviant, in need of more intensive and “specialised” training (Foucault, 1977; Rose, 1979). The construction of difference as deficiency, and of disabled people as in need of “correction”, masks and justifies systemic violence and oppression. Further, the construction of the norm as a “scientific” fact works to convince disabled and non-disabled people alike that everyone in their right mind would prefer to be normal, and will be willing to endure much suffering in order to approximate to the norm as closely as possible.

I go on to explore ideas from disability studies that locate disability in the realm of the social rather than the biological, and outline the contributions of materialist, feminist and poststructuralist theories to the development of this social understanding of disability. In the concluding section of chapter 2 I argue for the centrality of disability to any social theory, and call for the development of a dis-ability perspective that can open up exciting possibilities for the appreciation and valuing of all life, with *dis-ability* indicating a spectrum or multitude rather than the binary of dis/ability. This perspectives draws on the metaphor of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980) and on feminist ethics of care (Kittay et al., 2005; Tronto, 1993) to focus on connection, difference and interdependency as core social values.

In chapter 3 – *Reading Schools through a Disability Perspective: Arguing for the need to develop radical inclusive pedagogy*, I explore the development of comprehensive schooling in Britain as part of macro-structural social changes such as industrialization and rapid urbanization (Ball, 2008; Burman, 2006). I go on to discuss how a functionalist approach to education has led to the creation of the discipline of special education as means

to contain and control the problem of school failure by compartmentalizing it to a separate discourse of special education (Skrtic, 1995). However, as demonstrated by analysing the previous government's *Every Child Matters* agenda, even when official discourses promote the idea of social inclusion, the context of mainstream schools, which defines educational achievement as the constant improvement against national norms and sets schools and students to compete against each other on national norms, makes it hard to imagine how disabled students could participate fully in education alongside their non-disabled peers.

Following on from the argument that functionalist approaches to education are incompatible with the ideal of inclusion, I go on to explore educational philosophies that are rooted within radical humanist and interpretivist approaches (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). These approaches may support the inclusion of disabled students through their understanding of knowledge as co-constructed in a process of dialogue, and of education as a unique relational process that is not aimed at satisfying predefined goals. Ethical education, as Freire (Freire, 1972a) argues, is about enabling learners to affect change in the world, and is thus a deeply political process. However, I argue, it is necessary to reconsider these approaches from a disability perspective, as they too, rarely consider the realities of students with diverse support needs in their discussions.

In chapter 4 – *Learning in Movements and Learning from Movements: The place of activism in radical inclusive pedagogy*, I follow on from my argument that radical inclusive pedagogy is a political process that aims at connecting knowledge and experience to enable learners to affect change in their worlds, to explore what the disabled people's movement can offer our thinking around radical inclusive pedagogy. I draw on ideas from New Social Movements literature and from the writings of disabled activists to argue that the disabled people's movement is in itself a site of radical inclusive pedagogy, and discuss how materials

and practices produced in the movement can support and inform the practice of radical inclusive pedagogy within schools.

In chapter 5 I explore the methodological approaches and the methods of data collection and analysis that ensued from them. Adopting an understanding of knowledge as situated in, and shaped by, a continuous interplay of power-knowledge relationships in specific historical and economic contexts (Haraway, 1988; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000), entails a view of research as a political act that changes social reality rather than aiming at neutrally describing it, and necessitates the use of researcher's reflexivity in order to explicitly interrogate the assumptions, values and power relations in which the research is embedded (Goodley & Lawthom, 2005; Lather, 1986a). Building on the arguments in chapters 1-4, I sketch the values and beliefs underling my '*researcher's template*' (Goodley, 1999), which included an understanding of disability as socially created, of humans as constituted through relations of interdependency, and of schools as power laden institutions that should work to share power horizontally rather than use it for domination and coercion. The chapter explores the specific methods used in interviews and observations, and pays close attention to ethical dilemmas of sharing power in the process of research production. I describe how the frustrating problem of sharing power with participants in the hierarchical context of the school was subverted by the use of playful and creative workshops with the utopian aim of designing "the best school in the world", a method that opened new ways for interacting with participants and "data", allowing for critical reflection and rhizomatic multivoacl storytelling. This, I argue, can be seen as a form of *prefigurative research*, a methodology that seeks to embody the values of radical inclusive pedagogy. I conclude this chapter by outlining the approaches to analysis.

In chapter 6 – *Activists’ Visions of Education and How They may Inform Radical Inclusive Pedagogy*, I explore the activists’ analytical accounts of their education, understood in its broadest sense as a process of learning in and out of school. I pay close attention to the complex tensions between the need to affirm difference as productive, which was seen by many activists as standing at the core of radical inclusive education, and the empowerment and validation experienced by identifying with a group of disabled people, arguing that relations of belonging and processes of identification and disidentification are complex and concurrent, and that the task for radical inclusive pedagogy is not to favour difference over identity or vice versa, but rather to allow for open and flexible shifting between different positions and identities. Other issues that arose in interviews included the need to equalise relations of power between children and adults, and contextualise learning in many forms of experience. Further, activists have argued for the need to view education as a relational process of becoming, stressing interdependency and connection as important social values, without compromising the demand to support disabled people in exercising their agency and gaining as much control as possible over their lives. These two seemingly competing sets of values, I argue, can be reconciled through adopting of view autonomy as a relational rather than individual concept (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000a).

In chapter 7 – *Reading One School through the Perspective of Radical Inclusive Pedagogy*, I explore the practices in the special needs unit of a secondary school. The unit is unique in its innovative approach to curriculum and teaching, structuring learning around themes rather than curriculum subjects, and promoting open, supportive and respectful relationships between students and staff and amongst the students, as well as creating a strong sense of belonging and pride in the unit. These approaches, I argue, provide some promising alternatives to the realities of exclusion and failure experienced by many disabled students, and can inspire ideas for radical inclusive pedagogy. However, the lack of critical

engagement with power relations and the political aspects of social exclusion and deprivation, render those practices vulnerable to recuperation.

Chapter 8 – *Prefigurative Research: Playful methodology as a site of radical inclusive pedagogy*, revisits the concept of prefigurative research and argues that the process of conducting the “best school in the world” workshops, with their attempts to equalise power relations and support students with diverse ability in critical reflection and the co-construction of knowledge, can be explored as a site of radical inclusive pedagogy. In particular I argue that the use of group play and multiple creative methods allowed for fun and accessible ways of interacting with participants and audience, creating data and representations that do not only appeal to the rationale intellect, but also engage the visual and emotional. Further, the use of play and utopia created a distance from the lived reality of the school and opened spaces where binaries and hierarchies could be examined, challenged and blurred.

In chapter 9 I draw the different parts of the thesis together, building on the arguments developed in the previous chapters to offer a four way framework for radical inclusive pedagogy. First, I argue for an understanding of education and development as a rhizomatic process of ‘*becoming-in-the-world-with-others*’ (Price & Shildrick, 2002), which entails emphasising the vital role relationships of interdependency play in processes of development and change. Second, I argue for the development of educational communities of difference that simultaneously celebrate difference and allow for coalescing around shared identities. Third, I argue for the need to contextualise learning in varied aspects of experience as necessary means for both the facilitation of access to learning for students with diverse cognitive and learning styles, and the understanding of knowledge as political and co-constructed rather than as a neutral representation of an objective reality. The fourth and final component of the framework looks at the need to horizontally share power, while recognising

that oppression can never fully disappear, and that therefore resistance and conflict are just as valuable to radical inclusive pedagogy as consensus and harmony. I end the conclusion chapter by drawing out the implication of this work to policy, practice and research.

CHAPTER 2

INTERROGATING DISABILITY AND NORMALCY

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will define and contextualise the different meanings of disability, a concept which provides one of the starting points to this work. I will begin my discussion by looking at how, in the context of the 19th century Enlightenment, professional and scientific discourses of medicine and psychology have come to dominate our understanding of the subject, constructing disability as pathology located within the individual, which needs to be responded to through curative interventions that seek to normalise disabled people to the greatest extent possible, or, when this is not possible, through the provision of charity and institutional care (Davis, 1995; Oliver, 1990a). Further, I argue with Foucault (1977, 1980) and Rose (1979, 1989) that these discourses do not only work to oppress and marginalise disabled people, but are disciplinary tools for constructing productive and governable subjects. This means that researching about disability is not about developing evermore intricate biological and psychological models, but is rooted in social discourses, practices and structures.

In the second section of the chapter I discuss the *social model of disability*, which originated in the thinking of the disabled people's movement (UPIAS, 1976), and gave rise to the academic field of disability studies. I go on to outline how scholars within this field draw on ideas from Marxism, feminism and poststructuralism to offer social theory of disability. In the final section of the chapter I argue that disability is a central category in social theory. Following my argument that disability and 'normalcy' (Davis, 1995) are simultaneously

socially constructed as opposite ends of a binary, I call for social and political thinking that rejects such binaries and views all people, of all embodiments, as incomplete and constantly in the process of becoming, connecting and separating from other entities. Such social thinking, I will argue throughout this work, is a necessary starting point for developing radical inclusive pedagogy.

THE 'NORM' AND A PROFESSIONAL MODEL OF DISABILITY:

As discussed in chapter 1, my engagement with the subject of disability and with disabled people started from my professional choice to become a speech and language therapist. I chose this profession because I believed it was consistent with my commitment to social justice and complimentary to my activism in the feminist and anti-militarist movements in Israel/Palestine. However, in my first years of practice I came to realise that rather than choosing an emancipatory profession I was actually involved in a discourse and practice of marginalisation, and sometimes outright oppression. My first job as a speech and language therapist (SLT) was in an “inclusion” classroom for students with the label of autism. As autistic children often find it difficult to infer information from implicit non-verbal social communication it was our job at the SEN team to “adjust” to students’ needs by explicitly spelling out school norms and rules of behaviour. These norms included not arguing with the teachers and not flapping one’s hands while non-autistic children were present. In other words, our job was to extinguish any sign of difference or resistance, framed through a paternalistic discourse of “inclusion” or assimilation to a norm. Unfortunately, this is not an incidental example of bad practice; rather the idea of the ‘norm’ as the desired form of human existence and behaviour is one that underlies the philosophy of speech and language therapy and other para-medical professions (such as special education, psychology and occupational therapy) that seek to “ameliorate” disability by training individuals’ bodies, minds and

behaviours to better approximate the norm as much as possible. However, it is important to remember that the idea of the norm is not a neutral scientific formulation of a reality that has always existed, but rather a tool through which certain subject positions are *produced* and governed (Foucault, 1977; Rose, 1979)

In his 1995 book *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body*, Davis studies the historical development of the concept of the ‘norm’ as it applies to human behaviour and physique, and its transformation into the imperative of human existence. According to Davis, the word ‘norm’ in its modern sense only entered the English language in the 19th century in the context of industrialisation and the rising power of the bourgeoisie. The move to mass production and the accompanying need to control and coordinate the activities of large numbers of people in growing cities and factories led to the development of statistics and the measures of an “average man”. In other words, the development of the idea of the norm does not stem from a “natural” body or mind but from the requirement of social institutions such as the factory, the school or the army. Further, the transformation of the norm to an ideal imperative for human life has grown through the ethos of *l’homme moyen*, the average man, which provided the scientific justification to bourgeoisie hegemony as the exemplar of the middle way of life (Davis, 1995). Thus, the scientific discourse has helped to give authority a new legitimacy: authority is no longer arbitrary but acts through a claim to knowledge of human nature (Rose, 1989).

This process had profound implications for disabled people. With the application of statistics and the bell curve to human subjects the population was divided into standard and non-standard subpopulations, with people whose measured features fell outside of the range of “normal distribution” being characterised as scientifically deviant, outside the acceptable human range. A contemporary example of the conflation of statistical infrequency with

pathological deviancy can be seen in the American book of psychiatric diagnosis called ‘*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*’. According to Davis, the process of substituting the normal for the ideal of human life is threefold –

First, the application of the idea of the norm to the human body creates the idea of deviance or a “deviant” body. Second, the idea of the norm pushes the normal body through a stricter template guiding the way the body “should” be. Third, the revision of “the normal curve of distribution” into quartiles, ranked in order [...] creates a new kind of “ideal”. [...] The new ideal of ranked order is powered by the imperative of the norm, and then is supplemented by the notion of progress, human perfectibility, and the elimination of deviance, to create a dominating, hegemonic vision of what the human body should be.

(2006, p. 6)

Thus, the norm is not just a description of frequency, but is the basis for the development of a whole complex of professions and practices that is used to create, adjust and train individuals in accordance with the changing forms of production and changing techniques and morals of government:

Like surveillance and with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical age. For the marks that once indicated status, privilege and affiliation were increasingly replaced – or at least supplemented – by a whole range of degrees of normality indicating membership of a homogenous social body but also playing a part in classification, hierarchization and the distribution of rank.

(Foucault, 1977, p. 184)

Foucault’s classical analysis of the ways power in modern society operates through knowledge goes further than pointing to the historical circumstances under which certain knowledges have developed or the ways in which they have been useful for those in power. The point is that in the modern era power and knowledge are inextricably linked to one another in what he terms ‘*disciplinary power*’ or ‘*biopower*’ which works to produce certain governable subjects rather than merely describe their existence:

[P]ower produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful) [...] power and knowledge directly imply one another [...]

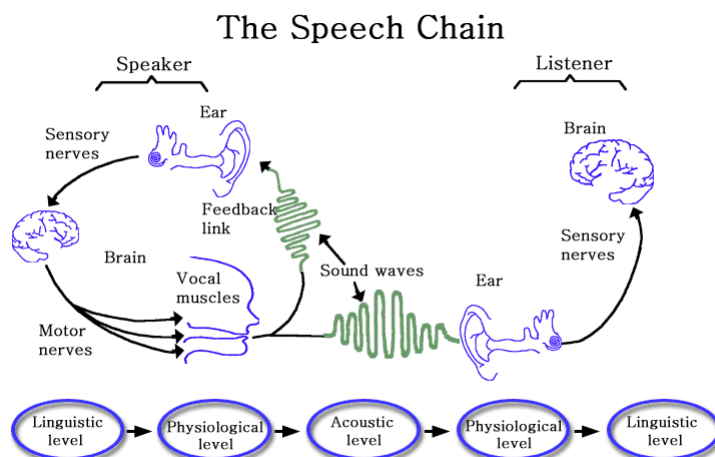
there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relation. [...] it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge.

(Foucault, 1977, p. 28 emphasis added)

Thus the question is not whether a certain professional discourse is “true” or not, but how it functions as a ‘*regime of truth*’ which establishes the ‘*conditions statements have to fulfil in order to count as true and the means and consequences of the production of truth*’ (Rose, 1979, p. 11).

To demonstrate the claim that power-knowledge ‘*determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge*’ (Foucault, 1977, p. 28), let me use an example from my practice as a speech and language therapist. In my first year as a student of speech and language therapy every course started with a slide detailing the different components of ‘*the speech chain*’ (Dense & Pinson, 1993, see Figure 1). This was the first slide because it was supposed to represent the full context of a ‘*communication event*’ (ibid). It illustrates communication as a message coming out of one brain and transmitted via a mouth and an ear to its destination, another brain. Communication is seen as a direct connection between two individual minds or subjects, *addresser* and *addressee*, standing at each end of an unbroken line.

FIGURE 1: ILLUSTRATION FROM DENSE & PIRSON, 1993 P.5:



In this diagram the speaker and the listener are drawn as lacking a body, comprised of brain, mouth and ear only, and devoid of any external context. It is an offspring of the modernist Cartesian distinction between body and mind and external and internal reality (Goodley, 2011). According to this model, my individual clients were to be understood as a specific sum of skills and processes – phonological awareness, vocabulary, short term memory span etc. Each of these skills was first examined on a large number of individuals, under strictly imposed conditions, measured and averaged, until it “transcended” the state of an indexical, specific and personal occurrence and morphed completely into an “objective truth”, with “objective” meaning that it is not true of anyone in particular and hence true enough of everyone in general. The process of diagnosis therefore involves administering a set of standardised test questions, under constant conditions (for example many tests include specific instructions regarding how many times a question can be repeated or what forms of support and clues can be provided) followed by calculating the scores of the child against the population’s norm and standard deviation. Supporting a child by, say, repeating the question is considered to invalidate the diagnosis, as it provides a kind of support that cannot be calculated in advance and compared across the population. Thus, identifying effective ways to support a child’s communication (e.g. by repeating a question or slowing down the rate of speech) is rendered outside of the scope of professional diagnosis that defines ability as residing within a unitary, bounded individual (Venn, 1984), manifesting itself in independent and unsupported performance. A problem in communication is thus defined as located within the “deviant” individual rather than within the complex and contextualised process of communication, and the solution becomes training or segregating of the individual rather than changing the environment (for further discussions of how disability is produced within special education discourses see chapter 3).

What follows from this scientific regime of normalcy which sees disability as located within the individual and categorises the population into two distinct groups – the normal and the deviant/disabled – is a “less than human” status accorded to those who cannot satisfy the demands of the norm. As Norman Kunc, a disabled activist so succinctly puts it:

It makes you feel that you are not quite human. Almost like you have to earn your right to be human. In earning your right to be human, what do you get? Human rights! So when you are perceived as less than fully human, what typically are rights for nondisabled people become privileges for people with disabilities. It's like if you have a disability they are doing you a favour by letting you live in the community. As soon as I demonstrate I am mentally capable then I have earned my right into the community. I see this going on not only with people with disabilities but also around the whole issue of poverty. You have to demonstrate your merit. It's categorizing people as producers versus non-producers.

(Giangreco, 2004, p. 35)

The exclusion of certain forms of human diversity from the concept of humanity and human rights and their subjugation to the medical discourse serves to justify varied forms of violence, abuse and oppression as a natural and scientific solution to the problem of disability. Disabled people's lives are often portrayed as not worth living through discourses of mourning the birth of a disabled child (McGuire, 2010), or the promotion of prenatal screenings and euthanasia as an *ethical* choice reflecting the best interests of the disabled individual in question (Marks, 1999a; “Not Dead Yet UK Campaign,” n.d.). But it is not just in birth and death that disabled people are subjected to the power of medical and para-medical professions. Over a quarter of adults diagnosed with learning disabilities live in institutionalised settings in the UK (Emerson & Hatton, 2008) and are often denied the basic right to decide where or who to live with. Both in institutions and in the community disabled people are often denied a say regarding who will provide intimate personal care, which sometimes involves assistance with dressing, bathing and toileting. The Equality and Human Rights Commission recent inquiry into home care for the elderly reported that in many instances care staff were changed by agencies without consulting the clients or even notifying

them about the change, a finding that, among other findings, had led the commission to express ‘*real concern*’ of human rights violations in home care (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011). Further, between April 2010 and March 2011, a total of 6,380 people in England were detained in hospitals and care homes *without their consent* under the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) – approximately 17 people a day (Care Quality Commission, 2011).

One such case of detention has received media attention after a court declared the authorisation of the DoLS order was illegal (e.g. Davies, 2011). In December 2009 Steven Neary, a 21 years old autistic man was placed in respite care for 3 days by his father and sole carer Mark who was ill with the flu. Distressed by parting from his father Steven tried to escape the care home and while walking in the street snatched the glasses off a stranger. Following this incident care staff have applied for a DoLS order to detain Steven in a behavioural change unit. Only when his father came to take him home was he informed of the decision to detain his son for violent behaviour, which the father explained was Steven’s reaction to the unfamiliar situation. Despite those explanations Steven was taken to a unit 150 miles away from his home, where the distress of being locked up in an unfamiliar environment had caused him further outbreaks. It took a year of vigorous campaigning by his father before the decision was revoked and Steven was allowed to return to his home.

While this case was unique for receiving media and legal attention, it represents many of the common practices in segregated settings (such as special schools and residential institutions), in particular those for people diagnosed with cognitive or mental ‘disorders’. In such settings disabled people are subjected to medical and psychological gaze, which seems to colonize their entire personhood, objectifying them (Gillman, Swain, & Heyman, 1997), and turning them into a collection of impairment manifestations by interpreting many of their

actions and behaviours in terms of a supposed intrinsic biological condition rather than contextualised interactions with the world around them (Goodley & Rapley, 2001; Goodley, 2001). Just like in Steven Neary's story, much of what is termed "challenging" or "incompetent" behaviours can be consequences of social expectations or rebellious responses to a disabling environment that assumes incompetence and restricts freedom (Goodley, 2001). The challenge in lashing out after being prevented from engaging in a gratifying activity (such as watching TV, masturbating or walking around in the streets) is interpreted by care and health professionals not as an act of resistance, but as a signifier of a biological deficiency. Non-compliance with treatment programs is taken as proof of incompetence and lack of agency and inherent inability to learn, not as indicators of resistance or dissatisfaction (Gillman et al., 1997). Even talents can be seen as part of a syndrome rather than just a personality trait, as shown in the next vignette:

The special school's Christmas performance. I take my seat at the back, amongst an audience of family members, teachers, support staff and local dignitaries, to whom students sang, danced and acted. Enter stage left, Hugh. A slight teenage lad, Hugh performed to piano accompaniment the classic Tom Jones number 'It's Not Unusual.' As his performance was greeted by enthusiastic applause, a teacher turned to me and shouted above the noise, 'It's his syndrome you know—it makes him so extraverted'

(Goodley, 2001, p. 224)

It is here that the productive rather than descriptive nature of power-knowledge becomes apparent. What these examples demonstrate is the circular or self generative relationships between being diagnosed as having cognitive or mental disorders and presenting the behavioural diagnostic criteria, as at the moment of diagnosis a person's behaviour ceases to be seen as part of social relations but rather as evidence of deviancy. Diagnostic labels are not "out there" to be discovered or detected, but are constructed through the subjugation of people so labelled to the medical institutional gaze and relations of power.

So far we have seen how the techniques of power knowledge instate the normal and the abnormal through the use of institutional coercion and violence, while legitimising such violence by relegating certain practices from the discourse of human rights into discourses of “expert”, “therapeutic” and “scientific” knowledge, acting in the “best interest” of a client. However, a Foucauldian analysis of power goes further than arguing that the gaze of professional experts is oppressive and limiting, but also understands power-knowledge as a positive force in constituting individual subjects as the bearers of rights, interests, and the will and capacity to govern and control themselves, so that they function as productive members of society (Rose, 1996). Industrialisation, urbanisation, and the growth in bourgeoisie and the philosophical tradition of the Enlightenment have brought forth the need for developing modes of government that can govern from a distance, coordinating the actions of the masses without a need for constant supervision – *‘the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body’* (Foucault, 1977, p.26). Disciplinary power as a form of governmentality is dispersed in multiple *relations* of power rather than being localised in the hands of a particular person or group. It works most effectively by producing knowledge and procedures that the emergent subject can comply with through *apparent choice*.

It is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies

(Foucault, 1977, p. 217)

Thus, knowledge-power is not just exercised externally through the gaze, surveillance and sometimes violence of social institutions, but also internally, as people make sense of themselves and construct their lives and choices through the available discourses.

For example, Wendell (1996) describes how getting a diagnosis of ‘myalgic encephalomyelitis’ or ‘chronic fatigue immune dysfunction syndrome’ has served to validate

her bodily sensations and legitimise seeking the accommodations she needed such as increased periods of rests. Similarly, many autistic people who sought diagnosis as adults describe how getting the label allowed them to make sense of their lives, often replacing a sense of alienation with a place of belonging within an autistic community (e.g. Prince-Hughes, 2004; Sinclair, 2010; Singer, 1999). Gillman, Heyman & Swain (2000) suggest that diagnostic systems give a sense of legitimacy, confidence and predictability to both professionals and clients and provide an explanatory device that can be used for dealing with the general public. They describe how parents made use of their children's diagnostic label (e.g. autism, learning disability) to deflect questions, criticism and stares in public places. However, it is important to remember that the need to use labels as legitimisation and explanation to the self and to other is not inherent to a "condition" but is exercised against a backdrop of a cultural discourse of normalcy (Davis, 1995) or '*compulsory able-bodiedness*' (McRuer, 2006). This is a cultural discourse which '*assumes in advance that we all agree: able-bodied identities, able-bodied perspectives are preferable and what we all, collectively, are aiming for*' (ibid, p.9). In a social system that assumes certain embodiments and behaviours, any deviance from the standards needs to be answered for. It is in this context of compulsory able-bodiedness that choices around seeking cure, passing as non-disabled or "coming out" as disabled are made by individuals and families (McRuer, 2002, 2006; Sherry, 2004). In an interview with Michael Giangerco titled '*The Stairs Didn't Go Anywhere*', Norman Kunc describes how as a child he internalised the discourse of normalcy in an attempt to make sense of the physiotherapist's demand that he will climb up and down a set of stairs that led right into a wall:

She would say, 'You want to walk better, don't you?' I didn't know any better, so I said, 'Yeah.' And what I learned at that moment in life was that it was not a good thing to be disabled and that the more I could reduce or minimize my disability the better off I would be. When I was in segregated school, I fundamentally saw myself as deficient and abnormal. I saw myself as inherently different from the rest of the human race. The implicit message that

permeated all my therapy experiences was that if I wanted to live as a valued person, wanted a quality life, to have a good job, everything could be mine. All I had to do was overcome my disability [...] I turned into a kid that physiotherapists only see in their dreams. If they wanted me to do ten repetitions of a certain exercise, I did 20. If they wanted me to hold a precarious balance position to the count of ten, I held it to the count of 30. I was determined I was going to get to be a valued person. And if that meant conquering my disability, so be it.

(Giangreco, 2004, p. 33)

What those examples show is how disciplinary power permeates relations of power to create individuals that *choose* subject positions that are in accordance with the social order. This may seem as a pessimistic view, which negates the possibility of any real individual agency or liberation, and indeed one of the major criticisms of Foucault's work has been its inability to satisfactorily explain resistance (Pickett, 1996). However, in his later work Foucault elaborates about the central place of resistance within relations of power (e.g. Foucault, 2000). Disciplinary power constructs individuals who are '*vehicles of power, not its points of application*' (Foucault, 1980, p. 98), with power-relations maintained through people actively internalising and embodying the norm. However this process of embodiment and internalisation requires active engagement on the part of the subject, and is thus never unilateral and open to resistance. Shildrick & Price (2006) point out that in the case of disability/impairment it is people's very embodiment that is resistant to the rule of the norms and defies efforts of normalisation. But it is also through reflexivity, agency and political organisation that disabled people and their allies have fought to subvert, challenge and change discourses around disability and the exclusionary and oppressive social structures constructed through such discourses and the practices they produce. It is these subversive discourses that I will discuss in the remainder of this chapter.

DE-BIOLOGISING DISABILITY: THE EMERGENCE OF ‘THE SOCIAL MODEL’ AND THE DISCIPLINE OF DISABILITY STUDIES.

Theories of disability from the emergent field of disability studies provide a major inspiration to this work. Disability studies is a relatively new academic field that has emerged in part from the disability rights movement and social change activism, spurred largely by people labelled and marginalized as ‘disabled’ in numerous societies (Thomas, 2004). It is explicitly committed to assisting disabled people in their fight for full equality and social inclusion through the critique of law, culture, society and professional practices that disable rather than enable (Goodley & Van Hove, 2005). Although the models and understandings of disability are different across scholars and countries, the basic argument that they all share is the rejection of the idea that disability is an individual trait, located in the disabled person’s body or mind. Instead, they trace the roots of disability (at least in part) to cultural, political, economic, medical, educational and social *oppression* exercised upon people identified as impaired.

While the term “social model of disability” was coined by Oliver (1983), it usually refers to the understandings of disability developed in the early 1970s by the *Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation* (UPIAS). This radical analysis of disability is based on the distinction between impairment which is defined as a bodily, biologically determined trait, and disability, which is defined as the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by the social organisation. Disability, then, is to be located *outside* the individual, in the realm of the structural and the public.

It is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments, by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society.

(UPIAS, 1976, n.p)

Thus, the way to diminish the hardships of disability is through social transformation that will ensure disabled people have full control over their lives and the means and support necessary to fully participate in society:

The Union aims to have all segregated facilities for physically impaired people replaced by arrangements for us to participate fully in society. These arrangements must include the necessary financial, medical, technical, educational and other help required from the State to enable us to gain the maximum possible independence in daily living activities, to achieve mobility, to undertake productive work, and to live where and how we choose with full control over our lives.

(UPIAS, 1976, n.p)

The potency of the social model of disability as a tool for changing reality is evident in the rapid growth of the disabled people's movement in the 80s and 90s, which, in accordance with the definition of disability as a form of social oppression, has framed its struggle for inclusion in the context of human rights and the liberation movements of the 60s and 70s such as feminism, anti-colonialism and GLBT rights (Campbell & Oliver, 1996; Shakespeare, 1993). The achievements of the movement and the valuable knowledge it has produced through the involvement in political struggles to eliminate disablist oppression will be broadly discussed in chapter 4. However, as the originators of the social model have pointed out in numerous discussions about its validity, the model is *not* a comprehensive social theory of disability (Finkelstein, 2007; Oliver, 2004); it has, however, contributed significantly to the emergence of the academic discipline of disability studies which aims at theorising disability as oppression. Different theorists within the field of disability studies offer different explanations about the methods and circumstances through which disability is produced and maintained, utilising different theoretical and epistemological frameworks.

MATERIALIST PERSPECTIVES ON DISABILITY:

Much of the early development of the social model of disability was inspired by Marxist analysis which considered the social production of disability as ‘*dependent upon a variety of factors including the type of economy, the size of the economic surplus and the values that influence the redistribution of this surplus*’ (Oliver, 1990a, p. 24). According to writers such as Finkelstein (1980) and Oliver (1990a) the social segregation of disabled people is rooted in the transition from feudal to capitalist production. The feudal economy, based on agricultural and small-scale industry, did not preclude the great majority of disabled people from taking part in the production process, even if to a lesser degree than their non-disabled relatives. While disabled people were still regarded as individually unfortunate they were not segregated from the rest of society. With the transition to industrial production many more disabled people were excluded from the production process due to the speed and discipline required in factory work. However, exclusion from production does not provide a full explanation to the creation of disability as a form of social oppression; modes and values of distribution play a vital part, utilising disability as a boundary category through which people are allocated either to the work-based or need-based system of distribution (Abberley, 1997; Oliver, 1990a).

As Oliver (1990a) points out, it was with the rise of capitalism that the institution became a major mechanism for exercising social control and dealing with the rejects of industrial production. While initially all such “rejects” were lumped together in the workhouses, the Poor Law Amendment Act (1834) played an important role in separating out those unwilling from those unable to work through specialisation and medicalization of different categories of paupers. This medicalization instituted disabled people as the “deserving poor”, i.e. eligible to a need based distribution, by constituting them as naturally

inferior. While this had constituted disabled people as eligible for state funds, initially via institutionalisation and later through community care, it also tied them to a status of inferiority and incompetence. As Abberley (1997) points out, this inferior status is no accident or negligence by well-intended professionals, but a powerful tool to enforcing capitalist social order that depends on the willingness of the majority of people to constantly work while conceding to an unequal distribution of economic surplus:

Because of negative stereotypes and material disadvantages connected to disability it encourages people, where possible, to normalise suffering and disease so as not to include themselves in a despised and disadvantaged sub-group. It helps to constitute part of a passive 'sub-class' of welfare recipients (Leonard, 1984) which serves as a powerful warning against falling off the achievement ladder. By presenting disadvantage as the consequence of a naturalised 'impairment' it legitimises the failure of welfare facilities and the distribution system in general to provide for social need that is, it interprets the effects of social misdistribution as the consequence of individual deficiency.

(p.175)

A materialist social model of disability, then, aims at severing the causal relationship between impairment and disability. While impairment may restrict activity, it is not the cause of disability, defined as the *externally* imposed restrictions on social participation. Further, it identifies mechanisms for the production and distribution of wealth as the predominant factors of social organisation, and hence as the origins of disability. It is therefore those social structures that we should focus on when studying disability, not individual bodies or psyches.

While acknowledging disability as a socially created form of oppression, many writers within disability studies have pointed out the limitation of a solely materialist analysis that focuses on economic participation to the exclusion of many other forms of social oppression. Feminist disability scholars have highlighted the need to attend to personal and subjective aspects of disability, arguing that focusing only on externally imposed restrictions reifies the public/private dichotomy and leaves many of the ways by which disability oppression is internalised and embodied under-theorised and hence outside the scope of social

transformation (e.g. Clare, 2001; Crow, 1996; Morris, 1991; Reeve, 2002; C. Thomas, 1999). Others call for elaborating the social model to include ideas from poststructuralism and queer theory to discuss the social construction of the body itself, arguing that impairment, and not just disability, is socially constructed (e.g. Corker, 1999, 2001a; Hughes & Paterson, 1997; Shildrick & Price, 2006; Tremain, 2005). I will discuss those critiques in the following sections.

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON DISABILITY- THE ROLE OF SUBJECTIVITY:

The main argument of feminist disability scholars is that in the analysis of disability as a form of oppression it is impossible to neatly separate social structures from personal experience, as subjectivities are constructed through experiences of living out discursive cultural practices from specific social and economic locations (Reeve, 2002; Thomas, 1999). Discrimination and oppression are located in social discourses and practices that work to produce certain subjectivities and thus influence what disabled people can be as well as what they can do. It is for these reasons that feminist disability scholars call for the inclusion of subjective experiences of disability as a major tool in understanding and challenging disablist oppression:

The work of refiguring the world is often framed as the work of changing the material, external conditions of our oppression. But just as certainly, our bodies—or, more accurately, what we believe about our bodies—need to change so that they don't become storage sites, traps, for the very oppression we want to eradicate

(Clare, 2001, p. 363)

While accepting the importance of external social-structural barriers that exclude and discriminate against disabled people, Thomas (1999) suggests that the social model of disability should be expanded to include social processes and beliefs that affect the emotional well-being of people with impairments, and restrict the subject positions available to them.

Building on the work by Thomas, Reeve (2002) developed the concept of ‘*psycho-emotional dimensions of disability*’, which, while stemming from social structures and conceptions, are manifested in subjective experiences. Such psycho-emotional dimensions can include responses to external structural and social processes of exclusion such as feeling frustrated or angry when faced with an inaccessible building, or feeling ashamed when being stared at on the street; but they also include aspects of internalised oppression which may affect the self-esteem and sense of worthiness of many disabled people (Reeve, 2002).

Examples of those subjective dimensions of oppression are multiple. Marks (1999a) describes how through widely accepted discourses of genetic screening and abortions people with the label of learning disability are exposed to the message that their lives are not worth living. Such messages often affect their sense of a place in the world and their feeling that they have a right to live, as many express the feeling that they slipped into being because amniocentesis had not been booked (Marks, 1999a). Disabled people are exposed to social messages and representations that capture them as “ugly”, “tragic” and “inferior”, an Other to be avoided. Even if all structural barriers to participation will be removed, such strong social messages can clearly affect a person's emotional well-being:

Dealing with anger, self-loathing, and daily experiences of rejection and humiliation are among the hardest aspects of being a disabled person

(Shakespeare, Gillespie-Sells, & Davies, 1996, pp. 42–43)

We harbour inside ourselves the pain and the memories, the fears and the confusions, the negative self images and the low expectations, turning them into weapons with which to re-injure ourselves, every day of our lives.

(Mason, 1992, p. 27, cited in Marks, 1999)

Further, disabled people are exposed to a normalising gaze (Foucault, 1977) that seeks to analyse, document and train many aspects of their lives. While this is largely done by professionals in medical, psychological and educational institutions, it is by no means restricted to those setting, as disabled people are often exposed to the normalising gaze of passer-by's on the street or other public places:

We often experience the fascination that non-disabled people have with 'just how do you manage?' They have a consuming curiosity about how we pee, how we shit, how we have sex (do we have sex?) ... Our physical difference makes our bodies public property

(Morris, 1991, p. 29)

But these phenomena do not only occur externally, people develop an awareness of how they are seen through the gaze of another and then modify their behaviour via self-surveillance to attempt to make themselves acceptable (Reeve, 2002). Disability, then, does not reside in a particular body or environment, but rather is an '*embodied relationship*' constructed through experiences of social, cultural and emotional invalidation that are interconnected and mutually constitutive (Marks, 1999a, p. 611).

A more controversial argument put forward by some feminist disability scholars is the need to include personal experiences of *impairment* and not just of disability as an important part of disability studies. As Crow (1996) and Wendell (1996) argue, leaving personal experiences of impairment outside the scope of social theory of disability implicitly conditions social inclusion on the suppression of negative bodily experiences (such as pain or fatigue), a task that many disabled people can't (and shouldn't have to) accomplish. Removing disabling barriers means more than installing ramps or Braille sign posting. It also means considering stress, pain, fatigue or the need for frequent medical treatment when organising work, education, family life and political activism (among other things). It means claiming such experiences as an integral part of human life and supporting people in voicing

their difficulties and in seeking ways to accommodate them as well as reducing the added stress of having to ignore such feelings when in public.

Further, although discourses of race, gender, class and disability have their own ontological basis that cannot be reduced to one another, there is no separate concrete meaning in any of these categories as they are mutually constitutive in any specific historical moment (Meekosha, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2011). To be disabled will be different if one is middle class or working class, gay or straight, male or female, full citizen or illegal migrant, living in the city or in the country. Ignoring such differences in the attempt to theorise a universal idea of disability marginalises the experiences of, and oppressions imposed upon, women of colour, lesbians and others, and this serves as reification of those oppressions. As Black feminist Audre Lorde argues:

Those of us who stand outside that power often identify one way in which we are different and we assume that to be the primary cause of all oppression, forgetting other distortions around difference, some of which we ourselves might be practicing.

(Lorde, 2007, p. 116)

Theorising disability as oppression, therefore, requires an ‘*intersectional analysis*’ (Crenshaw, 1989) since disability does not exist in isolation but is always constructed in the intersection of numerous positioning. It is within specific cultural, economic and historic conditions that people with impairment are being disabled, and these conditions are always gendered and racialised (Meekosha, 2005). Further, disability is not only located in the meanings applied to the individual with impairments by others, but also in the meanings that the individual assigns to the situations in which she negotiates social relations, and these meanings interact and affect each other (Reeve, 2002; Meekosha, 2005). A British woman with MS might ascribe her denied immigration visa to her disability; whereas a deaf Somalian

denied asylum status in the UK might ascribe it to her nationality and status in a system of global capitalism.

In other words, what feminist disability scholars argue for is an understanding of disability as a form of identity and lived experience that is enacted in many specific and changing interactions.

Disability identity needs to include aspects of both disability and impairment and to be more complex and inclusive if it is to better represent all disabled people in society. The psycho-emotional dimensions of disability underpin the concept of a fluid disability identity, an identity which is not fixed in time or place and which varies between disabled people

(Reeve, 2002, p. 505)

Like the differing experiences of structural disability not all disabled people experience the same degree of psycho-emotional disablism; personal biography, intersecting identities, impairment and context change the daily experiences of this form of disability. That is not to say that impairment causes structural or psycho-emotional dimensions of disability, but rather that different people with differing identities, positions and embodiments will experience different consequences from different types of oppression.

A SOCIOLOGY OF IMPAIRMENT – POSTSTRUCTURALIST AND
PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO DISABILITY

In focusing on the ways in which disability is socially produced, the social model has been instrumental in shifting debates about disability from biomedical agendas to discourses about politics, oppression and liberation. However, this original focus was contingent upon the binary distinction between disability, defined as social and environmental barriers to participation, and impairment, defined as the *‘functional limitation caused by physical,*

mental or sensory structures within the individual' (DPI, 1982). Such a view of impairment assumes that non-impaired bodies and minds are naturally “whole”, self-sufficient and contained within the boundaries of the skin; an assumption without which the idea of functional limitation *within the individual* becomes meaningless. While such a concept of the body may seem intuitive, it is by no means the only one, as the anthropologist Clifford Greetz so aptly puts it:

The Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic centre of awareness, emotion, judgement, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against its social and natural background is, however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures.

(Greetz, 1975, p. 48)

Poststructuralist, queer, and recently disability studies scholars destabilize such modernist notions of the body, reminding us that *'what is called normal or natural is always normative, and at the very least devolves on some form of unstated value judgement that may well require intervention and manipulation to achieve'* (Shildrick, 2008, p. 32). The discursive and social nature of the “wholeness” and “distinctiveness” of the body is readily exemplified by cases of conjoined twins or organ transplantations, where bodies are surgically cleaved together or cleaved apart to satisfy the modern imperative of a self-sufficient body in the possession of one willing subject (Shildrick, 2005, 2008). But the distinction between one body and the other is blurred also in more mundane instances such as birth and pregnancy, sex, blood donation or even touch.

Bodies are not only interconnected with one another, but also with the world and with machines (Haraway, 1985; Shildrick & Price, 2006). The act of walking is not contained within the body, but is an interaction between different forces and matters – the contraction of the muscles, the elasticity and texture of the surface and the presence of gravity. Ambulation

can occur through the combination of body, surface and gravity as in walking, or in a combination of body and machine such as riding a bicycle or rolling in a wheelchair. Similarly, seeing is not contained in the eyes but is a combination of eyes, brains and the presence of light in certain electro-magnetic wavelengths. But more than this, seeing is only a feature of the eyes insofar as our personal and cultural experiences tell us it is, as exemplified by this vignette from Michalko (1998):

I spent some time speaking with a three year old blind boy, Mark, at his home. We set on the floor, legs spread in front of us, rolling a ball back and forth. At one point, the ball hit Mark's foot and bounced away from us. Mark immediately began trying to locate the ball. He began "looking" for the ball by stretching his arms out very quickly in as many directions as he could.

After a short time, Mark stopped "looking" and said, "My mommy could find the ball." "Really?" I replied. "Yeah," Mark said, "cause she can see." I asked, "How do you know that?" Without any hesitation, Mark answered, "Cause she's got really, really, really long arms!"

(p.79, cited by Corker, 2001)

In this sense, the blind person who "sees" with his hands or with his cane is not different (though potentially less destructive) than the soldier who uses infra-red binoculars to allow him night vision. What we define as "impaired" or "whole" is never natural, but always constructed by social and cultural perceptions. Disabled people are not unique in their failure to satisfy modern assumptions of stability, separateness and independence; rather, intercorporeality, vulnerability and interdependence are characteristics of human existence that are not easily disguised by disciplinary power and self-sovereignty in the case of disability/impairment (Shildrick & Price, 2006).

Just as much as contemporary science and technologies open up (for those who have access to them) new forms of experiences and embodiments (Haraway, 1985; Shildrick & Price, 2006), they serve to constitute new impairments. The first edition of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) was published in 1952,

and contained a then unprecedented 60 diagnostic categories of “mental illness”. By 1994, the fourth edition of the DSM recognised a total of 384 mental ailments, in other words, the range of possible impairments had multiplied by more than six in just forty years. Dyslexia did not exist before literacy instruction became widespread and not reserved to bureaucrats and the clergy, nor before the creation of a science of reading with its sets of norms and measures of reading level. Thus, many researchers call for the inclusion of impairment and the body under the scope of disability studies, and for engagement with deconstructing disabling perceptions of the body and its functions alongside research into the social exclusion and oppression imposed upon such bodies (e.g. Corker, 1999, 2001a; Hughes & Paterson, 1997; Shildrick & Price, 2006; Tremain, 2005)

Such sociology of impairment often utilises Foucauldian analyses¹ of knowledge and bio-power as forms of governmentality, arguing that:

Medical thought has also been fully engaged in the ethical question of how we should live – of what kind of creatures we are, of the kinds of obligation that we have to ourselves and to others, of the techniques which we can and should use to improve ourselves, and the kind of persons which we should strive to be.

(Rose, 2001, p. 20)

The focus of investigation is the various social processes that lead to the problematisation of difference under certain impairment categories, and the mechanisms and discourses employed in solving such identified “impairments” (Campbell, 2008). For example, Sullivan (2008) shows how social discourses and practices are inextricably linked with available medical technologies to render possible (both materially and discursively) a certain range of subjects and bodies. She discusses how medical and psychological criteria for sex reassignment

¹ Abberley (1987) calls for sociology of impairment which is based on a materialist approach and discusses how impairment is socially produced through such factors as work-related stress, inappropriate housing or limited access to health services.

surgery require those seeking surgery to express ‘*the wrong body with the right mind*’ (Sullivan, 2008, p. 110) by proving that their subjectivity or sense of ‘self’ comply with culturally accepted norms of femininity or masculinity. It is only by adhering to gender norms and to the culturally prevalent notion that body formation should match the sense of self that the act of removing healthy bodily organs is considered a restoration of identity. On the other hand, Sullivan notes how self-demand amputation surgery, which, just like sex reassignment surgery, requires the removal of healthy body parts, is considered to be an assault on bodily integrity and is therefore delegitimized as a medical practice. This is because the idea that there might be something “wrong” with a fully-limbed body contradicts the cultural body logic, or in other words, because an inner identity of an amputee is not culturally and discursively available as a fully legitimate self. With the lack of such “self” or identity from cultural norms, the demand to change the body is conceived as irrational and as acting to distort rather than restore integrity. What this example goes to show is that medical practices and discourses, rather than being distinct from culture, are simultaneously shaping and being shaped by cultural and social norms of “right” and “wrong” bodies and minds.

While UPIAS have stressed the need to distinguish the medical (impairment) from the social (disability), people with the label of learning disability, mental health system survivors and Deaf people argue that it is the very identification of their difference as biological impairment that is the core of their disablement, and point to the need to expose the ways impairment is socially constructed:

*I usually describe myself as a disabled person who has been labelled by the system as having learning difficulties. This makes it very clear that the name, and the identity ‘learning difficulty’, have been **imposed** on me by the system, in particular, the education system which pre-defines ‘learning ability’. [...]*

Once a child is labelled in this way it becomes almost impossible to change the image the label creates because teaching and learning are geared to reinforcing it by making everything simple- and therefore leaving a lot of information out- so that disabled people with the learning difficulties label ‘can understand it’. The label therefore not only assumes

*that a person is only capable of limited thinking and knowledge acquisition but requires that this assumption is **reflected** in the educational materials they are exposed to.*

(Aspis, 1999, p. 174, original emphasis)

Far from furthering our struggles as “system survivors”, this definition [hidden impairment] reads to me as firmly placing us back into medical models of “mental illness”, “chemical imbalances” and so on. Some of us have long been intent on challenging such concepts!

(Plumb, 1994, p. 6)

Another epistemological route often used in the sociology of impairment is phenomenology, and in particular Merleau-Ponty's (1968) concept of 'embodiment', which collapses the body/mind binary by insisting that there is no subject that is distinguished from the body, that being in the world means being a body (rather than having a body), and that the body is our point of view in the world. This means that '*[d]isability is experienced in, on and through the body, just as impairment is experienced in terms of the personal and cultural narratives that help to constitute its meaning*' (Hughes & Paterson, 1997, p. 335). Such an epistemological route can offer a way of directly dealing with the lived body (rather than relegating it to medicine or deconstructing it to the point of abstraction) without falling into individualism and neglecting the ways our embodiments are created in the constant interface of experiences and the ways we make sense of them socially.

The ways in which *being in the world* is legitimised or punished by social, psychological and medical discourses is often discussed by autistic activists who identify with the neurodiversity movement (e.g. Meyerding, 2003; Milton, 2012; Sinclair, 1993). The idea of neurodiversity highlights the importance of a different sensory perception, usually understood as evidence of some neurological difference, in the lived experience of being an autistic person. While this discourse claims that autistic brains are biologically different from

non-autistic brains, such difference is not framed as impairment, but as an integral part of a person's identity and sense of self.

Autism isn't something a person has, or a "shell" that a person is trapped inside. There's no normal child hidden behind the autism. Autism is a way of being. It is pervasive; it colors every experience, every sensation, perception, thought, emotion, and encounter, every aspect of existence. It is not possible to separate the autism from the person—and if it were possible, the person you'd have left would not be the same person you started with.

(Sinclair, 1993)

Thus, many autistic activists write to describe their experiences of 'being in the world' both as a form of resistance to bio-medical oppression which seeks to "cure" and change their behaviour to better resemble non autistic norms, and as a way of informing others about the ways they *do* communicate and perceive the world.

Similarly, Eli Clare (2001), a trans-man with cerebral palsy, argues for the importance of dealing with the body as a site of oppression and liberation. He discusses the sensation of tremor in his right arm as simultaneously a sense of identity or the intimate feeling of being 'I', a source of shame, pain and frustration that caused him to want to cut his arm off, and a source of erotic pleasure for his lover. The lived experience of the body, what Merleau-Ponty (1968) calls embodiment, is central to the ways by which we identify with, or defy the social order:

It isn't only oppression that lives in my body, our bodies. The many experiences of who we are, of our identities, also live there. I know so clearly that my queerness, my disability, reside in my body—in the ways that I move, dress, cut my hair; in who I am attracted to and who's attracted to me; in my tremors, my slurred speech, my heavy-heeled gait; in the visceral sense of muscle sliding over muscle as I lie with my lover; in the familiarity of tension following tremor, travelling from shoulder to fingertip. Identity, of course, can live in many places all at once—in the communities we make home, the food we eat, the music we play and dance to, the work we do, the people we feel wild and passionate about, the languages we speak, the clothes we wear. But so much of who I am is carried in my irrevocably different body.

(Clare, 2001, p. 362)

It seems, then, that a sociology of impairment based on interrogating the ways in which certain differences come to be conceived of as medical problems, and exploring the lived and embodied experiences of disabled people, is crucial for furthering the understanding of disablism as a form of social oppression, enhancing forms of social support and reclaiming disability and difference as an affirmative identity.

DEVELOPING A 'DIS-ABILITY' PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL THEORY

Having demonstrated that disability and impairment are socially constructed categories that have acquired their current meaning at the rise of capitalism and the Enlightenment, I would now like to argue that a dis-ability perspective is central to any social theory that is politically committed to justice and respect to all. I use the term 'dis-ability' to indicate a spectrum or multitude rather than the binary dis/ability which was constructed through power relations and hegemonic beliefs about ideal productive bodies and about notions of usefulness, independence, and social and economic contributions (Ben-Moshe, Hill & Nocella, 2009). In making this claim I will first explore how the issue of dis/ability as a binary operates as an axis of oppression on both "impaired" and (temporarily) non-disabled people. This occurs in co-construction with other social divisions such as race, class and gender to produce '*entrepreneurial citizens*' (Masschelein & Simons, 2005) able and willing to fulfil their role in global capitalism. I will go on to explore how a dis-ability perspective, influenced by the idea of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980) and focusing on connection and interdependency can offer the basis of just politics that go beyond neo-liberal discourses in their configuration of individuals, communities and the relations between them.

Feminists have long been promoting the concept of intersectional analysis (Crenshaw, 1989) which tries to resist essentialist and universalist assumptions of identity politics, while

still recognising power inequalities that operate through social structures which are not reducible to individual circumstances, and avoiding the pitfall of complete relativism that accords equal value to *all* claims of knowledge thus obliterating the possibility for any real emancipatory struggle (Haraway, 1988). Such analysis challenges the different ways by which various social divisions operate to locate some people in a position of inferiority thus justifying others' privileged positions. The importance of intersectional analysis to disability studies was discussed earlier in this chapter, however, as Meekosha (2006, p. 162) points out '*an integrated and more holistic theoretical approach that incorporates disability has not occurred within feminist studies*'. Nira Yuval-Davis, a prominent feminist scholar and one of the leading contributors to the development of intersectional analysis defends this omission by arguing that:

*While in specific historical situations and in relation to the daily lives of specific people there are some social divisions which are more important than others in constructing their specific positioning relative to others around them, there are some social divisions, such as gender, stage in life cycle, ethnicity and class which will tend to shape most people's lives in most social locations, while other social divisions such as those related to **disability**, membership in particular cast or status as indigenous or refugee people will tend to affect less people globally in this way.*

(2011, p. 9, emphasis added)

But is that really so? The first World Report on Disability (WHO, 2011) estimates that the global prevalence of disability defined as '*significant functioning difficulties in everyday life*' (ibid, p.27) is 15.6% in the adult population, ranging from 12% in high income countries to 18% in lower income countries. Prevalence was higher in all countries for women, those in the poorest wealth quintile, and older people. For all these groups the rate was higher in developing countries. The prevalence of disability in lower income countries among people aged 60 years and above, for instance, was 43.4%, compared with 29.5% in higher income countries. Further, as the report indicates, the social and economic disadvantages of disability are not incurred by the disabled individual alone, but affect members of their household as

well, making disability a far from marginal factor in social analysis, particularly when looking at de-privileged groups.

An even more important argument for the centrality of dis-ability to social analysis and social justice is the idea that the social category of disability is part and parcel of the construction of normalcy, citizenship and personhood. Once we understand disability not as a trait tied to an individual body or mind but as a socially created binary, it is impossible to claim that only one side of the binary (the disabled) is socially constructed, while the other (the “normal”) is a natural or neutral position. This is not to say that non-disabled people are oppressed by disablist society to the same extent as disabled people are, but rather that the constitution of the self as “normal” and “able” always requires some work. Butler (1999) describes how fixed ideas of gender and even sex are not pre-given identities but operate through constant performativity, defined as a stylized repetition of acts that produces the effect of an internal, seemingly natural core on the surface of the body. These acts conceal gender’s construction precisely because they are articulated at the level of the body. Because gender is often assumed to be natural, its sociality and public function can easily be overlooked. Similarly, both ability and disability need to be constantly preformed in the “right way” in order to achieve a naturalised status. Performing the “able-bodied” identity requires the denial of many times and aspects of dependence and inability as alien to the core of the self. These might include childhood, older age and even mundane instances of sickness. Wendell (1996) describes how for a long time after being diagnosed with a permanent medical condition she continued to try and disguise her pain and fatigue in order to maintain her “able-bodied” identity. This is by no means a unique and personal experience as many people with impairments or chronic conditions reject the idea that they are disabled. The denial of disability, Wendell explains, stems from the social understanding of ability and disability as mutually exclusive and fixed categories (i.e. one is either disabled or not, but

never both) and from the devaluation of disability as inferior and tragic. On the other hand, people who require support in terms of state funding (e.g. Disability Living Allowance or direct payments) have to satisfy strict conditions to prove their “inabilities” (Reeve & Soldatic, 2012).

As discussed earlier, the idea of normalcy, with its accompanying mechanisms of normalisation and standardisation, is a pillar of the Western modern project (Davis, 1995; Rose, 1996). The discourse and mechanisms of normalcy both work to produce subjects that are self-governing and fit for capitalist production, and resolve the inherent tension between the liberal ideals of personal freedom and equality and the demands of a capitalist market economy, by explaining such contradictions in terms of meritocracy. Burman (2006) discusses the similarities between the discourse of developmental psychology and the concept of global development. Both these discourses view development as a natural and universal ascent and position traits culturally associated with the rational, white, Western, middle-class man as more developed than traits such as dependency, irrationality and vulnerability, usually associated with *‘the child, the woman, the native/savage along with other rejects from the modern development project of productivity- the mental defective and degenerate’* (ibid, p. 646). Ironically, however, the denunciations of such chauvinistic and colonialist cultural norms, rather than destabilising the oppressive binary of dis/ability, have often served to reify it further-

As feminist, race, and sexuality studies sought to unmoor their identities from debilitating physical and cognitive associations, they inevitably positioned disability as the “real” limitation from which they must escape. This methodological distancing was necessary because identity studies resignified cultural beliefs grounded in material differences, real or imagined. [...] Formerly denigrated identities are “rescued” by understanding gendered, racial, and sexual differences as textually produced, distancing them from the “real” of physical or cognitive aberrancy projected onto their figures.

(Mitchell & Snyder, 2000, pp. 2–3)

A liberatory social theory that tries to resist *all* oppressive hierarchies needs to incorporate a dis-ability perspective alongside other subaltern and resistant knowledges such as feminism, anti-colonialism and queer theory. Davis (2002) calls for the development of a dismodernist ethic that starts with dis-ability rather than ends with it. In this dismodernist ethic, political struggles are not directed at making all identities equal under a model of rights based on the dominant view of personhood as rational, self-sufficient and independent, but rather at the recognition of partiality, instability and difference as the common human condition.

A useful starting point of such dismodernist ethic could be found in Deleuze & Guattari's (1980) metaphor of the rhizome rather than trees to describe human societies. This metaphor comes from biology in which rhizomes are horizontal forms of plants that send out roots and shoots from their different nodes. If a rhizome is cut into pieces, each piece will be able to give rise to a new rhizomatic plant. Deleuze and Guattari use this metaphor to explore the human life. Unlike Freudian psychoanalytic models that focus on the task of an individual to become separate from others and sees desire as a consequence of some lack the individual experiences, Deleuze and Guattari understand humans as rhizomes – that is, not discrete and separate individuals but involved in a contestant process of becoming through connection and separation. This shifts the focus of development and life change from a journey to build an individual, separate and self-sufficient self, to a model focusing linkage and proximity. In their model desire is the energy that drives this constant becoming, thus understood as productive and ever present, rather than oriented at fulfilling a certain lack. In this model people do not exist in the world as separate entities, but are in continuous and shifting relationships with the physical environment and with others in it. We exist beyond the boundaries of our skin, merging with other part subjects, part objects. Becoming a rhizome can be exemplified by the deep pain and anger one might feel when seeing a helpless dog being beaten with a stick, forcing her body to act against her better judgment and lash out the

bully. It is the deep emotion one might feel when listening to a favourite piece of music that takes hold of the body and mind. It is the different role we play in different relationships, or in different instances of the same relationship that allows desire to flow between people, animals and objects; that allows for new things to be produced in different forms and competences.

Shildrick & Price (2006) expand on how the incorporation of dis-ability into this rhizomatic model can serve as a liberatory framework that resists the signification of difference as lack:

In a model in which corporeality is no longer to be thought [of] in terms of given and integral entities, but only as engaged in ever dynamic and innovatory linkages, bodies are neither whole nor broken, disabled nor able-bodied, but simply in a process of becoming. [...] It is not the agency of a self embodied in a complete and integrated organic unity that is the driving force, but the flows of energy that bring together part objects – both living material and mechanic – to create surprising new assemblages. In place of the limits that the ideal of independence imposes, the emphasis is on connectivity, and linkage. The point is not that disabled people are unique in relying on a profound interconnectivity, but that for the normative majority such a need, inevitable as it is, may be covered over – particularly in the domain of Western hegemony. Once the focus switches from separation to connection, however, a corporeal mode that has figured only as a devalued deficiency must be reassessed

(Shildrick & Price, 2006, n.p.)

The idea here is that different embodiments need not be seen as impaired, but rather are sites for producing desire and for becoming. They are unique, not because of their partiality and “openness”, but because they are more resistant to modern discourse that seeks to fix bodies and desires in place. A vignette from Goodley (2000, p. 193) can help to demonstrate these ideas:

Rachel arrives at the meeting by minibus from the local “Autistic Community.” She does not speak often. She spends her time quietly and apparently contentedly smelling her fingers and looking around the room. She doesn’t appear to interact with any of her friends. At break-time Bill asked her if she would like a cup of coffee or tea. Erica, who lives with Rachel, replied, “She likes coffee don’t you Rachel?” Bill looked at Rachel, “Coffee then?”

If we apply a modern reading that focuses on individual competence, Rachel would appear to be lacking agency, incapable of contributing to the group's activity. But if we adapt to the notions of rhizomes, of becoming, we can see how action and production flow between all the points in the rhizome – Rachel's silence, Bills actions and questions, Erica's actions, Rachel's and Erica's relationship – all come together in a productive desire to create the event.

This view of productive desire can help resist the centrality of work and productivity as means for social participation and empowerment. Marxists, feminists and anarchists have all critiqued the capitalist organisation of production and distribution, drawing attention to its inherent inequalities and hierarchies and suggesting amendments to the social organisation of work as a solution to those problems. However, as disability scholars and activists such as Abberley (1997) and Taylor (2004) point out, the full social inclusion of disabled people requires broadening our understating of human value beyond the idea of work (waged or unwaged), understanding people as contributing members of society even when such contributions are not material. Kittay (2005, p. 123) describes how her daughter, who is diagnosed with severe to profound mental retardation [sic] is a contributing member of her family and community through her ability to take part in relationships of love and care:

[She] has the capacity to enjoy life, to share her joy through her smiles and laughter, to embrace those who show her love and care, and to bring joy to all whose lives she touches—an individual who, through her warmth, her serene and harmonious spirit, and her infectious love of life enriches the lives of others

Recognising and valuing the diverse ways in which people contribute and interact with their environment means shifting attention from the goal of assumed independence into a stress on interdependency.

The concept of interdependency as opposed to the modernist ideal of independency had been developed in feminist ethics of care, and had often been promoted within disability

studies (e.g. Kittay et al., 2005; Reindal, 1999). Dependency and independency are constantly and simultaneously present in human life. During childhood, adulthood and old age people are dependent and independent to different degrees in different aspects. They take part in different relationships in which they depend on others and others depend on them. A baby's wellbeing is dependent upon the constant care of the parent (or other care giver) but also the wellbeing of the parent is dependent upon the baby's health and happiness (a parent's wellbeing can be seriously undermined by a baby crying ceaselessly or facing a life threatening condition), and perhaps later on in life that baby would care for the parent. A disabled person employing personal assistants is dependent on them to dress, bath and feed her, as they are dependent on her for their income, on which others in their family may depend as well. We are never wholly dependent or wholly independent but emerged in relationships of interdependency.

It is not only the case that some disabled people are especially prone to the vulnerabilities of inevitable dependency, but also, as Kittay et. al (2005) argue, that they are often constructed as dependent in ways in which they are not, or need not be, if resources were devoted to equipping them and their surrounding properly. For example, a woman with the label of learning disability, who in an institutional setting is prohibited from making tea, or is not supplied with an accessible form at the NHS clinic, is made dependent upon others' actions to get about in life. Both bearing the burden of unmet dependency needs, and being falsely seen to be dependent in ways that one is not, serve to exclude disabled people from full social participation and the possibilities of flourishing.

Feminist ethics of care are particularly sensitive to the power differences that are inherent to any human relationship and in particular care relations. As care work is usually low paid or unpaid, carers often come from under-privileged groups (women, migrant

workers and working). However, their position as carers for people dependent upon their services gains them control and surveillance over the life of the subject of care (Tronto, 1993). Ethical care is not only about providing care when care is required, but also about withholding interference with the other's need and desire to be exercising their own agency. In bridging the tension between the relational view of human life, the relational nature of self-conceptions and the inevitable human dependences and interdependences too often ignored in theories that begin with adult moral agents pursuing their own conception of the good, and the need to support and empower people in exercising their agency, feminist scholars discuss the concept of *relational autonomy* (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000a; Nedelsky, 1989). Recognising the mutual constitution of self and other means understanding autonomy not as the property of the unitary self, but as created socially through cultural and institutional practices that recognise and enable some choices but not others. Adopting a rhizomatic view on social life and valuing interdependence, then, does not mean doing away with notions of autonomy. Rather, it is about challenging cultural representations and social structures that disable people, replacing them with relations and structures that value difference and provide people with the support they require to exercise their autonomy within interdependent relationships.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have explored the understanding of disability as a socially constructed phenomenon that acquired its current meaning in the context of 19th century Enlightenment and the shift to disciplinary power. This understanding means that seeking to include disabled people in all aspects of social life (including education) requires a shift from “scientific” interventions that seek to cure and normalize individuals, towards a social struggle that aims to challenge disabling values, practices and norms. Further, the understanding of normalcy

and disability as mutually and simultaneously constituted means that the experiences, standpoints and political struggles of disabled people should not be relegated to a niche field, but are central aspect of any social theory.

Following from my argument in chapter 1 that the questions of what is the desirable society and what are the aims and goals of education cannot be separated, I drew on disability studies, feminism and poststructuralist theory to offer a dis-ability perspective on social life. This perspective brings to social theory a focus on connection, difference and interdependency that can open up exciting possibilities for the appreciation and valuing of all life. While these ideas are also prevalent in queer and feminist studies, the incorporation of dis-ability is essential for the development of inclusive social theory and for further illuminating the contradictions between capitalist and neo-liberal norms and structure and the diverse and relational reality of human living. This does not suggest that we should do away with subjectivity, agency or struggles for autonomy and self-sovereignty, but rather that we will reconfigure these ideas to better fit the varied forms of embodiments and the changing relations of dependency and interdependency we all occupy; that rather than imposing the belief that disabled people, and in particular people with the label of learning disability, are suffering in their lack of rationality, agency or independence, we will embrace forms of life that has thus far been pathologized as impairment.

A rhizomatic dis-ability perspective on social life is not about wishing away embodied and social structural constraints that continue to impede the flow of energies and restrict activity and participation, nor is it about glossing over difference and separation. It is about recognising that we are simultaneously connected and separated, constantly changing and becoming with relations of interdependency. It is about embracing vulnerability, partiality and connectedness as productive sites of desiring and becoming, while continuing to fight for

removing barriers and opening spaces for new possibilities of connection. Through this work I explore how adopting such perspective affects our understanding of education and support the development of radical inclusive pedagogy.

CHAPTER 3

READING SCHOOLS THROUGH A DISABILITY PERSPECTIVE: ARGUING FOR THE NEED TO DEVELOP RADICAL INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

INTRODUCTION

Following my argument in the previous chapter that disability and impairment are socially constructed, I will explore in this chapter how different discourses of schooling construct the individual student and in particular the student with “learning disabilities” or “Special Educational Needs” (SEN). Schools are perceived as institutions of learning, in which children should acquire the skills to become fully participating citizens in society. Thus, discourses of schooling can provide a site for analysis of the meanings assigned to social participation by looking at the aims of schooling, and to the relationships between the individual and the society by looking at what skills the individual should have in order to fulfil which roles. Another significant aspect that can be examined through discourses of schooling is the construction of childhood vs. adulthood, a distinction that gained prominence in culture, philosophy and legislation at the same time that comprehensive schooling was introduced (Burman, 2006; Qvortrup, 1999). In the schooled society ‘*only certified consumers of knowledge are admitted to citizenship*’ (Illich, 1973, p. 12), and non-graduates, such as people with the label of learning disabilities, are excluded from many arenas of participation, are unemployed or low paid (Erevelles, 2000), and denied many civil liberties such as the right to choose where and who to live with (Goodley, 2001). Furthermore, through the construction of school failure as an individual biological pathology (Skrtic, 1995) social inequalities are naturalised and sustained

as a form of meritocracy. As I subscribe to a view of disability as an axis of oppression and marginalization, co-constructed in reciprocity with other axes such as gender, race and class (Erevelles, 2000; Morris, 1991; Shakespeare, 1996), my main argument is that in order to be inclusive of disabled students schools need to transform in radical ways.

I will begin my discussion by exploring how comprehensive schooling and modern notions of child development emerged in the West as part of macro-structural social changes that brought about the celebration of the “rational Man” (gendered language intended) as the realization of human existence. It is in this context that the category of disability became prominent in educational discourses, in an effort to obscure the incompatibility between the democratic ideology of the common school and the social reality of unequal divisions of labour within the capitalist economy, especially those that were organized along race, class, and gender lines (Erevelles, 2000).

I will continue by exploring how the discipline of special education serves to promote status-quo by privileging a statistically defined normalcy (Davis, 1995), individualising and pathologising difference, and adhering to the epistemology and traditions of positivist science (Skrtic, 1995), thus contributing to the further marginalisation and exclusion of its students. This is particularly worrying in face of the Coalition government’s commitment to maintain and increase the provision of special schools (Department for Education, 2011). Yet, while the previous government emphasised in its policies the need to promote *social inclusion* and the need to educate disabled students alongside their non-disabled peers, a close analysis of the New-Labour policies of '*Every Child Matters*' (ECM) shows that the underlining assumptions of this policy continued to privilege ideas of competition rather than cooperation, independence rather than interdependence; and personal accountability rather than social responsibility. Under

such assumptions it is hard to imagine how students with varied abilities could participate meaningfully in schools and be valued for their contribution.

In an attempt to envisage meaningful ways for educational participation for students with varying abilities I will explore ideas from alternative educational perspectives, focusing particularly on *critical pedagogy* and the contribution of Progressivism to educational philosophies. While these writings offer some promising ideas for challenging social exclusion and valuing of varying abilities, they still leave disability under-theorised, thus promoting its perception as a “natural” unchallenged barrier to participation.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLING AS A MODERN PHENOMENON

State schooling in Britain has emerged in the 19th century as part of the vast economic, political and social changes that followed the industrial revolution. Changes such as rapid urbanisation (Ball, 2008) and the rise to prominence of the professions (Skrtic, 1995) had an important role in the construction of schooling and even of childhood (Burman, 2006; Qvortrup, 1999). The mass migration into the cities during the 19th century has produced enormous social and political pressures that were slowly responded to through the development of state mechanisms such as public sanitation systems, social statistics, and forms of social welfare and regulation through the work of the modern professions such as teachers, social workers, health inspectors and probation officers (Ball, 2008). Urbanisation and industrialisation meant that more parents were working away from the home and the level of technology made children less fit for labour. Children as a collectivity changed their main modes of activity in accordance with those major social changes; it was not a change due to a new discourse among educationalists or child savers, but a change that was demanded by a new industrial system, which was in need of a mobile, educated labour force (Qvortrup, 1999).

Beyond the shifts from agricultural to industrial production, the modern era was also characterised by a shift in forms of government, from sovereign power to disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977, and see chapter 2 for further discussion). The introduction of state comprehensive schooling has not only served to manage the productiveness of the population (either by freeing adults from child-minding duties or by preparing children for the demands of the industrial workforce), but has also served to create modern, rational subjects and to maintain the docility of citizens. Schooling or formal education is in particular a form of reproducing hegemonic power, as it always involves an introduction to, preparation for and legitimisation of, certain ways of seeing and behaving in the world. Schooling always involves power relationships and the privileging of certain forms of knowledge (Morgan, 2000). Gramsci (1971) had carefully articulated a theory of hegemony, as he sought to explain how historical changes were being less and less exercised by brutal physical force. Instead he argued that the mechanism for social control is exercised through the moral leaders of society (including teachers), who participate and reinforce universal “common sense” assumptions of “truth”. Gramsci argued that by cultivating such consensus through personal and institutional rewards, students could be socialized to support the interest of the ruling elite, even when such actions were clearly in contrast with the students’ own class interests. This reproduction of ideological hegemony within schools functions to sustain the processes that reproduce cultural and economic domination within the society.

Ball (2008) shows that since its beginning in 1870, education policy in Britain reflected and sustained class stratification. For example, although secondary schooling became free to all in 1944, the allocation of students to grammar, secondary modern, and sometimes technical schools was clearly modelled on a class-divided vision of education, masked by a discourse of attainment and fixed ability. The Norwood committee (Committee of the Secondary School Examination council, 1943) argued that:

In a wise economy of secondary education, pupils of a particular type of mind would receive the training best suited for them and that training would lead them to an occupation where their capacities would be suitably used

(p. 4, cited in Ball, 2008).

In this quote, that seems to be taken from Huxley's *Brave New World*, we can see how the perpetuating of hegemonic power is masqueraded by discourse as the restoration of harmony between the individual, who is assumed to have some fixed inner abilities, and society, thus serving to naturalise class privileges. Different kinds of education and different kinds of employment are constructed as results of '*particular type of mind*' rather than as a result of social structures.

State comprehensive schooling was also strongly interconnected with the growing power of the professions in modern society. The professions rose to a position of prominence and authority in society under the claim that professionals have exclusive access to knowledge that society needs to solve its problems; and that they will apply this knowledge in a disinterested way, in the interest of their clients and common good rather than for personal gain (Skrtic, 1995). It is not surprising that schools play a significant role in a professional culture, as one becomes a professional through a prolonged process of education, training and certification. However, Illich (1971) argues that the '*schooling*' of society doesn't serve to spread knowledge that increases one's possibilities to act in the world. To the contrary, the hyper reliance on specialised knowledge and the subjugation of knowledge to processes of measurement and certification serve to further mystify the relationships of people with the world, and decrease the control they have over their environments. Fishermen, that in the 50s and 60s were able to tinker and fix the motors of their boats, are now forced to buy new ones, as the technology becomes more and more specialised and spare parts are not manufactured for old models. Instead of applying medical knowledge to the development of simple medical kits

that people might use after a short training to the prevention of most common infections and diseases, which continue to kill many people in the majority world, medicine is becoming more and more specialised and reliant on expensive equipment and prolonged training. Thus, the schooling and professionalization of society serve more as gatekeepers to knowledge than as education for the masses. The gate keeping function of schooling is maintained through the 'hidden curriculum' (Illich, 1971) with its underlying assumptions of human nature and the relationships between people and the world:

Among these assumptions is that which impels us to treat all people as if they were newcomers who had to go through a naturalisation process. Only certified consumers of knowledge are admitted to citizenship. Another assumption is that man is born immature and must 'mature' before he can fit into civilized society. Man must be guided away from his natural environment and pass through a social womb in which he hardens sufficiently to fit into everyday life.

(Illich, 1973, p. 12)

Thus, instead of spreading knowledge to open up new possibilities for being, schools restrict participation in many social arenas only to certified graduates.

But, as discussed in chapter 2, the knowledge and power of the professions affect more than people's relations with the world, it constructs who they can be in the world. The professionalization of social problems such as ignorance, poverty, crime and disease has meant that more and more aspects of life now fall within the power of the professions to set apart, regulate and contain (Skrtic, 1995). Schools themselves constitute an arena of professional practice, and the emergence of the philosophical concept of childhood, and of childhood professions (e.g. developmental psychology, child psychiatry, paediatrics and pedagogics) was concurrent with the establishment of comprehensive schooling (Burman, 2006; Qvortrup, 1999). Schools, as segregated settings where children are placed under constant observation and surveillance, are typical sites for the exercise of disciplinary power, which, according to Foucault (1977), constructs the modern subject. Students are subjected to a 'normalising

judgment' as activity is broken into small separate units, and performance on each one is examined and ranked (ibid, p. 184). Students who fail to perform to the desired level are assigned more exercise, and students who continue to fail are placed under the observation of the '*psy-complex*' professions (Rose, 1979), where judgment is passed on more than an act, and the '*knowledge of individuals*' judges and ranks the potential and value of the child (Foucault, 1977, p. 180).

Burman (2006, 2008) shows how prevailing models of pedagogy and of developmental psychology reproduce the cultural and gender chauvinism of the late 19th and early 20th century Western thinking. In this discourse, children are positioned as without knowledge, and therefore in need of teaching. Development is seen as a natural and universal ascent up a ladder that leads children from a needy place associated with dependency, irrationality and vulnerability to the state of a rational, autonomous, self-regulating, and responsible citizens. Burman shows how by positioning at the top of the ladder traits culturally associated with the rational, white, Western, middle-class man '*the child, the woman, the native/savage along with other rejects from the modern development project of productivity- the mental defective and degenerate*' are devaluated, and their deprivileged status is naturalized (Burman, 2006 p. 646). This has profound implications for disabled and particularly people with the label of 'learning disabilities', who, as we have seen in chapter 2, are often thought of as eternal children in need of special treatment or protection, alongside diminished responsibility and secondary civil status.

As we have seen above, in a professional culture the specialized knowledge of the professions and the services offered by them work to construct and legitimise certain ways of seeing, behaving and being in the world. The problem is, that because virtually all professionals work in bureaucracies, the application of professional knowledge to society is largely

determined by the nature and needs of the organisations themselves (Skrtic, 1995). In a professional culture service is substituted for value, as Illich argues:

Medical treatment is mistaken for healthcare, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work. Health, learning, dignity, independence and creative endeavour are defined as little more than the performance of the institutions that claim to serve these ends, and their improvement is made to depend on allocating more resources to the management of hospitals, schools and other agencies in question

(1971, p. 1)

As education is reduced to schooling, and schools rely heavily on pen and paper tasks, students who have difficulties sitting quietly at their desk might be defined as having “special educational needs”. Those needs can then be addressed through the services of another institution, by, for example, administering drugs to make it easier for the teacher to change the child's behaviour.

To sum, we can see how comprehensive schooling has emerged in the West at the end of the 19th century as part of larger economic, demographic and political changes. Modern notions of childhood, education and schooling are constructed, at least in part, by macro-structural changes in society, such as industrialization and urbanisation and the prominence of professional authority and disciplinary power. On the other hand, comprehensive schooling serves to construct through processes of disciplinary power both its direct subjects (students, teachers, families) and, through its future orientation, constructs the citizen. By posing school education and psychological development as conditions for social participation, Western modern society excludes many people under the guise of natural ability and meritocracy.

The meaning of 'learning disabilities' is tied closely to the meaning of schooling, as it serves as a differentiated category for some students who display difficulty in learning and not for others (Reid & Weatherly Valle, 2004). Following on my claim in the previous chapter that 'learning disabilities' are socially constructed, I would now like to explore how this category comes to be within the context of schooling and in particular through the disciplinary practice of special education. I acknowledge of course that differences do exist between students, and that students labelled with learning disabilities may well struggle in school, but I would like to argue that by privileging of statistically defined normalcy (Davis, 1995), individualising and pathologising of difference, and adhering to the epistemology and traditions of positivist science (Skrtic, 1995), the discipline of special education serves to promote stability rather than change, thus contributing to the further marginalisation of already marginalised groups.

Functionalism, as the dominant mode of theorising in the social professions, grounds much of the knowledge, discourses and practices of general education, special education and educational administration (Giroux, 1981; Skrtic, 1995). Functionalism presupposes that social reality is objective, inherently orderly and rational, and thus that social and human problems are pathological (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Under this discourse of schooling knowledge is defined as a certain and objective body of facts about a single reality that is independent of humans' apprehension. The teacher is defined as a technician who organises the knowledge codified by the curriculum for efficient presentation. The student is the 'non-knower' whose role is to passively receive the knowledge to the desired level and at the desired pace (Freire, 1972a; Skrtic, 1995). Skrtic (1995) argues that the dominance of the functionalist world view implemented the mutually reinforcing theories of organisational rationality and human pathology into practices, policies and theories of education. As a result, when industrialisation,

immigration, and compulsory schooling brought into schools large numbers of students who were difficult to teach in traditional classrooms, the problem of school failure was reframed as two interrelated problems – inefficient (non-rational) organisation and defective (pathological) students. This removed the problem of school failure from general education discourse and compartmentalised it into two separate but mutually reinforcing discourses. The first discourse was in the developing field of educational administration, which, in the interest of maximising the efficacy of school organisations, was compelled to rationalise its practices and discourse according to the precepts of “scientific management”, an approach to administration designed to increase the efficacy of industrial mass production firms (Donaldson & Edelson, 2000). The second discourse on school failure was in the field of special education which emerged as a means to remove and contain the most recalcitrant students, in the interest of maintaining order in the rationalised school (Skrtic, 1995, p. 67)

The disciplinary discourse of special education locates school failure within the individual by conflating two models of normality – the pathological model from medicine and the statistical model from psychology – as performance outside a statistical norm is perceived as a signifier of a biological pathology (Davis, 1995). It is through this conflation that difficulties in schools are transformed into biological deficiency –

The implicit logic that underlies this transformation is as follows: Low IQ= "bad" in American society: a social evaluation. "Bad"= pathology in a pathological model. Therefore, low IQ= pathology. Thus, IQ, which is not a biological manifestation but is a behavioural score based on responses to a series of questions, becomes conceptually transposed into a pathological sign carrying all the implications of the pathological model.

(Mercer, 1973, p. 6)

By adhering to this model schools can resolve the inherent tension of the demand to achieve above average on national norms through excluding individual students who don't “measure up”, either to a different school or to a specialist program within the school. Ironically, although

the intention in diagnostic testing is to '*level the playing field*', tests have become instruments to confirm unconscious assumptions about the unacceptability of some students and to legitimate their exclusion (Reid & Weatherly Valle, 2004, p. 469). This is especially worrying when we remember that pupils from working class or ethnic minority background are over represented in the special education class room (Lynch & Baker, 2005; Slee, 1997; Watts & Erevelles, 2004).

The standardisation of skills and its use in the process of differential diagnosis gives special education professionals a finite repertoire of standard practices that are applicable to a limited set of contingencies or perceived client needs. As such, special education practice can be described as a form of pigeonholing, a process in which the professional matches a presumed client need to one of the standard practices in his or her repertoire (Skrtic, 1995). Instead of accommodating to heterogeneity, the process of differential diagnosis and special education referrals tend to screen it out by forcing student's needs into one of the standard practices, or by forcing the student out of the professional-client relationship all together (e.g. by referral to a special school or unit). Alderson & Goodey (1998) describe a student who was referred back and forth between schools as she was too bright for the "severe learning disabilities" school, and too physically handicapped for the "mild learning disabilities" school.

Another example to this process of pigeonholing comes from my own experience as a speech and language therapist in an out of school unit for students with learning difficulties in Israel/Palestine. As part of a move to improve services, each of the professions within the unit was asked to prepare a list of possible therapeutic goals, which will then be used to plan individual therapy by selecting the appropriate goals for each student. This was said to improve service by allowing closer monitoring of students' progress and referring them to better suited services (e.g. special classes or special schools) if progress is too slow or insignificant. The

underlying assumption of this initiative was that “learning difficulties” and the knowledge of “curing” them exist as decontextualized phenomena. The role of the therapist or remedial teacher is not to draw on the specific interactions between student, school, teaching material etc. in order to define the problem and possible solutions, but s/he is to select from a pre-existing repertoire of problems and solutions the ones most closely fitting the situation. Lack of progress, therefore, does not indicate a need for change in professional knowledge and service, but renders the individual outside the scope of this service, and thus excluded from participation,

Thus, by locating school failure as an individual biological pathology and relegating failing individuals into separate disciplinary practices and discourses, prevailing notions of instruction, school structure and learning go unchallenged. Poor educational achievement, unemployment or low paid jobs and even social exclusion are assumed to be natural consequences of impairment, rather than the result of institutional deficits or social inequalities. Special schooling isolates students as different and inferior with lasting personal and social consequences which are often blamed on the original diagnosis. The circular way in which problems are recreated rather than resolved through special education is clearly described by Alderson & Goodey:

In special schools, the greater the reported difficulties, the more competent and even heroic the staff can appear to be, in dealing with such serious, intractable cases. If many special school ex-students end up in mental hospital, prison, or other institution [...] this too can be taken as evidence to show the immense difficulties the school staff contended with, rather than to question their competence. Similarly, on an individual level, special school students' protests, boredom and unhappiness tend to be interpreted as evidence of their own difficulty and disturbance, and not as serious commentaries on their teaching.

(1998, p. 15)

Trust in the professional knowledge of special education secures its reputation as a rational sensible way to educating part of the population. Special education professionals justify the

exclusion and segregation of their students under the claim that they possess specialised knowledge to support these students and allow them to overcome their difficulties with learning. But the usefulness of this specialised knowledge to the actual teaching of students with SEN is questioned by many researchers in the field of education (Alderson & Goodey, 1998; Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1995; Thomas & Loxley, 2001). Much of what is thought of as good special education – such as connecting the learning to the world of the child and balancing new ideas with old and familiar ones – is just as relevant for good general instruction (Reid & Weatherly Valle, 2004). Further, the belief that special education constitutes a separate professional knowledge base works to convince teachers in mainstream schools that they are not fit or qualified to teach all children (Alderson & Goodey, 1998)

This “scientific” understanding of disability, which was translated in post war Britain to the state’s commitment to provide specialised educational services to disabled students (Dyson, 2005), had begun to come under criticism in the 60s and 70s, with the rise of new social movements politics, and in particular the disabled people’s movement (see chapter 4). However, it was the changing demands of the market and the transition to advanced capitalism that have spurred educational reforms (Dyson, 2005). As part of New-Labour policy aimed at ‘tackling social exclusion’, with its particular emphases on bringing excluded groups back into employment through the development of ‘social capital’ (Ball, 2008), there has been a growing number of educational policies relating to the education of pupils with SEN, all of which build upon the idea that: *‘There are strong educational, as well as social and moral grounds for educating children with special educational needs with their peers and which aim to increase the level and quality of inclusion within mainstream schools ...’* (Department for Education and Employment, 1997, p. 43). The idea behind inclusion is that the majority of children with SEN will make an economic contribution to society as adults and that their education alongside their peers will ensure that this contribution is better valued and of better value (Lloyd, 2008).

In the following section I will discuss the New-Labour educational policies, which were in place in 2009 when this research had begun. While the Coalition Government revoked many of these policies, the privileging of competition, individualised ability and independence, remains prominent. It is my argument that such notions of education continue to individualise, pathologise and exclude difference, even when students with SEN are educated under the same roof as their peers.

CONSTRUCTING CITIZENS FOR THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY – NEO-LIBERAL EDUCATION REFORMS

Schooling has its roots in the economic and political cultures of the modern and industrialized society, but the economic and political cultures of the late 20th and early 21st century – the globalised markets and the “Knowledge Economy” – have brought about neo-liberal educational reforms (Dyson, 2005). Those reforms began in the policies of the UK Conservative governments during 1979-1997 and have been developed in the policies of New Labour since 1997 (Ball, 2008). In his discussion of British education policy Ball (2008) argues that key concepts in the texts of New Labour’s policy reforms are ideas of transformation, modernisation, innovation, enterprise, dynamism, creativity and competitiveness. Those ideas are often linked together as an ensemble and signify the sense of the pace, movement and constant change that is taken to define globalisation and the knowledge economy. The necessity and inevitability of adapting to such notions and pace is primarily linked to economic rather than social pressures and needs, as a response to urgent demands of globalization and international competitiveness.

The *Knowledge Economy* is a much used term in relation to contemporary education policy, which derives from the idea that knowledge and education can be treated as a business

product (Ball, 2008). In the current economic system it is argued that information and knowledge are replacing capital and energy as the primary wealth creating assets, just as the latter two replaced land and labour 200 years ago (Leadbeater, 2000). In an economic system that defines knowledge as property, and perhaps the highest valued property, formal education is no longer just an investment or a system of producing hegemonic subjects, it is also a commodity.

The neo-liberal discourse of education constitutes students and families as consumers, equity as measuring against national standards, freedom as consumer choice, and “good” or “worthy” education as managerially effective. It is set against a model of marketisation of human potential that ties responsibilities for welfare and well-being to the economically productive individual and family (Burman, 2006). Neo-liberal education reforms include the creation of a national curriculum and frequent testing of attainment against national standards and norms; publicising schools’ league tables and the encouragement of “consumers’ choice” by parents and students combined with a system of punishments and rewards for failing and successful schools; the elaboration of managerial responsibilities and control over budgets and staff; and the notion of accountability of teachers, students and families through, for example, home-school contracts (Ball, 2008). These reforms work together to render education like a commodity rather than a public good, and bring into play new relationships between teachers, students, families and the state (Ball, 2008; Burman, 2006; Lipman, 2009; Willmott, 1995).

In 2003, the British government embarked on an initiative to improve services for children with the publication of several documents under the *Every Child Matters* (ECM) agenda (e.g. Department for Education and Skills, 2003). Policies and practices for schooling, training and educational provision constitute a major part of the initiative. A close inspection of the educational and lifelong learning goals of the agenda reveals that for the government, the

chief purpose of education is to develop the skills and dispositions necessary for the individual, competitive, technocratic labour market of a post Fordist, globalised capitalism (and see Lipman, 2009 for a discussion of this in US education policy).

Reading through the 'Education & Training' section of the ECM website (<http://www.everychildmatters.co.uk>), one gets the impression that economic participation is the main aim of education. Being employed is portrayed as the sole way of participation in the public sphere, and the source of personal fulfilment:

The Government is committed to ensuring that individuals gain the skills they need to be employable and personally fulfilled. In its second White Paper 'SKILLS: GETTING ON IN BUSINESS, GETTING ON AT WORK' it sets out proposals to put employer' needs centre stage in the design and delivery of training – primarily through 'Train to Gain'.

(“Skills for Life - Every Child Matters,” n.d.)

Every child might matter, but it's the *employer's* needs that dictate the goals and content of education and of training. Being employable seems to be synonymous to personal fulfilment. Indeed, the conjunctive “and” is used between the two, implying to their additive value, but the paragraph's sole mentioning of business, work and employability suggests otherwise.

Employability is not only synonymous to personal fulfilment, but is also, according to the *Every Child Matter* agenda, the only way for social participation. Under the *Skills for Life* section of the website we find that:

It aims to help create a society where adults have the literacy, language or numeracy skills they need to find and keep work and participate fully in society, thereby increasing the economic performance and social cohesion of the country

(“Skills for Life - Every Child Matters,” n.d.)

Again, we see how the *individual* ability to ‘*keep a job*’ is tied to national economic performance and even social cohesion. It is interesting to note the emphasis on employability rather than on employment. Employment is a concept located outside of the individual in the arena of social relationships and interchanges. It is influenced by government policy, global trade agreements and trends, and the fluctuating nature of global markets. On the other hand, employability is a concept located within the individual, an intrinsic trait. According to the ECM agenda, it is the individual person who is supposed to be in possession of those skills required by the employer in order to find and keep a job. The government states its commitment to shape educational policies that will answer employers’ needs and supply them with skilled workers; but it says nothing about its commitment to provide employment for its citizens. This form of individualisation of even the most interpersonal and social phenomena is typical of neo-liberal discourse that conceptualises society as an ensemble of unitary individuals who interact freely with each other. As social macro-structures are left out of the picture, historical inequalities and power relations are naturalised, and responsibility for personal and social failures and successes can be placed at the level of the individual or the family (Burman, 2006).

Another major aspect of neo-liberal education policies is the National Curriculum, which was introduced by the Conservative governments of 1977-1997, and continues to play a major role in current policies (Ball, 2008). The National Curriculum centrally prescribes what is to be taught, and the methods and measurements by which students are assessed. On the ECM website we find that

The National Curriculum sets out a clear, full and statutory entitlement to learning for all pupils. It determines the content of what will be taught, and sets attainment targets for learning. It also determines how performance will be assessed and reported.

("The National Curriculum - Every Child Matters,")

This is a view of knowledge as a certain and objective body of facts about a single reality that is independent of humans' apprehension, which can be neatly broken down into predefined '*attainment targets*'. This leads to what Freire (1972) calls the 'banking model of education' under which teaching and learning become an act of depositing. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorise, and repeat. The scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.

However, the "single reality" reflected in the curriculum often represents white middle class culture (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Reid & Weatherly Valle, 2004), which might be different from the culture and knowledge students bring from home. As under the 'banking model' of education students are confined to the role of the receiver and the non-knower, they are not invited to bring the knowledge they already have to class. When students do not come from a background of the dominant culture, they are left alone to bridge any gaps and contradictions between home and school. This need to bridge the discrepancies between home and school, especially when the home culture is considered inferior, may lead to considerable difficulties with learning the curriculum, and to the identification of such students as having SEN (Reid & Weatherly Valle, 2004).

In terms of content, literacy and numeracy are almost the sole abilities to be recognised, promoted and rewarded by the schools. Other vital human capacities, such as building and handy work, art and movement and capabilities of love, care and solidarity, are not recognised or appreciated by schools, and are underpaid or unpaid in the job world (Lynch & Baker, 2005; Lynch, 2001). The majority of the school day is dedicated to educating students minds, with the needs and capabilities of the body, such as running around and playing, eating or going to the toilet are only allowed a place mostly during "breaks", when the process of education is

assumed to have stopped (Garrison & Neiman, 2003). Educational policies speak of and to teachers, students, managers, families, communities and employers, but hardly ever refer to janitors, cleaners or cooks, whose daily work is an essential part of schools' operation. The actions carried out by those people are always behind the scenes, outside the scope of the national curriculum or educational policy. This echoes feminist critique that discusses the private, unvalued and unseen perception of care work and care relationships, typically associated with women (Federici, 2012; hooks, 2000). This exclusion of bodies and body work from the discourse allows for the notion of the "typical body" as independent and capable. Reference to bodies is made in terms of lack, once a body does not conform to the spaces left for it in the public world (e.g. students who "can't see", "can't walk" etc.) and students with such bodies are then seen as having "special needs", as their bodies violate the assumed independence and capability by not conforming to these spaces (Erevelles, 2000; Gabel, 2002). Students are expected to keep their bodies from such a fate as is exemplified by the ECM goal of '*being healthy*' and '*staying safe*' (Department for Education and Skills, 2003), but are not encouraged to learn with and through their bodies (Garrison & Neiman, 2003), and are rarely taught how to care for their or others' bodies (Kittay et al., 2005).

On the other hand, emotions, in the new and trendy guise of *Emotional Literacy* and *Emotional Intelligence* seem to be a much discussed topic in recent social and educational policy (Burman, 2009). Since September 2009 the ECM website includes a section on behaviour in schools, and specific programs for promoting Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) are offered to teachers. However, as Burman (2009) shows, rather than admitting interpersonal and social factors to the contexts of development and participation, the notion of Emotional Intelligence serves to further individualise even the most social interactions, by constructing it as an individual (stable) personality trait. Just as with

employability mentioned above, this goes to further tie social problems to individual responsibility and to disguise structural inequalities as natural and meritocratic.

The citizen that is prompted through the SEAL programs is a law obeying, content one, not an angry revolutionary:

SEAL helps children and young people to be responsible citizens, helping to underpin Citizenship delivery.

("Teachernet, Social and emotional aspects of learning,")

*The DCSF recognises that teachers are only able to teach effectively and pupils learn effectively in **orderly** classes with good behaviour.*

("Behaviour in schools - Every Child Matters,")

Thus, this policy aims not only to increase the “social capital” by producing workers with “people skills”, but also at increasing the obedience of the citizens by measuring and training orderly behaviour (Burman, 2009). In this context it is interesting to note that the number of students labelled with Emotional and Behavioural Disabilities (EBD) has increased significantly, while the number of students identified with mild or specific learning disabilities has decreased (OFSTED, 2004). Further, according to the OFSTED (2004) report, students with EBD are also the most likely to be segregated to special schools. The rapid growth of EBD diagnosis, which is prevalent mostly among black and poor male students can be seen as a way of protecting the social order from groups that are perceived as a threat to it (Watts & Erelles, 2004). The individualising of violence as a stable inner trait serves both to disguise the violence inflicted on these groups by state institutions such as schools, police and prisons, and to justify the exclusion of members of these groups as means for restoring public peace.

The National Curriculum prescribes not only what should be taught, but also what should be attained, and the measure by which to assess it. Within the current educational policy, schools have to compete against each other in the league tables, with regards to their students' achievement as measured against national norms (Lloyd, 2008). "Failing schools", which do not measure up to the national norms, are penalised through funds retention and closure (Ball, 2008). Equity is seen as a personal responsibility with the adoption of the statistically nonsensical notion that everyone can attain the national average standard or better if they'd just work hard enough (Lipman, 2009; Lloyd, 2008). Under a neo-liberal discourse of democratisation, choice and accountability, schools and student are set in a cruel race for continuous improvement against national norms and against each other. This agenda operates as if those normalised standards were absolute, and the inescapable competitiveness is built upon an inherent paradox. On the one hand, the policy defines achievement by drawing on normalised bell curve that uses computational tools to guarantee that half the population falls below the mean, and on the other hand defines achieving under average scores as failure (Davis, 1995).

Under advanced capitalism and the *Knowledge Economy*, educational policies seek to promote the '*entrepreneurial self*', the individual that uses entrepreneurial behaviours to satisfy his/her needs (Masschelein & Simons, 2005). This discourse is not only about an active and on-going creation of conditions and control of entrepreneurial behaviour, but it also ensures that everyone is willing to establish an entrepreneurial relation to the self, is willing to invest in one's own life, willing to offer their capital, willing to sell at a large profit these competencies and knowledge and willing to invest in learning, health and security. The impetus for inclusive education, Masschelein & Simons (2005) argue, sits well with such an approach, as it is assumed to facilitate disabled students' participation and entrepreneurship. Yet, while this discourse constructs success and failure as individual responsibility, social participation as

economic productivity, and continues to rely on a gendered, classed and raced model of development which pathologizes difference, it is hard to imagine how disabled students can meaningfully participate and receive adequate education, even if their schooling takes place under the same roof as their peers.

This mismatch between ideologies of schooling that work to produce productive and obedient citizens for the global market economy, and the needs and preferences of many disabled students, had led to the continued social exclusion of disabled students even when they are officially “included” in mainstream schools (Allan, 2008; Warnock, 2005), and to parental dissatisfaction (DCSF, 2009). The government had responded to this by vowing to end the ‘*bias towards inclusive education*’ (Department for Education, 2011, p. 5), promising parents more choices through maintaining special schools as a viable option. Conversely, I argue, the incompatibility of mainstream education with the needs and desires of many students needs to be rectified through a radical change in our thinking about the values, philosophies and politics of education (Allan, 2008; Barton, 1997; Gabel, 2002; Goodley, 2011; Slee, 1997), which cannot be separated from wider social, political and economic change. In so doing, ideas from critical pedagogy, progressivism and democratic education can be useful. In the following section I will explore the potential contribution of these schools of thought to promoting inclusive education.

RADICAL PEDAGOGIES

In the previous sections I have discussed how the functionalist approach to education works to disable and exclude many students, and masquerades this exclusion as natural, scientific and benevolent. Working towards inclusion, then, requires us to question the general framework of schooling, resisting the reduction of the politics of education ‘*to a technical problem of*

resourcing, management, social groupings and instructional design within the scenario of neo-liberal schooling' (Slee, 1997, p. 411). Politicising education is crucial for two reasons; first, as we have seen above, education is constructed through, and constructs subjects for, the social order of global capitalism. Second, because education has such a powerful role in reproducing social relations, it plays an essential part in any attempt of social transformation and liberation.

Critical pedagogy is a term used to describe divergent writings of educators who share a commitment to social transformation and justice (Darder et al., 2009). It is rooted in the ontology and epistemology of *Critical Theory*, and especially in the philosophy of the Frankfurt school, which took as one of its central values a commitment to penetrate the world of objective appearances to expose the underlying social relationships they often conceal (Giroux, 2009). In other words, critical theorists and specifically critical educationalist view knowledge not as an objective representation of a reality that is "out there", but as dialogically constructed in a historical, social, political and economic process (McLaren, 2009). Adapting Burrell and Morgan's (1979) mapping of paradigms in social sciences, critical pedagogy is a '*radical humanist*' paradigm, that is grounded in a sociology of conflict and takes a subjective view of knowledge. Radical humanism situates knowledge production in the shared subjective creation of dominant discourses, hegemonies and social meaning-making processes of wider society. Meanings are imprisoned within ideological processes but also produced by resistant counter-hegemonic cultural practices and emergent community identities (Goodley, 2011).

Freire, arguably the best known critical educationalist, sees education as the process of endorsing students' ability to think critically about their education situation; this way of thinking allows them to recognise connections between their individual problems and experiences and the social contexts in which they are embedded, a process which Freire (1972a) calls '*conscientization*'. This is a needed first step of '*praxis*', which is defined as the power

and know-how to take action against oppression. Praxis involves engaging in a cycle of learning and theory, which are geared towards action, application, evaluation and reflection, and then back to action. Social transformation, Freire (1972) argues, is the product of praxis at the collective level. A major emphasis is placed on literacy in those conceptualisations of praxis, but critical pedagogues' definitions of literacy are far from the mainstream educational debates around *Phonics* or the cognitive skills of decoding words. Freire's (1972) call for education as process of '*reading the world*' is defined by Shor (1992, p. 129) as developing

habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse.

Those captivating notions of education as a process of emancipation, with their emphasis on knowledge as a dialogue between people and a dialogue between knowing and doing, have been taken up by many writers from feminist (e.g. hooks, 1994), post-colonial (e.g. Darder & Torres, 2009; Ladson-Billing & Tate, 2009) and Marxist (e.g. Aronowitz, 2004) perspectives, and may prove useful to proponents of inclusive education as we seek to counter the hegemonic discourse that pathologises difference and works to oppress and exclude disabled people not only in education but in society at large (see chapter 2). Yet, while Giroux (2003, p. 10) calls for rejection of all forms of schooling that marginalise and oppress students and argues instead for the necessity of developing

school practices that recognize how issues related to gender, class, race and sexual orientation can be used as a resource for learning rather than being contained in schools through a systemic pattern of exclusion, punishment and failure

disability is seldom mentioned as an axis of oppression, and even more rarely thoroughly theorised within the field of critical pedagogy (Gabel, 2002; Goodley, 2007a, 2011). Reference

to special education is usually confined to criticising the over representation of students from ethnic minorities or the working classes in segregated settings. This is rightfully identified as a process of pathologising *cultural* difference, but the silence around the pathologisation of *psychological* or physical difference leaves disability as ‘*the boundary condition that resides just on the other side of hope...the condition one must escape rather than improve*’ (Ferguson , 1987, p.55, cited in Erevelles, 2000), a condition so deviant that it is beyond the scope of social transformation. The absence of people of varying psychological and physical abilities in critical discourses about pedagogy demonizes them – by their absence they are deviant. Rather than acknowledging and celebrating differences of ability, critical pedagogy has ignored such differences and thus has constructed theoretical discourses that ‘*assume relatively similar academic abilities among all pedagogical subjects*’ (Gabel, 2002, p. 191). In chapters 4 and 6 I will explore how the knowledge, art, practices and discourses produced by the disabled people’s movement may be useful for constructing radical inclusive pedagogy that explores and resists socially engendered processes of disablement, promoting instead more enabling and inclusive environments and discourses.

Another important aspect of critical pedagogy is its stress on developing students’ agency, authorship and voice. Education is not seen as achieving against national standards, but as the power to take action and resist external imposition –

If situations cannot be created that enable the young to deal with feelings of being manipulated by outside forces, there will be far too little sense of agency among them. Without a sense of agency, young people are unlikely to pose significant questions, the existentially rooted questions in which learning begins

(Greene, 1988, p. 3)

Rather than instructing students on “packages” of knowledge in different curriculum subjects (as is called for in the ‘banking model’ of education), teaching is seen as a process of

supporting students in finding their own voice, and enabling a classroom dialogue between different voices. Such approach is promising to inclusive education, as it does not seek to normalise students into predefined developmental goals, but sees difference as an opportunity for dialogue.

The problem here is that critical pedagogy assumes that pedagogical subjects have voices that are recognised and understood by others (Ellsworth, 1989). As Gabel (2002) argues, voice is used as a metaphor for representing one's self to others in culturally acceptable ways, typically by reading and writing. If a student does not read or write, critical pedagogy assumes that the innate ability is there and that it merely needs to be brought out with the proper pedagogical methods. In this sense, liberation involves social and educational changes that make learning to exercise one's voice possible. This approach is consistent with the demands of the disabled people's movement for changing social and environmental conditions in ways that will enable disabled people to have more control and authority over their lives (UPIAS, 1976). However, little thought has been given to the problems of participation of students with diverse abilities who exercise voice differently than it is defined in educational theory, or to the intricate ways in which agency comes to play in the life of people who require cognitive or physical support in order to exercise their agency (Gabel, 2002). As Erevelles (2000, p. 32) argues –

critical theorists of education, rather than confronting the central issue of how to (re)configure "human agency" in the face of real physiological differences, have chosen either to avoid discussion of the category altogether or to add "disability" arbitrarily to the expanded sociological trinity of race, class, and gender

By ignoring those questions, critical pedagogy constructs a view of voice as the use of conventional literacies to represent the self, and of agency as an individual trait that can be exercised independently.

If we accept the notion discussed in the previous chapter that dis-ability as a continuum, a relationship between people with varying psychological and physical embodiments and social structures that privilege certain bodies and pathologise difference, we must struggle to reconceptualise critical pedagogy so that it includes reference to the lived experiences and struggles for emancipation of differently abled people. This does not only include an ideological shift, but requires significant changes to both theoretical and material aspects of schooling.

Inclusivity requires a commitment of resources of time, money, energy, and supplies: time and energy to alter the ways pedagogy is conceptualized; imagination to create applications of liberatory pedagogies to ability-inclusive educational and community contexts; commitment to a pedagogy that includes students who may wear diapers, who drool, who may be uninhibited, or who will never read and write but who can think and learn. It requires a fundamental shift in the way we plan and enact teacher education, particularly in the ways we prepare teachers to understand, come to know, and teach “all” students

(Gabel, 2002, p. 188)

Further, as argued in chapter 2, developing a dis-ability perspective on radical education means recognising and valuing interdependencies and rhizomatic relations with others in the world. This does not mean abandoning ideas of agency, autonomy and voice, but rather requires us to reconfigure what we mean by those terms and carefully consider how agency, voice and autonomy can be enacted in varying ways through relations of interdependency, which may often require other people’s support (Erevelles, 2011; Gabel, 2002). These ideas are further explored in chapters 6-9.

Another promising alternative to functionalist education comes from what we might broadly call progressive or democratic approaches to education (Fielding & Moss, 2011; e.g. Holt, 1983; Illich, 1971; Neill, 1968). These approaches to education are rooted in an *interpretivist* paradigm of social science, which is grounded within sociology of order and takes a subjective view of knowledge (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). It understands the social world as an

emergent social process, created by voluntaristic individuals and their shared subjective understandings (Goodley, 2011). Darling and Nordenbo (2002) suggest five recurring themes that characterise these approaches to schooling – criticism of traditional education, the nature of knowledge, human nature, democracy, and the development of the whole person.

First, these approaches share with critical pedagogy an antagonism towards models which rest primarily on the transmission of information, usually delivered via school subjects in an authoritarian instructional manner, with no significant place for the active involvement of the students in their own learning. This instructional style is frequently criticised by proponents of progressive and democratic education to operate at the expense of the life of the imagination and the emotional and social growth of the learner. Secondly, the nature of knowledge is not to do with the acceptance of established truths. Rather knowledge is seen as a personal acquisition: it is about personal growth and transformation through achieved experience. In order to do that we need to take seriously a whole range of other factors like the nature of the young person's previous experience, how they make sense of that experience, the kinds of things that intrigue them or interest them, and the sorts of things they wish to explore. Such approaches, it is argued, are not only likely to be more successful they are also more respectful of the student as a person (Darling & Nordenbo, 2002). This notion of knowledge and schooling carries opportunities for students with diverse abilities, who might make sense of the world in ways different than the traditional rational Western thought. Focusing attention on the lived experiences of students and supporting diverse ways of meaning making offers a way out of the pathologisation of difference and into a dialogue that takes into account multiple meanings and ways of thought. These ideas are further explored in chapters 7 and 8 in relation to data from the school research.

However, unlike critical pedagogy which is rooted in a sociology of conflict and pays close attention to the ways knowledge and education work politically in processes of oppression and liberation, democratic and progressive approaches to education work from a sociological stance of order and consensus, seeking to fit education to the needs, interests and experiences of the individual, without necessarily relating those to wider social structures and liberation struggles. This position, while useful for supporting disabled students' participation in schools, risks leaving social practices and discourses of marginalization unchallenged, allowing disabled students some access into the highly unequal social relations of global capitalism (Masschelein & Simons, 2005). This danger of recuperation is explored in further detail in chapter 7.

The third element of Darling and Nordenbo's (2002) classification is a view of the child as naturally curious with an inveterate desire for learning. The role of the schools is to build on and strengthen children's intrinsic interest in learning and lead them to learn for themselves rather than from fear of disapproval or desire for praise. In Summerhill, a democratic school in the UK, there are no exams, attendance in lessons is optional, and play is considered more important than learning (Neill, 1968). The idea is that by abolishing authority and coercion children will initiate learning on their own, and will participate in lessons if and when they wish. The need to counter authoritarian practices and develop ways of supporting students in pursuing their own interests is of core significance to radical inclusive pedagogy, and as such is further explored through the thesis. Yet, it is important to stress here, that unlike the view of progressive and democratic approaches to education which view development and learning as a natural process that occurs *within* the child and that the educator needs to follow with minimal intervention; radical inclusive pedagogy, which adopts a dis-ability perspective and values rhizomatic relations of interdependency, rejects such a view of development, curiosity and motivation as naturally occurring within the individual, positioning them instead as the product of active relations of becoming. Making lessons voluntary does not in itself make them

accessible to all children with different modes of thinking and communication styles, nor does it guarantee that if they wanted to they could initiate play or find people to play with. It is the teachers' job to actively engage with students and find out if they are not attending because they are more interested in playing or because the lesson and teaching methods are inaccessible to them. Radical inclusive pedagogy goes beyond the ideal of allowing children freedom and choice, emphasising the need to engage in relationship that can support students in identifying their needs and desires, and in coalescing with others to make more options available. These ideas are further explored in chapters 6, 7, and 8.

Darling and Nordenbo's (2002) fourth point, democracy, is of particular importance to radical inclusive education. Democracy is understood not so much as a set of procedural arrangements, but rather as a way of learning and living together. Here the emphasis is not just on the child as a learner, but also the child as part of relationships. The school is thus seen as a major site, not only of curricular engagement, but also of communal and ultimately deliberative democratic living. Zoe Readhead- Neil, the current head teacher of Summerhill, describes how students are expected to take a leading and responsible role in the community in an effort to reduce their dependency on adult intervention:

They have to be interested and involved and they have to care about the way the school is going. I'm not talking about a lot of little adults who walk around clutching school books and don't break any school laws- I'm talking about young people with a well balanced approach to life who care enough about the well being of the school community and all its members to be prepared to get their hands dirty and get involved. Summerhill is the place where you can't afford to be passerby with blinkers on who lets things happen because you are too afraid or too apathetic to deal with it. [...] It's a place where if you look around your shoulder you see that there is nobody behind you ready to deal with things for you

(Readhead-Neill, 2006, p. 76)

This practical approach to democracy is concurrent with the idea of prefigurative action (Gordon, 2008), which means "being the change" or implementing within political activism or education the spaces and practices of the desired society (see chapters 5 and 8 for further

discussion of prefigurative action and research). This means that education for democracy must be democratic in its practices, that children can't be educated for democracy within an authoritarian institute. However, although Readhead- Neil (2006) mentions the presence of students with statements of special educational needs in the Summerhill community, she says nothing about how the democratic practices of the school, such as the general assembly meetings, are made accessible to students who process speech in a slower rate, who are sensitive to noise or who communicate mainly in one or two words utterances. It is not clear to what extent all students can meaningfully participate in an assembly of approximately 100 people, and to what degree their views can be heard in the discussion. Having someone behind your shoulders to deal with things for you might indeed be patronising and devoid a student from a state of agency, but lacking the support one needs in order to participate meaningfully might marginalise the voice of disabled students and devoid them of agency even in a system where everyone has an equal vote.

The fifth and final characteristic identified by Darling and Nordenbo (2002) has to do with what they call the '*development of the whole person*' (p.191). What they mean by this term is the rejection of too strong an emphasis on the notion of education as a preparation for adult life, and particularly adult employment. This means elaborating the scope of education beyond the focus on school subjects and "employability skills", to include other important human capacities such as creativity, imagination and the development of friendships and other forms of relationships. Further it means that whilst education is, to some extent, a preparation for something that is yet to come it is, just as importantly, to do with life lived now. Schools therefore, need to be spaces where students can live fulfilling lives and explore their different capacities. This emphasis on play, imagination, emotional wellbeing, and the "living out of childhood"(Neill, 1968) has a major significance for the education of disabled students. As discussed earlier in this chapter, notions of education that view childhood as a preparatory stage

to a life of rationality, employment and economic participation, place disabled people, and particularly those with the label of learning disabilities in an inferior position, not “really” adults with full rights and responsibilities for participation. A philosophy of education and of community, which values different ways of being and appreciates play, imagination, happiness and creativity just as much as it values rationality and financial gain, can offer a real place for students with varying abilities, a place of cooperation rather than competition. Yet, as argued throughout this section, when considering such alternatives to mainstream education, it is vital to start with a dis-ability perspective that does not start with the assumption of individuals as naturally distinct and complete subjects, who, through a more or less universal process of development, would come to occupy the position of independent, self-sufficient and productive adults. Rather, it is about starting with the real life experience of disabled people and their struggles for liberation, placing particular importance on the way dis-abled students want to live their present and future lives, and supporting them in imagining and realising such dreams and aspirations.

CONCLUSION

From its very outset at the end of the 19th century, comprehensive schooling has centred on employment and economic participation, favouring the rational “problem solver” model of the subject which is associated with White, middle class men (Burman, 2006). Views of knowledge as objective and a-historical, and of school failure as an individual pathology, have served to justify the marginalisation and oppression of diverse groups of students including women, students from working classes and students of ethnic minorities. A prominent tool in this exclusion was the construction of disability – an assumed internal and stable trait of the individual, which is viewed in terms of deficit.

Contemporary discourses of inclusive education aim to solve the problem of exclusion by mandating that all students should be schooled under the same roof, with adaptation of teaching style and curriculum to serve students with special educational needs. However, the schools where those students are supposed to be included are run under policies and practices which favour competition, rapid information processing and business entrepreneurship, which are at odds with the abilities and wishes of many students. Freedom is reduced to “consumer choice”, wellbeing to “emotional intelligence”, and good relationships to “people skills”. Educators committed to social justice and inclusion must seek alternative pedagogy that radically challenges mainstream educational practices.

Critical pedagogy and democratic and progressive approaches to education offer many promising values and practices for student empowerment and social transformation. However, very little is written on the practice of such values with students with psychological and physical differences, who might rely on constant support and assistance to maintain their needs and exercise their autonomy. This research is an attempt to theorise radical inclusive pedagogy that does not start with the assumption of neo-liberal school provision, or of “normally abled” students, but reconceptualises education in dialogue with disabled students and activists in the disabled people’s movement.

CHAPTER 4

LEARNING IN MOVEMENTS AND LEARNING FROM MOVEMENTS – THE PLACE OF ACTIVISM IN RADICAL INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

INTRODUCTION

Following the argument that education should be understood as a lifelong process that goes beyond the school (chapter 1), and that it is a political process that should be applied to challenging, rather than reinforcing, injustice, oppression and exclusion (chapter 3), I will explore in this chapter the invaluable role the disabled people's movement (DPM) plays in thinking about radical inclusive pedagogy. This role is twofold; first, the DPM produces a wealth of cultural, historical and theoretical materials that challenge the view of disability as individual deficiency, celebrate and affirm difference, and promote access. Second, if we adopt the Freirean view of education as a process of conscientization, praxis and social transformation (Freire, 1972a, and see chapter 3 for further discussion), then we can see the DPM as a site of radical inclusive pedagogy in itself, as it works to enable disabled people to connect personal experiences with the social structures in which they occur and take action against oppression. As such, studying the political practices and organisational forms of the DPM is studying radical inclusive pedagogy.

I will begin my discussion in this chapter by asking what movements know, and discussing Cox & Flesher Fominaya's (2009) three way analysis of movements knowledge. After demonstrating the unique importance of movement knowledge, the bulk of the discussion will take an indepth look at ideologies and goals, tactics, and organisational

structures in the DPM, asking what we can learn from these about practising radical inclusive pedagogy.

WHAT MOVEMENTS KNOW

Critical pedagogy cannot be separated from political activism; indeed, the practice of critical pedagogy is in itself a form of political activism as it seeks emancipatory education that transgresses oppression. What is often considered the founding text of critical pedagogy – Freire’s (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* – is based on the experiences of the author teaching reading to adults in rural Brazil. It was in this context of impoverishment and marginalisation that he developed his understandings of education as an act of intervening in the social order to transform or perpetuate it, and that therefore teaching is only ethical when used in the struggle for freedom. These ideas have influenced many to develop transgressive educational practices that tackle oppression and marginalisation around class, race, sex and sexual orientation in urban and rural environments around the world (e.g. Giroux, 1981; Greene, 1988; hooks, 1994). Recently, ideas of critical pedagogy have been applied to analyse disability oppression and marginalisation (Erevelles, 2005a; Gabel, 2002; Goodley, 2007a; Ware, 2009). Further, social movements themselves often use methods from critical pedagogy and popular education as both ends and means in their political struggle. Examples of this include the adult education movements that existed in Europe during the late 19th and early 20th century such as The Workers Education Association in England, and the Latin-American popular education movements of the 1980s and 1990s (Hall, 2009). More recently, Mirza & Reay (2000) have identified black supplementary schools in Britain as a social movement, with involvement in education seen as a political tool for refuting oppressive discourses. But even movements that are not focused on education produce knowledge that is

part and parcel of their struggle for social transformation that cannot be ignored when thinking about radical inclusive pedagogy.

Cox & Flesher Fominaya (2009) identify three forms of knowledge created by social movements – *subaltern knowledge*; *knowledge of the system*; and *knowledge about tactics and practices of resistance*. Subaltern knowledge, as opposed to official knowledge, refers to what is known by ‘*the slave, the woman, the colonised, the worker, the oppressed, [the disabled] and so on, which is hidden to – or denied by – the master, the man, the colonist, the employer, or the oppressor*’ (ibid, p.4). It refers to the affirmation of the knowledge, cultural habits, linguistic and artistic forms that are often ignored or considered inferior by ‘hegemonic knowledge’ (Gramsci, 1971), as well as to the personal and collective experiences of oppression and resistance. Social movements bring together and articulate the fragmented ‘tacit knowledge’ of individuals in ways that challenge official understandings of reality (Cox & Flesher Fominaya, 2009).

The DPM had produced a fair share of such subaltern knowledge by posing disability as a social, and hence collective, phenomenon, with a history that goes beyond the experiences of any individual. Examples of such cultural creation and affirmation can be seen in the vast spread of disability arts which include dance, theatre, music, film, cartoons and more. Snyder and Mitchell (2008) discuss the recent phenomenon of disability film festivals that, through their screening of several works in a set time and place, create a complex and polyphonic discourse and a sense of shared cultural experience, albeit one that contains differences and contradictions. Similar developments are happening in the field of disability history, which is to be distinguished from medical history or the history of impairment. This includes autobiographies and life stories by disabled people published in books or magazines, alongside research and theorisation into the history of disability oppression. One telling

example is the Carlisle People First² research group who conducted research into the history of People First groups in the UK, and have recently completed another research project looking into the role and experiences of people with the label of learning disabilities in the Second World War. The transformative power of such history is emphasised by the group as one of their strong motivations for embarking on this research:

We need to share what people have been through. When the groups join together they see how much they have shared similar experiences, it's not just something that happens to a few people but what society has done to people with learning difficulties. [...]

We think that sharing history and experiences gives people a common bond. It makes them feel stronger about fighting for change. If people feel they are alone they will feel they cannot change anything because it is too big to change things alone. People's experiences give confidence to other people to make changes and move on; we have seen this happen in our own group. [...]

Many people have been rejected in their lives and rejected at school. We have been rejected from society and should not be rejected from research, especially when it is about us.

(Townson, Macauley, Harkness, Chapman, & Docherty, 2004, p. 73)

For critical pedagogues committed to fighting disablism oppression, these knowledges provide an invaluable resource. If we are to include disability in Giroux's (2003, p. 10) call for developing '*school practices that recognize how issues related to gender, class, race and sexual orientation can be used as a resource for learning rather than being contained in schools through a systemic pattern of exclusion, punishment and failure*', we must rely on the knowledges and cultures produced by disabled people themselves to affirm their lives and challenge their oppressors.

The second type of movement knowledge discussed by Cox & Flesher Fominaya (2009) is knowledge of the system, an analysis of the forms of oppression and how they operate. This is a form of movement knowledge that is most easily incorporated into academic knowledges and thinking. This is evident with Marxism and feminism being two of

² People First is an organisation run by and for people with learning difficulties to raise awareness of and campaign for the rights of people with learning difficulties and to support self advocacy groups across the UK.

the most productive contributions to the humanities and social sciences in recent decades (Barker & Cox, 2002), as with the more recent development of the discipline of disability studies. While there is much cross-fertilisation between academic theorising and movement theorising, there is also a crucial difference, as movement theorising is always connected with the third type of knowledge, the knowledge of tactics or the effective thing to do (Barker & Cox, 2002). Critical academic theory is usually produced to answer questions in the past tense – how or why things came to be the way they are. Movements knowledge, on the other hand, is aimed at answering the question ‘*what should we do now?*’ and other related questions, such as ‘*who are we?*’, ‘*what do we want?*’, ‘*who is on our side?*’, ‘*who “they” are and what are they doing?*’ (Barker & Cox, 2002, p. 23). These are questions in the present or future tense, which are geared towards action and therefore have different answers at different times. This is knowledge ‘*in movement*’ seeking to simultaneously identify and transform oppressive structures, thus avoiding the structure/agency tension so prevalent in the social theories (Barker & Cox, 2002, p. 22).

It is this constant involvement in praxis that makes movement knowledge and critical pedagogy so inextractably linked. Movement knowledge is constantly developed through and for action. Gramsci (1971) distinguishes between traditional knowledge and unofficial knowledge which is generated through the active struggle of meeting one’s needs. Movements involved in generating such knowledge don’t always know what they want but they are engaged in the process of finding out, through struggle and through solidarity. While some level of political consciousness is necessary for getting involved in activism, the process of struggling as part of a movement often radicalises people, changing their social and personal understandings. It is through involvement in socio-political activism that movements answer the questions of who they are, what they want and who their opponents are. Further, the answers to these questions can change in different stages of the conflict.

Gramsci's analysis of these forms of knowledge ties in with Freire's (1972a) critique of the *banking model* of education and his assertion that education that seeks change and emancipation should be dialogical, with new knowledge constantly and locally being created by both students and teachers. In his last book, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, Friere (1998) stresses that there is no teaching without learning, as the ethical practice of teaching merits an understanding of both teachers and students as in possession of knowledge (though different kind of knowledge) and engaged in an ongoing *process* of finding out how these knowledges relate to each other and to the wider environment. Thus, the question is not whether the knowledge the teacher brings into the classroom is informed by anti-oppressive ideologies such as Marxism, feminism or disability studies, but whether the teacher and students share power in an effort to combine global and local knowledges in transformative ways. As social movements in general, and the DPM in particular, are engaged in such processes of collective reflection, the knowledge they produce about ways of knowing and ways of getting to know, is of relevance to anti-disablist pedagogy just as much as, if not more than, knowledge produced by academically oriented theorists.

The third type of movement knowledge identified by Cox & Flesher Fominaya (2009) is knowledge of tactics and practices of resistance. As movements struggle to create worlds not yet existing they often need to produce their own language, ways of thinking and forms of communication. Feminist and anarchist movements have much practical and theoretical knowledge about creating non-hierarchical spaces and the processes of working in consensus while attending to difference (Gordon, 2008; Lorde, 2007). The DPM has much to teach us about making such spaces accessible and inclusive. This might range from technical and physical adaptations to the redefinition of social relations based on providing the necessary support for people with varied abilities to exercise their autonomy and agency (Waltz, 2007). As this research aims at understanding radical inclusive pedagogy, it seems crucial to broaden

the scope of investigation beyond schools, which are often based on functionalist principles, which marginalise disabled students and define support and participation in a narrow and normative way (see chapter 3). A focus on the knowledge and debates produced by the disabled people's movement can offer a framework that is built on the assumption of capacity and agency and that struggles to enact enabling social relations. While the movement had significant achievements in changing the discourse around disability, many internal debates still persist, and the task of prefiguring in the "here and now" those desired social relations is not finished (and perhaps can never be finished). It is therefore important to learn from the successes as well as from the internal criticism within the movement with regards to the ideologies and practices that can be applied to education.

THE DISABLED PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT: IDEOLOGIES, TACTICS AND STRUCTURES

The term "the disabled people's movement" is often used to refer to the mobilisation and self-organisation of disabled people, mostly in the UK and USA, as distinguished from the activities of charities or philanthropists working for disabled people (Shakespeare, 1993). More recently, Hughes (2009) has distinguished between the DPM, which is based on the social model of disability, and the health movements of what he calls '*biological citizens*', who self organise around impairment and biomedical diagnosis, embrace the medical and scientific knowledge associated with their "condition", and lobby for funding for medical research and treatment. The focus of this chapter, then, is on the DPM as a self organised movement focusing on disability as social rather than medical phenomena, and oriented towards political struggle rather than charity.

Campbell & Oliver (1996) describe the history of the UK movement through interviews with 28 key activists. They identify the onset of the movement in the activities leading to formation of UPIAS (Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation) in the early 1970s. While there were activities by impairment specific groups such as the National League of the Blind and the British Deaf Association prior to that, it was the identification of disability as a form of social oppression that brought about the formation of a wide disabled people's movement that goes beyond organising according to impairment labels. In 1981, which was declared by the UN as the international year of disabled people, the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People (BCODP) was formed as a national body and British representatives were sent to the Disabled People International (DPI) first conference in Singapore. The movement continued to grow in the 1980s and 1990s with more organisations being formed around impairment labels previously excluded from the BCODP (such as learning disabilities and autism) and organisations aimed at different campaigns and tactics (e.g. DAN- the direct action network, and ALLFIE- alliance for inclusive education).

Those decades have also seen the rise of what some European sociologists (Habermas, 1981; Melucci, 1989; Touraine, 1981) call *new social movements* (NSMs), such as the environmental and anti-war movements, second wave feminism and gay and black liberation. One of the most cited explanations of NSMs comes from Habermas, who argues that:

*In the last ten or twenty years, conflicts have developed in advanced Western societies that, in many respects, deviate from the welfare state pattern of institutionalised conflict over distribution. These new conflicts no longer arise in areas of material reproduction. [...] Rather, the new conflicts arise in areas of **cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation.***

(1981, p. 33, emphasis added)

The extent to which NSMs represent a complete departure from the class-based politics of the late 19th and early 20th centuries has been debated amongst sociologists (Chesters & Welsh,

2011; Pichardo, 1997; Shakespeare, 1993), as is the question of whether the DPM can be seen as a new social movement. Campbell & Oliver (1996) find the concept of NSMs helpful for their historical account of the disabled people's movement, its goals and achievements. Shakespeare (1993), on the other hand, is critical of the concept of new social movements and argues for the term "liberation movements" to account for the politics of the DPM, feminism, black liberation and LGBT rights, as distinguished from the environmental and anti-war movements. However, he too identifies the importance of identity and the use of direct action as important characteristics of the DPM, which are both important elements in NSM theory with its stress on broadening the field of politics both in terms of content and in terms of tactics.

The politicising of culture and social life as part of NSMs' campaigns can be explained by the changes in governmentality and production in the post-industrial era (Rose, 1996). Mouffe (1984) identifies the root of this cultural shift in politics in the commodification of social life apparent in neo-liberal Western societies, in which social needs have become dependent on the market for their satisfaction, alongside a process of bureaucratisation resulting from the intervention of the state into all areas of social reproduction. These changes brought with them new forms of resistance which include the diffusion of social conflict into areas beyond class politics and parliament representation and the politicisation of more and more social relations. While NSMs do not completely abandon demands for redistribution of wealth and material resources, they are more notable for their demands for a "difference friendly" society, seeking social recognition of the distinctive perspectives of minority groups, as well as of gender difference (Fraser, 2001). The changing nature of political conflicts has also brought with it a change in tactics and structures of organisation that aim to amend the failure of neo-liberal democracies in dealing with social

inequalities and oppression, and focus on direct action and grassroots activities (Pichardo, 1997).

In what follows, I will explore main debates in the UK disabled people's movement using understandings from NSM theory, focusing on the ideological emphasis on autonomy and identity and its relation to tactics and structures employed by the movement. These debates, I argue, have direct bearing on the values and practices of radical inclusive pedagogy, as the route for emancipation must be based on values and ideas offered by the oppressed rather than the oppressors, with practices sensitive to the needs and cultures of those groups.

IDEOLOGY AND GOALS:

In his review of NSMs literature, Pichardo (1997) stresses that the main difference between the new social movements and the class based politics of the industrial era is the focus on issues of quality of life alongside a criticism of structures of representative democracies that limit citizens' input and participation in governance. Taken together, the values of NSMs centre on autonomy and identity. Indeed, the notion of autonomy and control over one's life represents one of the main pillars of the DPM (Reindal, 1999). Campbell & Oliver (1996) identify the onset of the movement in the activities of Paul Hunt, a resident in a Leonard Cheshire home who worked (alongside others such as Vic Finkelstein) to organise disabled people living in institutions to take control over their lives. This originally took the form of organising the residents to challenge management and fight for an active role in running their own institution through the formation of residents committees. When UPIAS was formed, it took as its main goal the replacement of all segregated facilities for disabled people with

arrangements that will enable full participation in society, while stressing the demand that disabled people currently living in institutions must exercise full control over their lives

The Union of the Physically Impaired regards the neglected issues of institutions as of crucial importance in the field of disability. We therefore place great emphasis on supporting the struggles of residents in existing residential institutions for better conditions, for full control over their personal affairs, and for a democratic say in the management of their Home, Centre or Unit. The Union strongly opposes all attempts by the authorities to impose restrictions on visiting; to fix times for getting into and out of bed; to limit residents' freedom to come in and go out when they wish; to enforce medical and nursing opinions, or to transfer residents to other institutions against their will.

(UPIAS, 1976, n.p)

Ideas of control and autonomy play a major role in the politics of the DPM, going beyond the emphasis on independent living. The distinction between organisations *of* disabled people and organisations *for* disabled people is stressed again and again by interviewees in Campbell & Oliver (1996) as a key factor in the development of the movement. Charities, who claim to work for the interests of disabled people, but who are neither accountable to them nor representative of them, are heavily criticised by disability activists for several reasons. Firstly, they represent a paternalistic view of disabled people who are seen as not being in charge of their own lives. Secondly, they tend to promote a passive and tragic image of disabled people, in order to generate public support and maintain the idea that disabled people need someone else (i.e. charities) to look after them, thus reinforcing negative stereotypes in public opinion (Finger, 1994; Johnson, 1994). It was for this reason that the criteria for membership in the BCODP was restricted to organisations *of* disabled people, and insisted on its independence from charities (Oliver & Barnes, 2006).

The second significant characteristic of NSMs is a focus on identity (Pichardo, 1997). The notion that “the personal is the political” has led to ‘*the unprecedented politicisation of previously non-political terrains*’ (ibid, p.414). In this sense, the original UPIAS distinction between disability and impairment, coupled with the assertion that disability is caused by

social oppression (UPIAS, 1975), is a politicisation of what was previously considered private or personal. Its transformative power lies not only in identifying goals for political struggles (e.g. independent living and anti-discrimination legislation), but also in the affirmation of disabled people as subjects, and in particular as political subjects. As Liz Crow writes:

For years now this social model of disability has enabled me to confront, survive and even surmount countless situations of exclusion and discrimination. It has been my mainstay, as it has been for the wider disabled people's movement. It has enabled a vision of ourselves free from the constraints of disability (oppression) and provided a direction for our commitment to social change. It has played a central role in promoting disabled people's individual self-worth, collective identity and political organisation.

(1996, p. 55)

Shakespeare (1993) discusses disability identity as a form of political action, similar to other liberation movements such as the LGBT or Black people's movement. In these cases, identity in its political sense means identifying as part of an oppressed group and cultural minority.

This process of identification seems to reverse what William Ryan called "blaming the victim" because it is about converting private woes into public wrongs. It is about 'the victim' refusing that label, and instead focusing attention on the structural causes of victimisation. It is about the subversion of stigma: taking a negative appellation and converting it into a badge of pride.

(ibid, p.253)

In this sense, the politics of identity are closely connected even to the most materialistic politics, as identifying as part of an oppressed group is a necessary step towards self-organising to effect social change.

However, the role of personal experience and identity as political tools has been heavily argued amongst activists. All sections of the movement agree that *personal* experience is important, making disabled people experts on their own lives; and that there is an urgent need to identify and challenge disabling social structures through *collective*

reflection and action. They differ, however, in considering which aspects of personal experiences should constitute grounds for political action. The more materialist sections of the movement have insisted that discussing individual experiences of impairment and embodiment dilutes the political potency of the DPM by drawing attention away from the social barriers that disabled people face as a collectivity and by undermining the struggle for a unified disability identity (e.g. Finkelstein, 2007; Oliver, 2004). However, many feminist, lesbian and black disability activists have criticised the exclusion of certain personal experiences as reifying the “whiteness”, “maleness” and “middle-classness” of the BCODP, and as falsely identifying the disability experience with that of an elite group (Micheline Mason, cited in Campbell & Oliver, 1996). Further, the exclusion of impairment and bodily experiences has left many disabled people feeling excluded within their own movement, as it classes some experiences as the result of oppression while other are left out as “personal” and insignificant. Wade (1994) describes how silence and shame around bodily experience prevents certain needs from being discussed in the political arena:

To put it bluntly- because this need is as blunt as it gets- we must have our asses cleaned after we shit and pee. Or we have others’ fingers inserted in our rectums to assist shitting. [...] These blunt, crude realities. Our daily lives. Yeah, I know it ain’t exactly sexy. Not the images we are trying to get across these days. [...] We have great shame about this need. This need that only babies and the “broken” have.

*And because this shame is so deep, and because it is perpetuated even by our own movement when we emphasize only the able-ness of our beings, we buy into this language that lies about us and becomes part of our movement, and our movement dances over the surface of our real lives by spending all its precious energy on bus access while millions of us don’t get out of bed or get by with inadequate personal care. [...] If we are ever to feel at home in the world and in ourselves than we must say these things out loud [...] **How can we assert a right (for personal care) if we are too ashamed of the need to state it openly?***

(pp.92-3, emphasis added)

Whilst arguments persist, understandings of disability as social oppression and simultaneously as identity are mutually constitutive (Galvin, 2003). The identification of disability as a form of social oppression, alongside the assertion that it is disabled people

themselves who should be in control of their own lives and political struggles, have opened the possibility for positive disability identity. The empowerment involved in constituting disabled people as autonomous subjects through political action serves to tackle both external and internal oppression. Including more and more aspects of experience in public debates and analysis of the movement allows for larger numbers of disabled people to part take in the benefits of collective self-organisation, effecting change on greater aspects of their lives. Simultaneously, material changes in the “real world” such as independent living, inclusive education and removing barriers to employment allow more disabled people to access the resources needed to participate fully in society, including taking part in political and cultural spheres.

When struggling for radical inclusive pedagogy, the ideological stress on identity and autonomy takes an interesting turn. The stress on collective organisation by the disabled for the disabled might seem at odds with the notion of individually including disabled students in mainstream schools, where they are often singled out for their support needs which are usually framed as “special” needs. This is sometimes experienced as social isolation (Shah, 2007) and might deprive disabled students of the opportunity to develop the sense of pride and affirmation described by many activists in the disabled people’s movement as the outcome of their collective actions. This, however, should not be interpreted as a call for segregated schooling! Much of the emancipatory power of the politics of the disabled people’s movement lies in the simultaneous commitment to both collective identity *and autonomy*. Disabled people’s *self*-organisation, with the insistence on being separate from their oppressors, is not the same as externally imposed segregation. A key task for inclusive education is therefore to create school communities that will allow disabled students to be part of their local community while simultaneously benefiting from affirmative disability

identity and culture (and having the autonomy and power to also reject such identities if they so wish). In chapter 7 I explore these issues in depth.

TACTICS:

One of the major characteristics of NSMs is their self-reflexivity – the constant questioning of what is being done (Pichardo, 1997). This leads to the conscious choice of structure and tactics that mirror their ideological orientation and often aimed at prefiguring in the “here and now” those forms of social relations that are the ultimate goal (Gordon, 2008; Pichardo, 1997). As NSMs expand the terrain of the political to include many more forms of social relations, they also employ tactics that go beyond parliamentary politics or worker strikes. These may include direct actions, consciousness raising groups, and various DIY (Do It Yourself) projects such as autonomous social centres or self organised publishing groups (Gordon, 2008). This anti-institutional tactical orientation is consistent with the belief in the unrepresentative nature of modern democracies and the ideological stress on autonomy. This does not mean that NSMs avoid parliamentary politics nor avoid becoming institutionalised themselves (Pichardo, 1997). Rather, it means that diverse forms of action are employed, and that organisational and tactical debates are seen as carrying much ideological significance.

The understanding of tactics as an embodiment of ideology makes them relevant for radical inclusive pedagogy that seeks to dismantle disablist oppression. As argued earlier, education is not about transferring “objective” knowledge from teacher to learner, but a practice in which the forms of action are just as important as the content of the discussion. Learning from the DPM about the transformative potential and the possible exclusionary aspects of forms of action is therefore of high significance for thinking about education. The implications of the notion of *prefigurative action* for research and education are discussed in

depth in chapter 8. In what follows I will discuss three main tactics employed by the DPM – consciousness raising, direct action and lobbying.

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

As discussed previously, the foundation of the disabled people's movement lies in the understanding of disability as a form of oppression and the creation of the social model of disability. This revolutionary move that set the basis for the formation of a political disabled people's movement was the product of prolonged group reflections, connecting personal experiences with socio-political analysis. Judy Hunt (2001) believes that the 18 months spent by UPIAS members on forming their analysis before taking any political action were crucial for it becoming one of the vanguard organisations within the DPM. Several of the original members of UPIAS interviewed in Campbell & Oliver (1996) mentioned the extensive network of correspondence that served its members to form their analysis:

The Union, at the time, was very committed to the political requirement facing disabled people, which was to produce a rigorous, dependable explanation of disability in social terms that enabled society itself to be seen as the focal point of disabled people's attention.

(Ken and Maggie Davis, cited in Oliver & Campbell, 1996, p.66)

However, the importance of consciousness raising as a major political tool did not end with the publication of UPIAS (1976) *Fundamental Principles of Disability*. As Freire (1972) stresses, the process of conscientization involves integrating one's experience with social analysis through collective reflection. It is not a process in which social models and theories are externally imposed on a person or group, but rather an on-going dialogical process that brings about changes to the individual's consciousness as well as to the social understandings. While UPIAS was sometimes criticised for its internal discipline and the demand to ground arguments within a rigorous Marxist analysis (Campbell & Oliver, 1996), many other organisations of disabled people have gone on elaborating and developing

disability politics and analysis through meetings, writing and publications (one example of this is the *Coalition* magazine published by the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People), connecting more aspects of personal experience with disability politics. As

Micheline Mason describes:

LNDP [Liberation Network of Disabled People] was a woman-led organisation and it embodied female values, although it included men right from the beginning. Through the support groups, and later through the magazine 'In from the Cold', we began to challenge the traditional view of disability as an individual health problem. We challenged the effects of 'internalised oppression', recognised by all marginal groups as the major 'tool' of the oppressive society; we challenged the conditioned hatred of ourselves and each other as disabled people; we challenged the desire to assimilate; we challenged the denial of 'hidden' disabilities; we challenged the fierce competition between us; we challenged the inability to champion, appreciate and support each other's achievements or thinking (especially when it challenges our own); we challenged the lack of information and understanding about the issues of other oppressed people.

(cited in Campbell & Oliver, 1996, p. 69)

Changing the understanding of disability is one of the greater successes of the disabled people's movement, as Richard Wood, former director of the BCODP testifies:

The definition of issues and the identity of ourselves as people distinct in society, in a unique position in society, has got to be the key success. [...] discovering our identity as disabled people is very very important. It's still important today, otherwise people won't value themselves. I think this is probably the biggest success the movement has been able to point to. It is our movement, nobody else owns it. We know who we are. I think we are fairly clear about where we are going and why are we going there.

(cited in Campbell & Oliver, 1996, p. 124)

Thus we can see that the process of consciousness raising, *conscientization* in the words of Freire (1972), is transformative in two ways; first, by connecting personal experience with social structures it allows disabled people to identify positively and counter (some of) the effects of internalised oppression. Second, through the process of collective reflection and deliberation political goals and demands are identified and enacted upon, thus

leading to social transformation. And indeed, campaigns by the DPM had led to changes in legislation and policy (discussed further in the *Lobbying* section of this chapter), as well as to changes in terminology and practices of charities (Campbell & Oliver, 1996). However, many activists are suspicious of such language changes, which, without real accountability to disabled people's organisations might represent the same practices under new discourse (Campbell & Oliver, 1996; Oliver & Barnes, 2006). This is one of the reasons why the process of consciousness raising through collective reflection can never be done with. Liberation movements, as well as educators, need to constantly engage with the intricate connections between the personal and the political in changing social relations, in order to fight against the repetition of oppression and exclusion under new forms, in society at large but also amongst their own ranks.

DIRECT ACTION AND DIY POLITICS

Another important aspect of NSMs tactics is the DIY (do it yourself) approach to doing politics, mirrored by disinterest in operating through established political channels or in building political power within the state (Pichardo, 1997). This takes place within what is often framed as a dual strategy of confrontation to delegitimize the current system, and grassroots alternative-building from below (Gordon, 2008). Both strategies have been intensively employed by the DPM as complementary ways of achieving its goals on the individual and social level.

Campbell & Oliver (1996) describe the 1988 action in Elephant and Castle in London as a turning point in the politics of the movement, when some disabled people decided they are no longer willing to be nice in airing public grievances. The march to the DHSS (department of health and social security) offices has turned into a road blockade after no official representative had agreed to meet with the protesters. In that, disabled people took

power, making themselves heard and refusing to be ignored or confined to a passive and grateful recipient role. This was followed by numerous direct actions, particularly around accessible public transport and Stop Telethon actions (Shakespeare, 1993), and later by the creation of DAN (disabled people's Direct Action Network), a group dedicated to organising and supporting the organisation of direct actions. Shakespeare (1993) stresses that the importance of direct action goes beyond its instrumental value in securing certain changes and reforms; as a form of action it is significant in prefiguring the disabled people's movement's claims to autonomy, independence and power. It is a way of focusing attention on disabling institutions and environments, such as the inaccessible transport or the degrading media representation. It is an overtly political act, showing that disability is a matter of social relations, not medical conditions. It is a chance for disabled people to '*do it for themselves*' without the help or participation of non-disabled professionals. It is an empowering process for participants, which inspires people to take action and creates a sense of solidarity, purpose and collective strength which is essential for the development of the movement (ibid, pp. 251-252). A similar analysis of direct action as a tool for empowerment offered by of the participants in the current research is discussed in chapter 9.

However, the use of direct action is not always without problems. While it does not require professional or specialised knowledge and thus can be considered an inclusive tactic, it is not easily performable by any disabled person. Some physical impairments might prevent people from taking part in different forms of direct action, especially if they include prolonged stay outdoors. Both Wendell (1996) in the US and Crow (1996) in the UK speak of the difficulties of participating in political activism that doesn't take account of fatigue and lack of energy experienced by many disabled people. Unfortunately this happens not only in feminist organisations, but also within the DPM itself. This phenomenon is attributed to the movement's desire to promote the image of the "able-disabled" – the strong and assertive

activist who is determined to “smash down” oppression – as an alternative to the mainstream image of disabled people as vulnerable and worthy of pity (Crow, 1996; Wade, 1994).

However, by promoting these “macho” images of disability activists the movement risks alienating and excluding disabled people who do not conform to such ideals of strength and bodily control.

Further, direct action is often confrontational and illegal, which might prove problematic for people who shy from confrontation due to anxieties or sensory issues (Graby & Greenstein, 2011). This, however, should not be confused with lack of political commitment or radical thought. As Emily, an autistic activist in the environmental movement explains:

I have a very non-confrontational style and tend to feel stuck between radical spaces that are more confrontational than I feel comfortable being and more 'mainstream-liberal' spaces that are less radical than I want to be and sometimes overly hierarchical. I walk an uneasy line in the middle, never quite fitting any space entirely comfortably, always being different in any space... The uncomfortableness with confrontation/ getting into trouble (I see as probably an aspie thing about following 'the rules') is quite distinct from my political views on non-violence which actually encourage creative non-violent confrontation.

(cited in Graby & Greenstein, 2011)

Moreover, it is not only impairment that limits activists’ ability to participate in direct action. Disability – the social oppression imposed on people with impairments – is a major contributor too. For disabled people, the risk of legal penalties and retribution if participating in illegal activity is much higher than for the non-disabled. Footage from actions can be used as “incriminating” evidence leading to decrease in benefits, as a person is seen as “able” enough to protest and therefore not “disabled” enough to fit the criteria for benefits. This might leave disabled activists unable to sustain themselves economically and pay for necessary support. For people with a history in the psychiatric system being arrested might lead to being sectioned for a psychiatric evaluation, and possibly for a longer period. Goodley

(2001) describes how for people with the label of learning disabilities any expression of anger or resistance is interpreted by care staff and health professional as a pathological behaviour stemming from their “biological” condition rather than from external infuriating circumstances. This prejudice can also lead to the identification of political protest and confrontation as a sign of “mental illness” or “non-adaptive behaviour” which might justify medical intervention. Such forms of socially constructed vulnerability and disempowerment make many disabled people reluctant to take part in direct actions.

The other hand of direct action is grass roots alternative building, or constructive direct action (Gordon, 2008). This includes disabled people’s self-organisation to provide services and support to each other. One powerful example of self-organised service provision is the centres for independent living (CIL), which originated and flourished in the US, but to some extent are also present in Britain. The first CIL was set up by severely disabled students in Berkeley, California, in 1972, and has since been emulated across the States. Although there are local variations in how CILs are organised, generally they are based on the ideas originating in Berkeley. Disabled people themselves run services relevant to their self-determined needs; people with all kinds of impairments are involved; and services and facilities help disabled individuals achieve their own life-choices (Davis, 1984).

Another example of grass roots alternatives is self-advocacy organisations such as People First, which is the only organisation in the UK run and controlled by people with the label of learning disabilities (Aspis, 1997; Goodley, 2000). That in itself is an impressive achievement, as it was not without a battle that the Charity Commissioners allowed for people with the label of learning disabilities to become trustees (Campbell & Oliver, 1996). People First runs self advocacy groups which inform people of their rights and encourages them to stand up against oppression (Aspis, 1997). The unique nature of the self-run

organisation is that it provides members with a context that assumes capability rather than inability, allowing them to re-author their lives stories and experiences, which they often frame in terms of resistance and survival rather than tragedy and victimhood (Goodley, 2000, 2001; Roets, 2008).

The importance of these self-organised initiatives is in their ability to prefigure in the here and now concepts of the desired society. It offers a break from current social relations that were framed through the modern professionalised discourse on disability (Davis, 1984), which is not easily changeable as long as services are controlled by non-disabled professionals whose entire process of education and training was founded upon. Micheline Mason stresses the importance of building alternatives that are not confined to reforming state provision in a capitalist society, but that will prefigure social relations that will allow disabled people a place in a post-capitalist world:

The right to take part in society as equals is meaningless whilst the levels of inequality between non-disabled people are so vast and growing. [...] I am still longing for a forum in which disabled people take leadership over world-wide issues, where we can think, feel and learn together. I am bored with the victim role. I want to model a better way of relating to each other than that offered by the non-disabled world, and I want to have new kinds of organisational forms before the collapse of capitalism makes everyday survival too difficult and time-consuming to organise ourselves.

(cited in Campbell & Oliver, 1996, p. 165)

Mason's call for disabled people to self-organise and build alternatives for global capitalism is the other side of Waltz's (2007) criticism of the anarchist movement for its failure to incorporate disability issues in self organised projects. She argues that while anarchists (and other radical movements, such as environmental activism, not directly addressed by Waltz) are quick to point out the connections between disability and capitalism (e.g. impairments caused by environmental pollution, industrial life, war and stress) they fail to envision an anti-authoritarian model of health and care, and import mainstream concepts of disability into

radical contexts. She calls upon the anarchist movement to develop models for the support and inclusion of disabled people in the movement itself and in its visions of the future.

Autonomously organised projects, therefore, not only provide alternatives to the current system, but are highly significant in the struggle for wider revolution, as they provide guidance and practice for inclusive anti-capitalist social relations. However, organising locally and autonomously might seem insufficient when disabling barriers are continuously produced and reproduced by powerful bodies such as state authorities and global market demands. Davis (1984) points to this problem in his account of the discussions preceding the establishment of the Derbyshire Centre for Integrated Living. Instead of the US model of independent living centres organised separately from institutional provision, the Derbyshire Centre for Integrated Living was based on a model of cooperation with Local Authority provision. This, they believed, would lead to a reduction of paternalistic services, freeing up resources for services designed and managed in collaboration with the local disabled people's organisation. The gloomy implications of self-organised disability services being run under the "free market" competition logic can be seen in the recent takeover of DIAL (a national information and advice network run by local disabled people's organisation) by SCOPE, which is now under the threat of closure. It is therefore necessary to simultaneously take action *against* oppressive structures and relations on all levels (including authoritarianism and global capitalism), and build alternatives that will prefigure the desired society in the here and now.

The activist debates around the importance and limitations of direct actions bear great relevance for radical inclusive pedagogy. The importance of developing prefigurative practices which embody many aspects of the desired social change are just as relevant in schooling and in research as they are for political activism (see chapter 8 for further

discussion). This includes the active taking of power and control by the oppressed group. However, as the debates around the exclusionary aspects of direct action indicate, inclusion does not just mean demanding power and control, but also requires a radical shift in our understanding of the different ways in which people take power and control over their lives. While disabled students should not be left out of the project of “development” that allows a move towards greater independence and active control over one’s life, varied forms of interdependency and support need to be taken into account. This should not be seen as a “special” need or adjustment, a second best option for those who can’t satisfy modern assumptions of independency and power, but as diverse routes to autonomy that coexist in the lives of every person, currently disabled or not.

Further, the on-going fight against oppressive structures while building alternatives for them is critical for planning radical inclusive education. Schools are seen as a preparation for adult life, which is too often framed as the ability to earn money in a global capitalist market (Burman, 2006; Fielding & Moss, 2010). In chapter 3 I have explored how this focus has led to the exclusion of disabled students in schools and pointed to the need of developing other understandings of schooling. However, changing the values and practices of specific schools without tackling the exclusionary effects global capitalism has on the majority of people is still failing disabled students/people. It is therefore the task of all parties interested in inclusive education to fight against oppression on the global level, beyond the grounds of one specific school while simultaneously building local alternatives.

LOBBYING

While new social movements are characterised by their non-parliamentary tactics, this does not mean that they refrain completely from lobbying or other parliamentary forms of doing politics (Pichardo, 1997). However, with an ideological framework that stresses autonomy

and self organisation combined with a commitment to a fundamental change in social relations, there is much ambivalence regarding the role of lobbying for legislative rights. As Oliver & Barnes (2006) put it:

To get too close to the Government is to risk incorporation and end up carrying out their proposals rather than ours. To move too far away is to risk marginalisation and eventual demise. To collaborate too eagerly with the organizations for disabled people risks having our agendas taken over by them, and having them presented both to us and to politicians as theirs. To remain aloof risks appearing unrealistic and/or unreasonable, and denies possible access to much needed resources.

(ibid, n.p.)

A major example of lobbying was the massive campaign taken on by the DPM in the 1990s to promote anti-discrimination legalisation (Finkelstein, 2007; Oliver & Barnes, 2006), which resulted in the passage of the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995 (now under the Equality Act, 2010). The campaign was run in co-operation with charities that were also promoting such legislation (Oliver & Barnes, 2006), and required channelling of energy away from grassroots work to parliamentary lobbying (Finkelstein, 2007). In this, the movement has succeeded in converting all of the political parties and the vast majority of voluntary organisations to the idea of legislation to outlaw disability discrimination. This is particularly impressive when remembering that 15 years earlier the majority of voluntary organisations for the disabled were outright opposed to this idea (Campbell & Oliver, 1996). Another legislation that was implemented after political pressure from the disabled people's movement was the legislation of Direct Payments in 1996 which enabled disabled people to employ their own assistance staff.

For many people these developments signalled the coming of age of disability politics and that future progress would ensure that disabled people would finally achieve their goal of full inclusion into mainstream society (Oliver & Barnes, 2006). After all, it was the original

social model idea that it is *society* that needs to change and that what disabled people need is *rights* not charity. If the government is finally taking responsibility for removing disabling barriers rather than leaving it to the voluntary sector, why insist on organising separately rather than cooperating with government?

However, 10 years later, some key disability activists such as Oliver & Barnes (2006) and Vic Finkelstein (2007), have identified the “rights based approach” as a significant factor in the demise of the DPM, and as a setback to achieving true social integration. Oliver & Barnes (2006) argue that having legal rights does not mean that they will be enforced and even if they are, that enforcement will achieve the desired aims. Finkelstein (2007) is even more critical, arguing that

in the ‘rights’ approach parliament grants legal rights to those it defines as ‘disabled’. The focus is on identifying characteristics of the individual, rather than the nature of society, and then making selected ‘concessions’ to those so defined

(p.3)

Further, he argues, conceding control to the government risks disabled people having their support needs completely determined by the nondisabled professionals. On the other hand, grassroots user generated support services create

opportunities for harmonising user and provider needs. [...]The allying of service development with community-based aspirations requires substantially different worker attitudes and guidelines for providing professional assistance

(ibid, p.9).

This is particularly worrying when rights are defined in the context of neoliberal global market ideology. When freedom is defined as consumer choice and the ability to exercise a right is contingent upon one’s ability to buy services, the majority of disabled people (and indeed, the majority of people) will remain marginalised. A narrow rights agenda that strives

not to replace global capitalism but rather to maximise participation in it is dangerous for disabled people as individuals and to the possibility of a strong disabled people's movement.

As Finkelstein puts it:

That's what 'independence' means in the capitalist system. It's all about 'efficient' service provision (meaning who has the cheapest product to sell). The market has no need for non-productive groups such as 'political' organisations of disabled people. [...] After all we're all the same now – 'independent' competitors in the same service providers' market. In short, the disability movement is no longer setting the agenda for our emancipation – instead, we've become prisoners of a market that sets the agenda for our movement!

(Finkelstein, 2007, pp. 12–13)

From the early 1970s until today the movement has shifted between oppositional anti-institutional politics and tactics of cooperation with governments, local authorities and other organisations for the disabled to produce better services and remove disabling barriers. Of course, the movement does not speak with one voice, and different organisations and activists choose different paths of political intervention, often employing tactics of cooperation and opposition side by side. Yet it seems that, ironically, as the government has employed more of the language of the social model, the size and influence of the disabled people's movement, as autonomously organised and directly accountable to disabled people, has declined (Oliver & Barnes, 2006). During the 70s and 80s much of the tactics and the organisational structures embodied the ideals of autonomy through self-organisation and the proud reclamation of disability identity as active and politically potent through collective reflection and action. While the overall goal was always to achieve full participation in society, the early years were characterised by a stress on disabled people separately organising to define integration and participation on their own terms.

The movement's success in producing a different discourse on disability was apparent in government and charities incorporating some of this discourse into their own policies. This

made the insistence on self-definition seem redundant to many disabled people, believing that it is better now to focus on politics of integration where disabled people can take an equal role to their non-disabled peers, working to improve the system from within. However, conceding over all control to the government, especially when the government is committed to neo-liberal global market ideology, means that the rights disabled people have gained are translated into a right to compete against each other and against other firms and corporations.

The tensions between politics of opposition and integration, working with the government or as an alternative to it, are shifting with the changes of governments and political and economic relations. It is interesting to see how the with enactment of the Coalition government spending cuts agenda, the DPM as a self-organised movement had been revitalised, and new organisations and networks (such as *Disabled People Against the Cuts*) have been created. With regards to inclusive education, the *Support and Aspiration* green paper (Department for Education, 2011) sets out the government's commitment to prevent the closure of special schools and allow parents more choice over where their disabled children are educated. Drawing on the government's agenda to decrease LEAs control over school provision and create more "free competition" and "consumer choice" through privately owned academies and free schools (Department for Education, 2010), the green paper states that

By encouraging the setting up of special Free Schools we will make it less likely that existing special schools will close and create the opportunity for voluntary organisations and parents groups to establish new schools

(Department for Education, 2011, p. 3)

This could be taken up by activist groups seeking to promote alternatives to the '*repetitions of exclusion*' so often practised in mainstream schools (Allan, 2008, p. 65), in a similar manner to the strategy described by Davis (1984) of taking over services from local authority

provision to create the Derbyshire Centre of Integrated Living. Yet, as Finkelstein (2007) reminds us, taking over specific local provision, when the entire logic of the system is based on the principles of global market economy, is limited and may be dangerous. A multiplicity of tactics is needed when struggling for radical inclusive pedagogy, that simultaneously works to provide locally contextualised alternatives and challenge the wider social, political and economic relations.

STRUCTURES OF ORGANISATION

The social model of disability identifies the origin of disability in social structures that do not take into account the needs of people with different embodiments and cognitive styles. While the movement struggles to remove those barriers in wider society, its very forms of organisation can provide practical guidelines and inspiration for the creation of spaces that are inclusive of disabled people from their inception and not as an afterthought. For example, GMCDP (Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People) makes its publications available in several formats including large print and audio tapes. For its annual general meeting GMCDP hires its own sign language interpreters and personal assistants to allow for disabled people who cannot afford to hire their own assistants to participate in the meeting. Speakers are also encouraged to speak slowly and clearly and input from participants is gathered in different forms including speaking, writing, drawing etc. (GMCDP, 2004).

Another telling example of making spaces inclusive is Sinclair's (2010) discussion of autistic self-organised spaces (such as Autreat in the US and Autscape in the UK) which provide a place for '*being autistic together*'. Contrary to the widespread views of autistic people as anti-social and withdrawn, many autistic people find connection and community to be an important aspect of their lives, if organised in a non-intrusive way that is sensitive to

particular needs and cognitive styles. This includes the need to accommodate for a wide variety of sensory sensitivities by providing quiet spaces for people to withdraw to, and an incorporation of a badge system indicating whether people want to be spoken to or not. Together, such accommodations allow autistic participants to control and moderate the amount of stress they are under, making it unnecessary to be constantly on the defence from sensory overload and allowing for openness and communication. Further, Sinclair describes how social rules in autistic spaces are made explicit and always come complete with reason and explanation rather than being arbitrarily or implicitly imposed. This is done to suit the cognitive styles of people who, when not informed about the logic behind such rules, either follow rules literally or oppose them all together. However, this is not just a technical change but carries with it a redefinition of social roles and power relations, in a manner similar to non-hierarchical organisation in other social movements (Graby & Greenstein, 2011). Thus, the disabled people's movement provides an important source of "how to" knowledge about inclusion, that is applicable to other settings with inclusive aspirations, be it in a primarily political, educational, or social contexts. I return to this point in chapter 7.

However, even within the DPM itself there are still arguments about structures and attitudes that exclude some impairment groups, such as people with the label of learning disabilities (Chappell, Goodley, & Lawthom, 2001). As the movement was started by UPIAS – the union of the *physically* impaired against segregation – its original focus and language were oriented towards creating inclusive physical environments, leaving out questions related to cognitive access, as Aspis (cited in Campbell & Oliver, 1996, p.97) argues –

People with learning difficulties face discrimination in the disability movement. People without learning difficulties use the medical model when dealing with us. We are always asked to talk about advocacy and our impairments as though our barriers aren't disabling in the same way as disabled people without learning difficulties. We want concentration on our access needs in the mainstream disability movement.

Aspis goes on to claim that the lack of involvement of people with the label of learning disabilities in the larger disabled people's movement comes from prejudice, with disabled activists fearing the label of "stupid" or "thick" if they work to include people with the label of learning disabilities in key roles in the movement (Campbell & Oliver, 1996). However, the People First movement has worked to create spaces where people are supported to learn and speak for themselves, thus removing some of the barriers that prevent them from taking power over their lives (Aspis, 1997; Townson et al, 2004, and see also Roets, 2008 for description of the movement in Belgium).

Other arguments have revolved around the importance of including other forms of oppression within the movement's politics, such as internalised oppression, sexism, racism and hetro-sexism. These have included arguments about what forms of discrimination are being tackled by the movement alongside criticism of the lack of involvement and influence of disabled people who experience simultaneous oppressions (see chapter 7 in Campbell & Oliver, 1996). However, I believe that the presence of such heated arguments represents the strength rather than the weakness of the movement, as it indicates a commitment to an on-going process of liberation in the "real world" as well as within the movement itself. As the process of inclusion and liberation can never be done with (Chomsky, 1986), it is the commitment to engaging in anti-oppressive discussions that is a key to the creation of inclusive environments. Learning from on-going discussions within social movements in general and within the disabled people's movement in particular can advance the creation of radical inclusive spaces in education, but these ideas always need to be interpreted locally in relation to the specific people who comprise the group, their social relations and the wider socio-political environment within which they work.

CONCLUSION:

Throughout this chapter I have demonstrated that education and political action are inextricably linked. Freire's (1972a) understanding of education as a process of conscientization and praxis that should lead on a collective level to social transformation has made critical pedagogy a major resource for activism (Hall, 2009), especially in the context of new social movements. This has to do with the widening understanding of politics that encompasses struggles for cultural representation and the power to define and produce meanings, as well as issues of production and distribution (Habermas, 1981; Mouffe, 1984; Pichardo, 1997). Further, as discussed in chapter 1, developing radical inclusive pedagogy that starts from a dis-ability perspective means understanding education '*in its broadest sense*' (Fielding & Moss, 2011, p. 46), as a relational, political and cognitive process of becoming a member of society while acquiring increasing degree of (relational) autonomy and the ability to affect change in one's life. This means that political activism can be seen as another pedagogical site alongside schools, broadening the understanding of education beyond the narrow focus on preparation for future employment (Darling & Nordenbo, 2002; Fielding & Moss, 2011). The knowledge and experience produced by activists in the DPM is, therefore, of major significance to the development of radical inclusive pedagogy.

Another argument developed in this chapter is that the DPM is not only a site of radical inclusive pedagogy in itself, but also that major debates within the movement can support the struggle for developing radical inclusive pedagogy within schools. As is clearly evident from the history of the DPM, this does not only mean campaigning for change in governmental policies and legislation about placements and services, but a wider change in the structures and values of education (Slee, 1997), and in the power relations between students, teachers, families and local authorities (Gabel, 2002). This is not to say that fighting

governmental policies is not an important aspect of activism, but rather this means a simultaneous fight to dismantle oppressive structure alongside the active creation of alternative practices and forms of organisation within the educational system. This idea is nicely captured by the anti-globalisation movement's slogan '*think global act local*' which points to the necessity to build localised and self-organised solutions, while connecting these activities with global ideologies of liberation through the practice of solidarity and collective reflection. The praxis of the DPM in its effort to prefiguratively organise inclusively and enact change through a dual strategy of dismantling oppression and building alternatives can inspire models of radical inclusive schools that share such commitments.

Making schools inclusive requires a set of technical arrangements to tackle barriers to physical and cognitive accessibility and providing for diverse care needs. Many organisations and activists in the DPM possess practical knowledge of such adjustment, incorporate those in their structures and operations, as well as produce practical "how to" guides regarding access (e.g. GMCDP, 2004), that may support our efforts of making schools more radically inclusive. Moreover, radical inclusive pedagogy requires transforming the ideologies and values that underlie educational provision. Too often disabled students in mainstream schools are made to "fit in" with norms that demand they will act, think and identify according to certain standards, of which they always come short (Petersen, 2009). This denies them a sense of positive identity, as they are seen by others and come to see themselves in terms of deficit and deviancy. One of the major achievements of the DPM is in its creation of an affirmative disability identity that emerges from the coming together of a strong disability community in politics, art and culture (Cameron, 2008; Swain & French, 2000). For schools to become inclusive communities, these discourses and cultures need to inform educators and administrators and be integrated into the curriculum to provide students (disabled or not) with the opportunity to discuss issues of disability culture and identity and to allow them to find

their place and form their own meanings and identities in as valuable members of the community. These are critical issues for radical inclusive pedagogy and will be explored in detail in the following chapters.

It is for these reasons that this work draws on interviews with disability activists to inform understandings of radical inclusive pedagogy. Activists, who are experienced in connecting personal experience with political analysis and are committed to use this knowledge in an attempt to change society for the better, hold valuable information about the ways of making education more inclusive. All activists are themselves school leavers (be it special schools or mainstream education), and have been involved in educating themselves about the politics of disability. This gives them a unique standpoint in reflecting upon their experience of school and peer education, connecting these with wider social structures and offering practical ideas for change. Similarly, some parents of disabled children, faced with the need to fight for their child against a disablist system, have themselves become activists who fight for an inclusive society beyond advocating for the needs of their own child (Ryan & Runswick Cole, 2009). As families, alongside schools, teachers and students, are important stakeholders in educational practice and policy, the views of some parent activists, and the lessons they have learnt through their struggles, were also incorporated into the study.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explore the epistemological and methodological approaches that guided the research, and will describe the specific methods for data collection and analysis. Adapting a radical humanist paradigm, which is grounded in the sociology of conflict and situates knowledge production in the shared subjective creation of dominant discourses, hegemonies and social meaning-making processes of wider society (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, and see chapter 2 for discussion in relation to education), meant understanding research as a political act that changes social reality rather than aiming to neutrally describe it. Grounded in the theoretical and practical issues outlined in chapters 2-4, this research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the possibilities and obstacles in adapting radical pedagogy perspectives on inclusive education?
2. What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the analytical accounts of activists in the disabled people's movement and in campaigns for inclusive education?
3. What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from looking at the educational practices in a "special needs" unit in an innovative secondary school?
4. What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the process of conducting playful research workshops with a group of students in a "special needs" unit?

5. How can we construct a framework of radical inclusive pedagogy that is sensitive to the experiences and positions of students with varied abilities and to ideas from disability studies and the disabled people's movement?

The first section of this chapter will outline the epistemological approach to knowledge, and how this bears on the act of producing knowledge through research. An understanding of knowledge as a form of power entails a view of research as a political act, and necessitates the use of researcher's reflexivity in order to explicitly interrogate the assumptions, values and power relations in which the research is embedded. Using a '*researcher template*' (Goodley, 1999) I will explore in this section the values and conceptions that guided the process of data collection and analysis. Further, as the research questions are aimed at drawing on participants' practices, analyses *and dreams* to interrogate the "what ifs" of educational possibilities, I will introduce in this section the research stance which I call '*a stance of inspiration*'.

The second section of the chapter will describe the two main data collection projects that formed the empirical part of this work – interviews with 12 activists in various disabled people's organisations and inclusive education campaigns; and an ethnographic field work in the SEN provision unit of a secondary school located in a socially deprived urban area in the north of England. The section will also explore the efforts to equalise power relations and promote reciprocity and co-production of meaning, and will introduce the concept of '*prefigurative research*', a methodological approach that seeks to embody the desired social relations, and the ethical questions such methodology brings. As part of this prefigurative approach to research I will describe a series of creative and playful workshops conducted with a group of 5 students aimed at designing the best school in the world, and explore the

rationale behind developing those. The last section of this chapter explores the process and approach to analysis taken.

TABLE 1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS OF ANSWERING THEM

Research question	Methods	Section of thesis
Question 1: possibilities and obstacles in using ideas from radical pedagogies to theorise inclusive education	Literature review, application of theory to data analysis	Throughout. Particularly chapters 3, 6,7, 8 and 9.
Question 2: learning about radical inclusive pedagogy from the analytical accounts of activists in the DPM	Interviews with 12 activists in the DPM and in campaigns for inclusive education	Chapter 6
Question 3: learning about radical inclusive pedagogy from the practices in an innovative “special needs unit”	Ethnographic research in the unit, including observations in lessons, breaks and out of school activities, interviews with 4 members of staff	Chapter 7
Question 4: learning about radical inclusive pedagogy from playful workshops with students	5X2 hours workshop with a group of five students in the special needs unit dedicated to designing “the best school in the world”.	Chapter 8
Question 5: a framework of radical inclusive pedagogy that is sensitive to the needs and experiences of disabled people	Synthesis of findings and theory	Throughout, and particularly in chapter 9

SECTION 1: EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

RESEARCH AS A PROCESS OF CO-CONSTRUCTION

My epistemological stance is influenced by post-structuralism, feminist standpoint theory and critical theory. Broadly speaking, these theories criticise notions of objective, universal and fixed knowledge that characterise positivist science, and replace them with ideas of situated knowledges shaped by a continuous interplay of power-knowledge relationships in specific historical and economic contexts. Kincheloe & McLaren (2000, p. 291) identify several common assumptions that form the basis of such post-positivist epistemologies:

that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription; that the relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption; [...] that certain groups in any society are privileged over others and, although the reasons for this privileging may vary widely, the oppression that characterizes contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable; that oppression has many faces and that focusing on only one at the expense of others [...] often elides the interconnections among them; and, finally, that mainstream research practices are generally, although most often unwittingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race and gender³,

A key issue here is the understanding of knowledge not as an objective representation of reality as it is, but as power that is used to **constitute** the subjective and social reality. Foucault's (1977) historical analysis of the shift from sovereign power to a more pervasive disciplinary power highlights its productive, constitutive nature and its reciprocal and interlinked relation to knowledge. As discussed in chapters 2 and 3,

³ Disability, as is often the case, is missing from this holy trinity of oppression.

disciplinary power classifies and documents individuals and places them under continuous forms of surveillance; through this process it produces individual subjects as manageable units embedded in relations of power/knowledge. Further, power/knowledge relations make people into subjects because they make sense of themselves (and others) by referring back to various bodies of knowledge available to them (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000) in what Hacking (1995) calls the '*looping effect of human kinds*'. However, it is important to remember that power/knowledge relations are dynamic and multi-directional (Gallagher, 2008). While some discourses acquire the state of hegemonic knowledge under certain historical and political circumstances, they are always contested by discourses and practices of resistance. In chapter 2 I discussed in detail how power/knowledge relations constitute disability as a medical phenomenon, and how this is contested by the academic discipline of disability studies and the subaltern knowledge produced within the DPM (chapter 4). Thus, resistance is also a form of power which produces its own knowledge, in relation and defiance of hegemonic discourses.

This understanding of knowledge fits in with Burrell & Morgan's (1979) definition of radical humanist paradigm in social science (discussed in chapter 3). It shifts the focus of research from looking for an objective and universal truth to the careful analyses of the social, historical and subjective ways by which knowledge claims are created and used. The process of meaning making is always mediated by personal experiences embedded in webs of power relations. Some meanings are given a stamp of truth, while others are marginalised. There are multiple subjective meanings engaged in a struggle over social recognition and validation, but the terms of this struggle are not neutral and reflect the social structures, many of which are oppressive and based on power inequalities. In this sense, research, as a form of producing knowledge, is political.

Feminist theorists of science had a major contribution to the development of epistemology and methodology that are on the one hand suspicious of universal claims of truth and appreciate different subjective interpretations, while on the other hand sustain a political commitment to emancipation and social justice. In her much quoted work '*Situated Knowledges: the Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*', Haraway (1988, p. 579), points to the need to

have simultaneously an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own "semiotic technologies" for making meanings, and a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a "real" world, one that can be partially shared and that is friendly to earth-wide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited happiness.

Instead of positivist "objectivity" and its basic metaphor of science as '*a view from nowhere*' (ibid, p.560), a panoptic gaze that always sees but can never be seen (Foucault, 1977), feminist theorists such as Haraway (1988), Harding (1987) and Lather (1991) offer the notion of embodied, localised standpoints, with their partial views and many blind spots. This is a standpoint that is not transcendent to the plain of investigation, but is localised within a specific historical moment and geographic place, embodied in a certain body that takes part in multiple power relations. Since all knowledge claims are embodied and located, they should explicitly be described as such. Unlocatable knowledge claims are irresponsible, as they are unable to be called into account (Haraway, 1988). The positioning and assumptions of the researcher should be openly discussed through a process of reflexivity, alongside the implications such positioning and assumptions might bear on the process of interpretation and analysis. This process of reflexivity is crucial to the development of knowledge that leads to emancipation rather than subjugation as it positions the researcher as part of the field rather than locating her outside the scope of investigation.

In following sections of this chapter and throughout the analysis I explicitly discuss my positioning as a researcher in the different contexts of the field work. Here, however, I would like to briefly discuss the political commitments that guided my interest in the research topic and the choice of methodology, following Goodley's (1999) suggestion of the use of a '*researcher template*'. This template includes the epistemological assumptions and values the researcher brings with her to the field, and can be used as a tool against which one can read data and observations. The idea here is that in qualitative research with its multiple and complicated nature of data, the researcher's attention is always drawn to parts of any event taking place in the field, rather than to the "whole" of the data. This is true whether the method is observations, interviews, life stories or any combination of methods supposed to generate thick and rich data. Even before the level of analysis, selecting what constitutes "data" is far from being neutral or naturally derived from the research question, and involves an on-going selection of what and who to observe, what to listen to and what to notice and record. The process of separating figure from ground, deciding what is important and what is just "noise" or irrelevant information disturbing the process of data collection, is shaped by the significance the researcher places on different aspects of the situation. Using a researcher template can help to de-mystify this process of selection – what you see is what you notice, and that depends on an active and unconscious process of selection. Using a researcher template does not prevent unconscious selection, but it provides a tool for recognising its existence and discussing its effects on interpretation. This does not mean all data should be made to fit preconceived assumptions, but rather, it allows the researcher to explicitly negotiate convergences and tensions between their own experiences and that of the researched, thus making the process of data collection and interpretation more accountable.

THE RESEARCHER TEMPLATE

The values and epistemological assumptions, the '*researcher template*' that informed my choice of research questions and the methods of answering them is rooted within the understanding of disability as socially created, not the result of medical variations within the body and mind of individuals (see chapter 2). My research questions therefore are focused on the social structures and relationships carried out within schools. Further, I understand competence and ability as created within a community, what Booth & Booth (1998) call '*distributed competence*'. Thus, empowerment, development and enhancing capabilities are not (just) about training individuals to acquire the skills they are lacking and exercise them independently, but about identifying and increasing familial and community networks that support and enable people to take part in social life. Alongside theorists such as Margrit Shildrick, Eva Feder-Kittay and Lenard Davis, I understand human development as oriented towards interdependency rather than independency, enacted through multiple relations and connections alongside points of difference and separation (see chapter 2). This means that the focus of my research is not on how different individuals cope with their (enabling or disabling) environments, but rather on the multiple interfaces and relations between self and other (other meaning non-self, be it another human or an environment) and the different ways in which selfhood and agency are enacted and understood through such relations.

Inspired by ideas from the critical literature on education and pedagogy (Fielding & Moss, 2011; Freire, 1972a; hooks, 1994; Illich, 1971), I understand schools and education not as a mechanism for neutral transference of objective knowledge but as a powerful political process that can serve to perpetuate or transgress the social order (see chapters 3 and 4). With Illich (1971) and Fielding & Moss (2011) I believe in the de-institutionalisation of schools and the adaptation of '*education in its broadest sense*' (Fielding & Moss, 2011, p.

46). This means a rejection of the functionalist notions of learning heavily focused on the acquisition of factual knowledge and academic skills (see chapter 3), in favour of an understanding of education that stresses development and wellbeing in all aspects of community life. Adopting such notions of education means a focus on the ways student and teachers share roles and responsibilities for running the school and conducting projects of learning, alongside a commitment to seeing people as subjects rather than role occupants. Freire (1972a) also stresses the importance of education that can bring about change in the life of the learner and that therefore does not separate between learning and doing (praxis), and creates social change by connecting personal experiences with wider social structures. Thus, my analysis of education is not only inspired by school practices, but, viewing education as a lifelong process for change, aims at learning from the praxis of the disabled people's movement in their attempts to collectively change disabling conditions by employing analysis, resistance and the active creation of political spaces that work in inclusive and democratic ways (see chapter 4).

Another major influence on the researcher template comes from my anarchist politics. The core principle of contemporary anarchism is the objection to all forms of hierarchy and domination, replacing them with decentralised and horizontal power relations in which people organise together in peer groups to create their reality (Amster, 2012; Gordon, 2008; Kinna, 2012 and see chapter 8 for further discussion of different aspects of power). As a researcher this means that I was particularly interested in the ways power works within schools, and was paying close attention to instances of domination, resistance but also support and empowerment. Further, this distrust of domination had a major influence on developing methodologies that reflect the aspiration for horizontal divisions of power, which will be discussed in section 2 of this chapter.

Many researchers committed to social justice recognise that unless research develops some means of working towards an emancipatory goal for those with whom or about whom it speaks, there is a very real sense in which the research process becomes another tool of oppression (Lynch, 2001). Feminist researchers argue that the extent to which a piece of work is feminist should be evaluated in relation to its goals and what it seeks to (and does) achieve (Harding, 1987; Stanley, 1990). This means that research should not be just about describing an existing reality; research is about change (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994; Lather, 1991). Applied to the issue of disability, the growing methodological literature within the discipline of disability studies stresses the need for research that is engaged with changing disabling environments and assumptions rather than changing disabled individuals (Barnes, 1992; Chappell, 2000; Morris, 1992; Oliver, 1992; Walmsley, 2001).

These changes should include first and foremost the environment and social relations of research production, in which participants are not seen as passive objects of knowledge but as active agents engaged in processes and struggles of meaning making. While this is true to all research participants, it acquires an even greater importance when discussing disability research that has too often constructed disabled people as the objects of preventive or curative professional interventions, with very little to say about their own lives (Clough & Barton, 1998). Many methodological debates within critical feminist and disability theory revolve around power relations between the researchers and the researched, with terms such as emancipatory, participatory or collaborative research being used to challenge traditional research methods (see for example Lather, 1986a and Stacey, 1988 for debates within feminism). In a special issue of *Disability & Society* (1992, volume 7, issue 2) dedicated to

disability research, there is an almost unanimous call for the adaptation of emancipatory research (e.g. Barnes, 1992; Morris, 1992; Oliver, 1992; Zarb, 1992) based on principles of reciprocity, gain and empowerment. Reciprocity means that the research's agenda as well as the collection and analysis of the data are set through a process of dialogue and cooperation between the researcher and the researched. Gain and empowerment mean that research done with disabled people should have a positive impact on their lives (Oliver, 1992).

Many subsequent accounts by disability studies researchers have questioned the feasibility and even desirability of fully adhering to the original principles of emancipatory research outlined in this special issue (see for example Chappell, 2000; Mercer, 2004; Shakespeare, 1997; Stone & Priestley, 1996). Mercer (2004) notes that hardly any research project within disability studies completely fulfils Oliver's (1992) definition of reciprocity which demands that disabled people and their organisations should have control over every stage of the research including defining the research questions, designing data collection and analysing the data. This has multiple reasons including structural barriers in access to funding bodies and the need to fulfil their demands, alongside lack of skills, time and interest on the part of research participants to be involved in research planning and analysis. Reciprocity is still, however, often practised during the process of data collection. Davis (2000) discusses the use of '*non authoritarian techniques*' (p.201) as tools for enabling participants' ideas to shape the research design, and the need for researcher reflexivity that enables a dialogical co-construction of meanings through adapting a stance of learning from participants and recognising that disabled people are experts in their own life. For Davis, this use of non-authoritarian techniques, particularly in institutionalised contexts such as schools, also plays a key role in the creation of gain and empowerment, as part of the researcher's commitment to social change –

The first sphere of influence open to the researcher is the very locations where they do research. The researcher, by practicing the non-authoritarian techniques, [...] can set an example to the people who he/she encounters in the field; he/she can encourage a process of dialogue

(p. 201).

One of the most dialogical and change-oriented traditions in research is that of ‘action-research’. Research and action, even though analytically distinguishable, are inextricably intertwined in practice; both the practice of professional researchers as they conduct, analyse, and communicate research and the practice of any of us as we conduct our daily lives (Roets, 2008); ‘*knowledge is always gained through action and for action*’ (Polanyi, 1962, cited in Banister et al., 1994, p. 109). Action research was first developed by Kurt Lewin in the first half of the 20th century, as a form of practitioner research that challenges prevailing binaries of thought and action, the particular and the general, personal experience and professional expertise, facts and values (see for example Lewin, 1946). The research is built on a spiral of data collection, analysis and action at different stages – locating the problem, implementing an action for change, and evaluating the effects of the changes made (Zelermayer, 2001). In the 1980s, through the influence of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1972a), feminism (Lather, 1986a) and critical theory (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), the notion of *critical action research* was developed, and is particularly used amongst critical educationalists and other critical practitioners (Banister et al., 1994; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Critical action research shares with action research the commitment to creating change in the research environment and the commitment to collaborative building of meanings, but adds to it the importance of using theory in order to expose the ideological basis of language use and power relations within the researched situation (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Lather (1986a) stresses that critical action research is built on dialogue – a dialogue between people who conduct research together, but also a dialogue between experience and theory. Thus, while focusing on experience, critical action research also investigates the material,

historical and social circumstances in which this experience emerges. In this sense it can be understood as embodying the anti-globalisation movement's slogan '*think global, act local*'. Goodly & Lawthom (2005) argue that critical action research is of particular relevance to disability studies as it offers a way of simultaneously learning from people's personal experiences while shedding light on the oppressive social structures that need to be changed in order to elevate disablement.

This research shares some common characteristics with critical action research, though it also diverges from this model in other aspects. Similar to the principles of action research, this study has emerged through the identification of a problem within my practice. As a speech and language therapist working in "inclusive" education settings (i.e. pupils with and without SEN share the same classroom space) I was required to make children fit the authoritarian and technocratic school system (see chapter 1). This problem motivated me to embark on a research of radical inclusive pedagogy that would allow all students to grow and learn together. Also in accordance with the principles of critical action research I seek to use this knowledge in order to change my practice in particular and influence educational practices in general. However, unlike the model of critical action research, which emphasizes *simultaneous* action and analysis (Banister et al., 1994), this research seeks to learn from inspirational practice so as to implement that knowledge at a later stage. Thus, as a researcher I do not aim for an "objective" stance as advocated in positivist research, nor a descriptive stance that seeks to "give voice" and accurately portray the meanings research participants give to their life experiences. Rather, I define my researcher stance as *a stance of inspiration*.

A STANCE OF INSPIRATION

The current research is trying to examine possibilities for radical inclusive pedagogy as a philosophy and practice. It aims at developing ideas that take dis-ability as central aspect of human life (alongside other categories and roles). In so doing I aim to start with dis-ability rather than end with it (Davis, 2002, and see also chapter 2), using it as a lens through which education can be theorised rather than trying to make philosophies and practices developed from the standpoint of “normalcy” “able-bodiedness” and “sound minds” more responsive to the needs of students with “special needs”. Rather than giving detailed descriptions of an already existing field, my researcher stance is one of gaining inspiration from theory and from practice, to provide rich and thick descriptions of how things could be, and to draw on exciting practice that already takes place in order to develop such ideas further. This idea fits well with Fielding & Moss (2011) idea of democratic education, which is based on an on-going process of experimentation that produces knowledge which is not a reflection on the static world but emerges through active engagement and experience of “reality”. This processes of experimentation is not confined to figuring out effective ways of learning and teaching, but should also include ‘*utopian thought experiments*’ which start from the question ‘*how would social reality look if we configured it in radically different and improved terms and from different positions than is normally adopted?*’ (Halpin, 2003, pp. 53–4).

Halpin (2003) stresses the need to take utopian imagination seriously within education practice and research. Utopias constitute important signifiers or projections of people’s desires. They also entail a venture into a world unhindered by common sense assumptions, where it is possible to simultaneously imagine and anticipate radical alternatives to the status quo. Thus, while they are not immediately translatable into policy

documents, utopias can point at possibilities for change that otherwise would be either ruled out automatically or never thought about. It is precisely this distance from particular circumstances that makes utopias so invaluable to social theory that is geared towards change and the promotion of human happiness. Utopias relativise the present by undermining the sense that the way things are is inevitable and immutable through presenting alternative versions of society (Bauman, 1976, cited in Halpin, 2003). Further, Halpin argues, when such utopias are discussed publicly and with others they provide one of the necessary conditions for initiating collective action for school and educational improvement. As discussed in the following sections, these reasons encouraged me to use utopias as a tool of research, exploring with activists their visions of the desired social order and the desired education, and engaging with students in a series of creative workshops aimed to design the best school in the world.

While this research is a lone venture to the extent that any PhD is conducted and authored by a single person and aimed at the advancement of the researcher's career, it is a **collaborative** thought experiment that is meant to engage with the messy realities of life just as much as it looks at 'ideals' and values. Further, it does not only draw on theory and concepts but seeks inspiration from the lived experience and **praxis** of an innovative school community and of activists in the DPM and inclusive education campaigns. The process of being inspired through collaborative thought experiment implies a dialogue between the researcher and the participants in which ideas about education, social change and inclusivity are exchanged. As any researcher, I came to the field equipped with my own values and understandings, which were developed through my personal experiences as a speech and language therapist and a political activist, and through engagement with the literature around alternative education and inclusive education (see researcher template). The aim of the fieldwork was to allow opportunities for re-thinking these values and understanding how

they might translate to day-to-day educational relationships and practices. I was also interested in how “inspirational figures” within the field of disability activism understand their educational experiences and what their dreams and visions of “good education” might look like. Therefore, participants in both settings (school ethnography and activists interviews) were asked not just to provide analytical accounts of their experiences but also to imagine what education might look like in an ideal world. Drawing on such dialogue gave me the opportunity to re-examine my own ideas and engage with lived examples of democracy and education in practice, thus constructing knowledge through a process of dialogue.

While choosing a stance of inspiration meant that I was particularly interested in learning from good practice and envisaging utopias, the role of critical thinking and learning from bad experience also played an important part in informing this research project. Critically and collectively reflecting upon situations of conflict, oppression and resistance is crucial to theorising and practicing emancipation in two ways. First, it serves to identify existing and possible problems, thus initiating the process of finding solutions. Second, resistance, conflict and struggle are vital components of the democratic process of negotiating the needs, values and desires of individuals within the community (Mouffe, 1998a; Young, 1989; Yuval-Davis, 2007). Collaborative discussions and critical reflection that connects negative experiences with the social contexts, histories and struggles in which they occur is therefore an important source of inspiration, and had a significant contribution to this research.

SECTION 2: METHODS AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN DATA COLLECTION

This section will describe the methods for data collection and the process of their development, paying particular attention on to ethical considerations, which, as described in the previous section, included the social and power relations through which the research was produced. The two main sources of data were a field research in a school with a special unit that caters for students with SEN, and 12 interviews with disabled and non-disabled activists involved in the DPM and campaigns for inclusive education.

PROCEDURAL ETHICS

In adherence with MMU guidelines, I sought and gained Faculty Ethical Approval in December, 2009, prior to commencing fieldwork. The ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association requires that participants will give their voluntary informed consent to research and that to this end researchers must

'take the steps necessary to ensure that all participants in the research understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported'

(2011, para. 11).

Table 2 gives a summary of the different information and consent forms used in this research.

The 12 adult activists who agreed to be interviewed for this research project were sent written information and consent forms at the initial stages of negotiating their participation (see appendix 1a). A date for the interview was scheduled only after activists had read the information and agreed to participate in research. The main points of the information and consent forms were also discussed at the start of each interview to ensure that participants understood the terms and purposes of participation. As will be discussed in a following

section, a choice between anonymity and full attribution was given to the interviewees, and those who have chosen so are identified by their full name. This was explained to participants in the information sheets and at the start of the interview, and then discussed again at the end of the interview to ensure participants are comfortable with their choice of anonymity or attribution.

The process of gaining consent for the school research was more complex, and many of the ethical concerns and dilemmas are broadly discussed in the following section. Initially, consent for conducting research observations in the “special needs unit” of the school was gained from the head teacher (see appendix 1b for information and consent form). The four members of staff who were most involved in the unit have each separately agreed to be interviewed, and received and signed an information and consent form prior to the interview (see appendix 1c). This was followed by verbal discussion about the goals of the research and the way data from interviews will be used and reported (see further discussion in a following section).

A written information and consent form was sent to the parents or legal guardians of the 5 students who participated in the “best school in the world workshops” (see appendix 1d), and a signed consent form was returned for each participant prior to the first workshop. To gain consent from students themselves I have followed Swain, Heyman, & Gillman (1998) model of consent as a continuous process, rather than as an event occurring at a distinct point in time. At the start of the first and second meetings I handed the students accessible information and consent forms, using plain English sentences printed in large font and accompanied by pictorial representations (see appendix 1e). The students and I read the forms together and negotiated the terms of participation, and I took care to repeatedly remind students that they were free to withdraw at any moment from the research as a whole, or from any specific activity. A detailed account of these negotiations is provided in chapter 8.

Unlike the interviews with activists, the institutional context of the school research did not allow for giving participants a choice between anonymity and attribution, as naming one person would put all participants under the threat of exposure. Pseudonyms are therefore used throughout, and the name of the provision altered. In the following section I will discuss further concerns around confidentiality.

TABLE 2: INFORMED CONSENT

	Consent form	Access considerations	Appendix
Interviews with 12 adult activists in the DPM	Written information and consent forms sent before scheduling interviews	Main points of the information and consent forms discussed verbally prior to interview. When needed the content of the forms were read out loud to participants.	1a
School research • Head teacher consent to observations	Written information and consent form (preceded by discussions with members of the school's middle management)	Prolonged verbal discussions with school staff prior to consent	1b
• Interviews with 4 members of staff	Written information and consent form, followed by verbal discussion of data use and ways of reporting	Verbal discussions before interview	1c
• Creative workshops with students	Written information and consent form to parents and legal guardians	Plain English, 13p font	1d
	Written information and consent forms for students	Plain English, short sentences, 14p font, pictorial representations	1e
	Continuous negotiations and reminders about the option to withdraw	Consent as a continues process (Swain et al., 1998)	

RESEARCHING WITH ACTIVISTS:

The first source of data, and indeed of inspiration, came from interviews conducted with 12 activists in the DPM and in campaigns for inclusive education in the UK, USA and Canada (see table 3 for list of participants). The relevance of much of the knowledge produced in the

DPM to practices of inclusive and anti-oppressive education was broadly discussed in chapter 4. Such knowledge includes practical experience of creating inclusive spaces that allow for collaborative interrogations and actions to change reality; the creation of positive disability culture and representations of difference that offer alternatives to dominant discourses of disability as a tragic individual trait; and analyses of disabling social structures and norms. Therefore, an account of radical inclusive pedagogy needs to pay close attention to these processes and knowledges, and incorporate insights from the DPM into its analysis. Further, as discussed in chapter 3, the equation of education with schooling and of knowledge with the attainment of formal qualifications, which relies on creating and sustaining the too strict binaries of learning vs. doing and childhood vs. adulthood, marginalises and alienates many learners. Following Illich (1971), I seek a de-institutionalised approach to learning, and adopt a view of ‘*education in its broadest sense*’ (Fielding & Moss, 2011) as a lifelong relational process of development and becoming that takes place within communities. Thus, I draw on interviews with activists not only as a source for ideas *about* education that can be transferred and implemented in a schooling context, but understand activism as *a process of* education in itself, and therefore as an important site for research seeking to gain inspiration from radical inclusive educational *practice*.

My epistemological understanding of knowledge as a value laden form of power, and therefore of research as a political action, meant that I was not using the interviews as a tool for exploring the views that represent or are generalizable to some “universal” body of disabled people – indeed, I do not believe such essentially “disabled” views actually exist. Instead, I was seeking to explore ideas of radical inclusive education in conversation with people who share much of the basic assumptions of this research –

- that disability is not located in the body or mind of individuals but is '*a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-emotional well-being*' (Thomas, 1999, p. 60)
- that inclusive education is indeed desirable,
- and that the concept of inclusion could not be simply interpreted as the physical presence of disabled students in mainstream classrooms, but rather that it requires major changes in the ways we think of and practice education.

In this sense my position is similar to that of Sutherland (1981) who based his book on a variety of opinions and analyses which he knew to be current among certain disabled people and which he regarded as important, and placed these, along with observations of his own, within the structure of an extended argument, drawing upon interviews with people who he knew to be broadly in agreement with the set of ideas he was planning to advance in that book (Sutherland, 1981, p. 2). In the same way, the interviews with activists provided an opportunity to rethink, alongside others, about education that takes dis-ability as its starting point, and that values diversity and difference rather than asking how disabled students can fit into an already existing system.

The 12 interview participants were recruited via personal networks, sending out calls for participants on relevant email lists (e.g. the disability research list, DAN email list) and through handing out leaflets in meetings of disabled people's organisations (such as GMCDP and DPAC) and in disability studies and inclusive education academic conferences. Specific contacts were also made with the Alliance for Inclusive Education, a disabled people's organisation that campaigns around issues of inclusive education. While all participants indicated that they are interested in the subject of inclusive education, most of them were

also involved in grassroots activism around other issues, such as environmentalism, anti-capitalism, anti-racism, feminist and queer politics. 10 of the activists were disabled themselves, out of which 3 were also parents of disabled children and young adults. Two of the activists were non-disabled parents of young disabled adults and activists in campaigns for inclusive education (see table 3 for a list of participants and interview modes).

All participants were white, and all but one were native English speakers. Marianne, who is not a native English speaker, immigrated to the USA from a European country over 30 years ago. The choice of interviewing people from English speaking western context was a conscious one, based on language limitations and the need to keep a realisable scope of research, but the lack of Black or Asian participants was an unintended result. The fact that no Black or Asian person had answered my calls for participants in any of the modes and occasion can be seen as a result of the relatively white demography of the disabled people's movement in Britain (Campbell & Oliver, 1996, pp. 127–131). Yet, this is still a limitation of the current research, particularly as many of the participants expressed the importance of intersectionality to their identity and their understandings and experiences of education (see chapter 6).

TABLE 3: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND INTERVIEW MODES

Name	Gender	Country	Mode of interview	“Role”	Educational experience
Jennifer (p)	F	UK	Phone	Non-disabled mother of 2 children with SEN, activist for inclusive education	Mainstream, children in various mainstream provisions
Darth Vader (p)	F	UK	Face to face	Non-disabled mother of a child with SEN, activist for inclusive education	Mainstream, son in mainstream school with special course
Damian Milton	M	UK	Phone	Activist in the neuro-diversity movement, father of disabled child	Was in mainstream, son goes to special school
Linda Burnip	F	UK	phone	Activist in the disabled people’s movement and a founding member of DPAC, mother of a disabled son	Mainstream, son in mainstream.
Alex (p)	Gender queer	UK	Phone	Activist in the disabled people’s movement, parent of 2 disabled children	Was in mainstream, 1 st child attended a mainstream school with resource unit, 2 nd child attended mainstream school and is now home educated
Simone Aspis	F	UK	Face to face	Activist in the disabled people’s movement and People First, employed in ALLFIE	Attended a residential special residential school, now works towards a PhD
Lily (p)	F	UK	Face to face	Political activist, disabled and involved in the DPM	Mainstream school, home education, special college, mainstream university
Marianne	F	USA,	Phone	Political activist, blind, special educating teacher	Special primary school, mainstream secondary school and university
Nancy	F	Canada	e-mail	Activist in the disabled people’s movement	Special primary school, mainstream secondary school
Tom	M	UK	Face to face	Activist in DAN, anti-war movement and Anti cuts movement	Mainstream with resource unit
BB	M	USA	Phone	CEO of “blindness agency”	Mainstream with resource unit
Kate Crayer	F	UK	E-mail	AAC user, activist in ALLFIE	Segregated primary, mainstream primary, mainstream secondary and HE.

(p)= pseudonym

The aim of the interviews was to discuss with participants their *analytical accounts*⁴ of schooling, education and activism. That is, I asked participants to analytically and politically reflect about their experiences of education, inclusion and democratic engagement within the formal education system and within activist movements, as well as drawing on their experiences of schooling and activism to offer visions of education as they want it to be. As some participants were parents who were also involved in the education of their children, two similar but slightly different sets of interview questions were constructed for parents and non-parent participants. I was mainly interested in experiences of democracy and inclusion in a variety of spaces (including formal education and activism) and how these experiences inform participants' views of good education, with questions such as

1. From your experience (in school, activism, work etc.)- how can schools **be more inclusive**?
2. From your experience (in school, activism, work etc.)- how can schools **be more democratic**?
3. From your experience (in school, activism, work etc.)- how can schools **challenge disablism**?

For full interview guides and consent and information see appendices 2a and 2b.

All the participants were “experts by experience” having negotiated the education system as disabled pupils and/or as parents of disabled pupils, and having experiences in doing activism in movements committed to democratic and inclusive practice. Some of the participants were also experts through formal studies and qualifications, and indeed the literature review chapters include quotes from published works by some of the participants. This meant that my interviewing stance was that of consulting with experts, listening to their views and experiences but also asking for their feedback on some of my ideas and dilemmas where those were relevant for the conversation. For example, in the interview with Damian

⁴ I would like to thank my research supervisor, Professor Dan Goodley, who suggested this term.

Milton, after he described his positive experience of being part of the autistic self-organised space of Autscape⁵, I asked him if he thought a school run by autistic staff for autistic pupils seemed to him like a good idea. I have also asked him to interpret some of my experiences as a speech and language therapist working with autistic children from his perspective.

This view of participants as experts and colleagues, sharing with me their original analytical accounts, had also led to the decision to give participants a choice whether or not they want to be identified in the research. The need to give participants the option to take credit for their contribution to research, as well as the assumption that participants are in need of protection and that anonymity is indeed protective is being growingly criticised within the qualitative research literature (Giordano, O'Reilly, Taylor, & Dogra, 2007; Walford, 2005). Indeed the ethical guidelines for educational research published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) state that

Confidential and anonymous treatment of participants' data is considered the norm for the conduct of research. [...] Conversely, researchers must also recognize participants' rights to be identified with any publication of their original works or other inputs, if they so wish.

(2011, para. 25)

Thus, participants were asked to choose how they wanted to be identified, with some opting for full name, some for first name or initials and others choosing a pseudonym for themselves. As discussed earlier, I have explored with participants the different options of anonymity and identification prior to the interview, and checked with them again at the end of the interview to ensure they are still happy with their choice. This approach is also in line with the ethical criticism addressed at non-disabled researchers who appropriate the experiences of disabled people for the advancement of their career (Oliver, 1999). Viewing interview participants as experts who provide analytical accounts meant that it was vital to allow them the opportunity to be recognised for their contribution and analysis.

⁵ A conference organised specifically by and for autistic people. For details see <http://www.autscape.org/>

THE SCHOOL RESEARCH

The second source of data comes from ethnographic research in a school that was judged by OfSTED to deliver “outstanding” service to “students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities”⁶, where I was hoping to gain inspiration from good practice. I first heard of the school through a fellow PhD student who visited it and was highly impressed with its commitment to maximum inclusion and maximum achievement. With the school located in an ex-mining community, featuring high on social deprivation scales such as teenage pregnancies, early mortality, and free school meals, this commitment is manifested in a school wide innovative approach to curriculum, teaching and support. The GCSE curriculum ranges from the more academic English, maths and science to construction, child care and floristry. The school is committed to engaging students in learning in a variety of contexts. To this end it employs a full time worker (pseudonym Miss D.) who has the unique position of developing connections with other bodies and organisations in the community to provide students with learning opportunities and experiences beyond traditional lessons. As part of the efforts to minimise truancy, some students are offered the opportunity to do work placements outside of the school for a day or two and are only asked to be in the class room for 3 days a week. A student support unit is responsible for solving immediate day to day problems and dealing with a variety of care needs, ranging from providing food for students who came without their breakfast, to offering an upset student the chance to talk about what’s on their mind. In cases of more permanent support needs the student support unit refers students to a range of counselling and pastoral services offered by the school, such as the support group for the many students classified as “young carers” which is run by the school nurse.

⁶ For more information on inspection criteria and ranking see <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools>

While the school was not explicitly committed to any radical pedagogical agendas, it seemed like a suitable place for gaining inspiration because of its commitment to maximum social inclusion and the insistence that this could only be achieved by changing the environment in which learning takes place, adopting a broad view of education that takes into account the variety of cognitive styles and care needs of its students, and viewing learning as a relational process (see detailed account in chapter 7). After contacting Miss D. via email, a preliminary meeting between Miss D., the school SENCO (pseudonym Mrs K) and me took place to negotiate the details of the research project. It was only at this meeting that I discovered that the SEN provision was taking place in a segregated unit, located in a separate building of the school that even has its own yard away from the main school yard. My instinctive (and unspoken) reaction was one of great disappointment – could I find inspiration for inclusive practice in a segregated unit? However, the meeting also made clear the school’s relational understanding of learning and education, and the stress put on making the learning environment supportive and accessible to a variety of students. Understanding inspiration as learning from good *and* problematic practices, it seemed like doing research in this “special needs unit” could provide rich data and opportunities for nuanced discussions of the meanings of inclusion and education. It is important to note here that my misunderstanding regarding the nature of the provision was not accidental. The unit’s name does not refer or mention the term “special needs” and is connected with ideas of relationality and belonging. However, for anonymity reasons I cannot use this unique name that better reflects the values of the school. I use the generic term “special needs unit” (SNU) as an awkward compromise between protecting the anonymity of members of the school and accurately representing their values and practice.

During this meeting Miss D and Mrs. K expressed great interest in conducting research in the SNU, which they felt was working well but were eager to improve even

further. They asked for a research report, which I wrote and sent to the school, identifying good practice and suggesting ideas for improvement. The focus and scope of this report were agreed on mutually during this meeting. Further they believed that students' participation in the research can provide them with the sort of extracurricular activity that the school values. This fits well with the need to equalise power relations and produce research that benefits and promotes change in the life of its participants, argued for by many feminist and disability scholars and activists. However, this was complicated by the hierarchical structure of the school (discussed below), which meant that the effort to equalise power relations and co-produce knowledge that benefits participants required the use of varied methods (see table 4), and an ongoing process of gaining consent and negotiating ethics and meanings.

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF METHODS IN THE SCHOOL RESEARCH

Participant observation	Interviews	Creative group workshops
130 hours, between September 2010 and March, 2011.	5 × 1-1.5 hours interviews, as detailed below:	5 × 2 hours workshop with a group of five students (years 8-9)- designing the best school in the world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lessons in SNU - Lessons for SNU students in the main school - Breaks - After school provision (homework club). - Residential trip. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 teachers in the SNU - Mrs K, SENCO and head of SNU - Miss D, administrative worker - Class interview with year 11 (see following section) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction and board game - Models of the best teacher and students - Rules in the school - Role play of best and worst school - building a cardboard model of the best school, summary.
Initial notes taken during observations, detailed notes were typed soon after the end of observation.	All interviews with staff members were audio-recorded and transcribed. The class interview was not audio-recorded, but noted in the same manner as observations.	The first workshop was not audio-recorded but noted like observations due to faults in the recorder. The following 4 workshops were audio-recorded and transcribed. The role plays were also video-recorded, with video footage edited into comic strip format. Data also includes photos of the art work produced by students during workshops.

About 70 students in years 7-11 attend the SNU. Students in years 7-9 are taught for the majority of the school day in the unit's small building, which contains three classrooms. The majority of the teaching is done by 3 teachers and learning is organized differently to the main school (see chapter 7 for a discussion of approaches to learning). Some specialized subjects such as science, food technology, drama, and graphics take place in designated classrooms in the main school building (e.g. laboratory, drama hall) by specialized subject teachers. All these subjects are taught to SNU students alone, with the exception of PE (physical education) which is taught to a mixed group of SNU and main school students. Students in years 10-11 can pick subjects from the general GCSE curriculum (which, as discussed earlier contains a wide range of academic and non-academic options), and only come into the unit building for Maths and English. An in-depth description of the practice within the unit is discussed in chapter 7.

OBSERVATIONS

The fieldwork took place between September 2010 and March 2011. During this period I conducted 130 hours of observations, which included lessons, breaks, homework club, and a residential trip to a nature resort. These activities were provided specifically to SNU students (see detailed discussion in chapter 7).

As discussed earlier, I negotiated the terms of the research with Miss D. and Mrs. K, who occupy middle management positions, and it was them who approached the head teacher and passed on my consent and information forms. They also informed the teachers of my expected arrival. I was aware that some teachers were asked to consent to me observing in their classes (mostly those teaching outside the SNU). However, I didn't know if all teachers had been asked, and indeed to what extent they could refuse such a request coming from their bosses. Some teachers, who consented to Miss D's request to have me

observe their classes, felt the need to justify to me some incidents I was witnessing, or to apologies for not having fully prepared the lesson. The students were not informed at all as to who I was and what I was doing in their unit. This of course meant that they had no opportunity to consent or refuse to my observations.

This situation made me very uncomfortable and I was seeking ways to inform students of who I was and creating a reciprocal relationship with them. This was no simple matter, as adult-child interactions within the school always conform to some degree of hierarchy. While students and teachers share the same spaces in the school, they move and embody them in very distinct ways (McGregor, 2004). During my time of observation the classroom setting posed a frustrating problem for positioning myself as a researcher. During classes when I sat quietly like a student at the back I was focusing my attention on the teacher. It was impossible to see students' faces from this position, or to hear any interaction that was going on between "desk-mates". It was also problematic to interact with those students sitting next to me, as this was often disturbing the teachers' work. On some lessons, usually when arts and crafts were involved, I assumed a more teacher-like role, walking between students and offering help. This provided me with an opportunity to interact with students and witness their interactions with each other, but from a teacher's position. Also during breaks, though students and staff were sharing a space, they each took their distinct place within it, keeping their distance. Getting too close to students aroused a strong "out of place" sensation and I backed off in fear of being too intrusive. Even the residential trip, while allowing many more opportunities for interaction with students, was still governed by the same adult-child power hierarchies. In chapter 7 I discuss the different ways these hierarchies were embodied and enacted, but here it will suffice to say that my positioning as an "adult" within the school context made it difficult to equalise power relations with

students, and necessitated thinking of creative ways to create opportunities for interactions with students. These happened in the series of workshop discussed below.

INTERVIEWS

During my time in the school I also conducted semi- structured interviews with the 4 members of staff who were involved in the running of the SNU. These were 2 teachers, Mrs. K, who is the SENCO of the school, the head of the SNU and was also involved in much of the day to day teaching, and Miss D, the administrative worker in charge of the SNU. Each interview was 1- 1.5 hours long, and took place in a small private room in the school. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. All interviewees were asked about their practice in the SNU, including their role, their special achievements and the barriers they faced in their work. A second set of questions encompassed their educational vision, why they decided to work in education and why they decided to take on their specific role in the SNU as well as questions about what in their opinion would be an ideal school. As the interviews were semi structured, each specific interview yielded specific questions and topic, but a general interview guide (see appendices 2c and 2d) was followed loosely to make sure all those subjects were covered.

As mentioned earlier, I personally gained consent from teachers who participated in interviews (appendix 1c), and informed them of my promise to write a report for the school. At the beginning of the interview I discussed issues of confidentiality with the teachers and the measures I was going to take to protect their anonymity, particularly in the school report. I also informed them of the possibility of asking me not to include specific issues in the report to the school and some of them made use of this option. The teachers seemed somewhat apprehensive from the interview even before I informed them of the school report, fearing that they will have nothing to say. In response to that I was trying to reassure

them that their experience is valuable and useful to me. This emotional position reminded me of my experiences of interviewing parents as a speech and language therapist about to start therapy with their child, taking the position of an authority figure that tries to demonstrate its benevolence. In contrast, when interviewing middle management (Mrs. K and Miss D) I felt a need to demonstrate my “professional” knowledge trying to convince them that I am worthy of their time and effort – a position reminiscent to what I felt speaking to my bosses.

On the early stages of my observation in the school, just five minutes before the lesson I was intended to observe was due to start, Mrs K, who was teaching this year 11 maths class, suggested I should take the opportunity to speak to the pupils. The following account from my observation notes describes my feelings and thoughts in face of this offer:

Mrs K. suggests I would take the opportunity to speak to the year 11s as they have the most experience with the SNU. This year they do most of their learning in the main school, but some of them were in the SNU since year 7. I'm very unsure of what that means – I think she is also tired (everyone seems very tired today) and busy and needs the time. I'm also slightly confused at having to improvise – this is not my plan at all. I was chatting to students during classes and breaks and thought about talking to them more, but I'm not sure about this setting. It is very formal, in the class, with quite a bigger group than I imagined. I quickly consider asking the students to move the tables away and form a circle in the middle, but I'm not sure how much time I have for this conversation and what are Mrs K.'s plans – how much of the lesson can I take up? I also have no questions planned or any sort of game or task to help facilitate the discussion. But I really don't want to miss the opportunity and say yes.

Mrs K. asks me and the students if we want her in or out – I prefer she will be outside but am also afraid as I don't know the students and have no idea what to expect. One student says 'get out' but she asks again and two girls say 'stay'. She later leaves for a while and comes back, but Mrs E. is also in the room. In several occasions Mrs K is taking over the conversation explaining what 'students meant'. At a certain point I gather the courage to tell her I want to hear the students, and she does not intervene again.

(Observation notes, 22.9.2010)

This was an awkward situation loaded with contradictions. On the one hand, I felt that agreeing to conduct an interview under those conditions was ethically problematic on several levels. First, the degree to which students have consented to participating in the

interview was highly questionable. The idea of turning the lesson into an interview was proposed to me by the teacher, without consulting with the students. While I tried to mitigate this by explaining the purposes of my research (both the PhD research and the report promised to the school) and stressed that they do not have to answer any of my questions, the general setting was that of a lesson, with its distinct power hierarchies. This included an adult standing by the board asking questions and students sitting behind desks and raising their hands when they wish to speak. Further, the situation of the lesson is built on the assumption that physical presence, if not active participation, is a compulsory requirement. Indeed the students themselves seemed to be willingly participating, with many of them eager to contribute and none asking permission to leave. However, this might very well have been motivated by a desire to “chat” on non-academic issues as an appealing alternative to doing maths, and can at best be described as ascent, rather than informed consent to research (Morrow & Richards, 1996).

Second, this situation exemplified some of the complexities in aiming to enact ideals of gain and reciprocity, and equalising power while working within a hierarchical environment. On the very immediate level it seems like all parties were gaining from this “lesson interview”. The students gained their way out of doing maths, which, if we are to believe McCourt’s (2005) autobiographical memoir of teaching, is of high priority to students. Further, all students (including the one whose request that the teacher will leave was ignored) seemed to enjoy voicing their opinions of the SNU and were very willing to share criticism and requests for improvement, which may be understood as a form of empowerment. Mrs K. gained the opportunity to listen to the students’ feedback, which she seemed genuinely interested in. Indeed, on the following day of observation she informed me that she had suggested to the student who was most critical of the SNU to speak with me further, as she thought his opinion will be relevant to my report. I gained important, if

limited, information regarding school practices from the students' point of view, which, alongside other data from observations, helped inform the planning of the workshop activities discussed below. Yet, the intricate ways in which power relations were constructing and limiting possible choices evoked some worrying but illuminating reflections about my multiple positionings as a researcher.

Mirroring the question of students' consent, this incident raises the question of my own informed consent (or lack thereof) to Mrs K.'s suggestion. The high value placed on the researcher sharing their power with participants should not be taken to imply a unilateral power relation in which the researcher is the sole possessor of power that he or she is free to exercise over participants. As a researcher, I had power to make meanings and interpretations based on data participants shared with me. However, participants, and in particular Mrs. K and Miss D who acted as gatekeepers, had the power to deny or obstruct me from gaining access to data, without which there will be no research. Further, within this particular situation, it was indeed the constructive and disciplinary aspect of power that was in operation. As noted earlier, Miss D and Mrs K were enthusiastic about the research and had worked hard and efficiently to facilitate and support my stay in the school, including convincing the (new) head teacher to allow the research to take place, an idea he was initially opposed to for fear that my presence will take teachers' time away from the students. For that I felt in debt to them, dependent upon sustaining their enthusiasm and morally obliged to prove my worth to them. When Mrs K suggested I would speak to her class I wasn't sure if she is asking me for a favour or compromising her plans to support me, but either way I felt obliged to accept immediately. I even felt that asking for more information or clarification about what she had in mind or posing any terms on my agreement would be rude. It was not fear of repercussions as much as the will to please that was driving me to agree to her suggestion against my better judgement. This was an illuminating example of the working of

“benevolent” hierarchy to construct desirable choices through a multidirectional web of power relations rather than the unilateral force of domination (Gallagher, 2008), which I believe mirrors much of the teacher-student relations in the SNU (see chapters 7 for further discussion).

In all these complex situations, the idea of equalizing power relations within the research production took on different forms, as I found myself negotiating my position in the multiple hierarchies of the school. I had to find a way of interacting reciprocally with students while acknowledging my position as a ‘Miss’. It took an extended period of observation and several critical incidents to come up with a playful method that helped bridging some of these tensions and yielded a wealth of surprising and multilayered data, which I will now turn to.

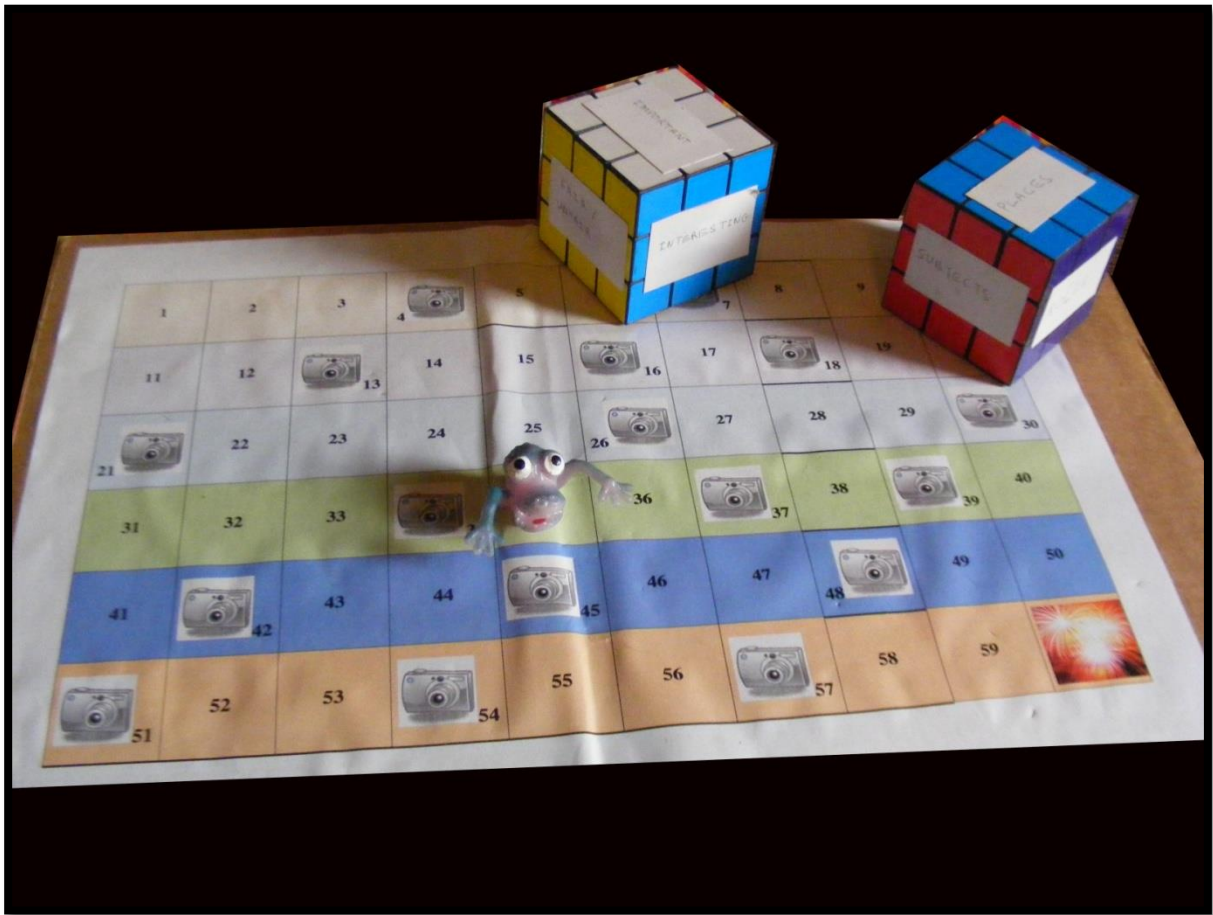
PREFIGURATIVE RESEARCH – DESIGNING THE BEST SCHOOL IN THE WORLD

The best school in the world project was a series of five creative workshops, each lasting 2 hours. A group of five pupils in years 8 and 9, three of whom were boys and two girls, participated in the workshops in which we discussed what the best school in the world would be like. All sessions were audio-recorded and later transcribed. The drama activity in session five was video recorded, and pictures were taken of all art work produced in the workshops. The participants were selected and approached by Miss D and Mrs K to create a group that represented the variety of students (and their varying “impairment labels”) in the unit. Students’ parents or legal guardians received a printed information sheet and were asked to sign a consent form within one week (appendix 1d). The students were provided with accessible information sheets and consent forms (appendix 1e) at the beginning of the first and second workshops, which was followed by a group reading of the forms and negotiation of their meaning, viewing consent as an on-going process rather than as a

distinct event (Swain et al., 1998). A detailed discussion of how the utopian and playful structure of the group workshops had worked to challenge and construct relations of power, and the ethical and educational possibilities and dilemmas that were posed by this structure are further discussed in chapter 8.

The first session was dedicated to teasing out participants' ideas about their current schooling through the use of a board game (see figure 2). Students moved a pawn across a board by throwing two dice. One die was marked with a list of six school related nouns (subjects, roles, equipment, places, rules, activities) and the second with a list of six adjectives (important, interesting, boring, fair/unfair, annoying, fun). Each student in turn threw the dice and completed the sentence. For example, a student who came up with "unfair places" replied – *'the library, because you have to be quiet and you can't speak, even if you sneeze they shush you'*. Once a student had played their turn other students were invited to move the pawn forward or backwards in agreement or disagreement with the statement made. The information gained through this activity was used to design the activities and themes of the following workshops, in accordance with both my '*researcher template*' (Goodley, 1999) and the students' views. In particular it became clear that students valued activities that are "fun" and include drama and music.

FIGURE 2: BOARD, PAWN AND DICE



The second workshop included creating life size models of the best teacher, the best student and the best friend through the use of arts and crafts (see figure 3-5). The third session was dedicated to rules, with students having to sort out a list of 30 rules (appendix 3a) into 3 categories – rules that must be in the best school in the world, rules that should never be in the best school and rules they don't care about, and to rank order the best and worst rules. We then conducted a discussion with the aim of making a group decision about the 3 best and worst rules. The list of rules was compiled by me according to observations and previous sessions with the students. When compiling the list I included three kinds of rules – rules that reflect the current situation in the school (e.g. having to wear a uniform of suit and tie), rules that are opposed to the current situation in the school (e.g. students can wear what they want) and “weird” rules (e.g. having to come to school naked), designed to

insert a sense of playfulness. The 4th session included students performing an improvised play of a scene of “the best school in the world” and a scene of “the school from hell” (figures 7 and 8). The 5th workshop was dedicated to building a cardboard model of the school (see figure 6) and summarising the research project. At the end of this session the students asked to perform again the play of the school from hell.

The drama activities were video-recorded and later adapted by me to a comic strip format, which allowed for representation and analysis embodied and spatially situated data (such as the use of space, movement posture etc.). The possibilities of such forms of representation and analysis are discussed in chapter 8. The process included viewing the videos over and over again to identify key plot events and capture suitable screen shots to represent them. This was followed by the use of several filters on the Fotosketcher software (available for free download from <http://www.fotosketcher.com>) to improve contrast and transform the photos into sketches. The images were re-coloured using PhotoFilter software (available for free download from <http://photofiltre.en.softonic.com>) to protect students anonymity and avoid recognition. Using Microsoft PowerPoint software the final images were arranged into story lines, and narration and speech bubbles were added where needed (in the “best school” comic a ClipArt illustration of musical notes was also added).

FIGURE 3: A MODEL OF THE IDEAL TEACHER

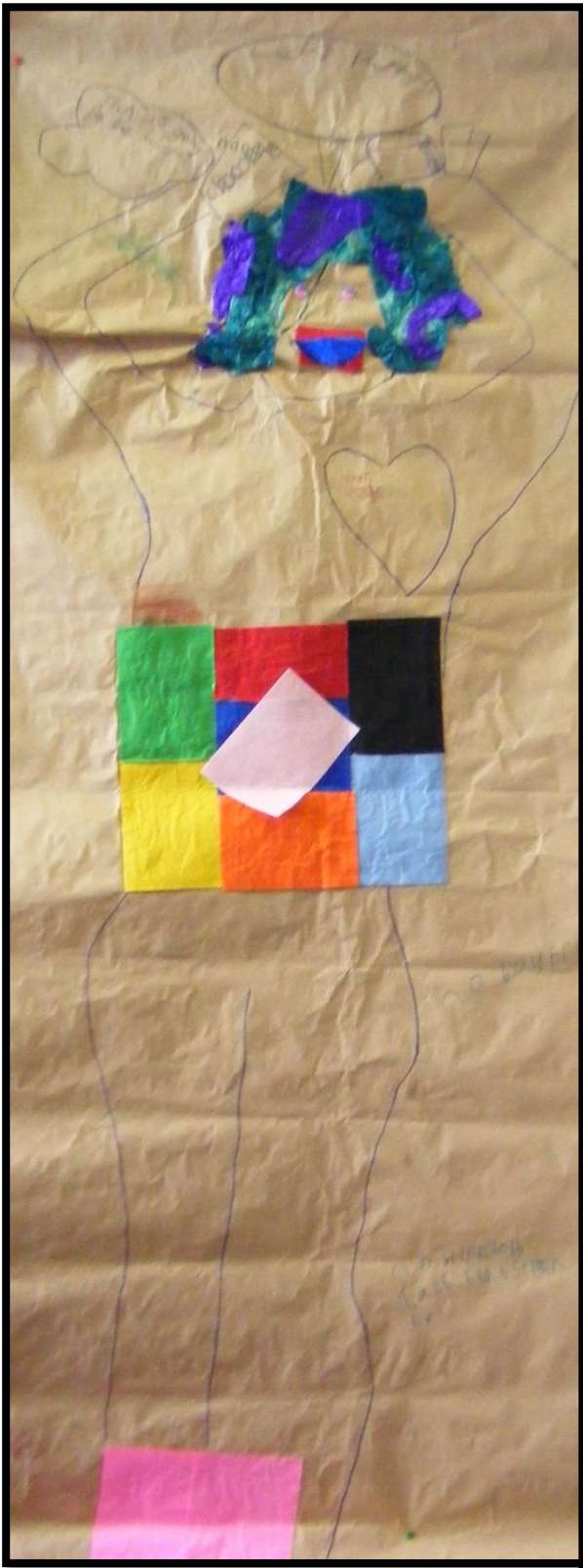


FIGURE 4: MODEL OF THE IDEAL STUDENT

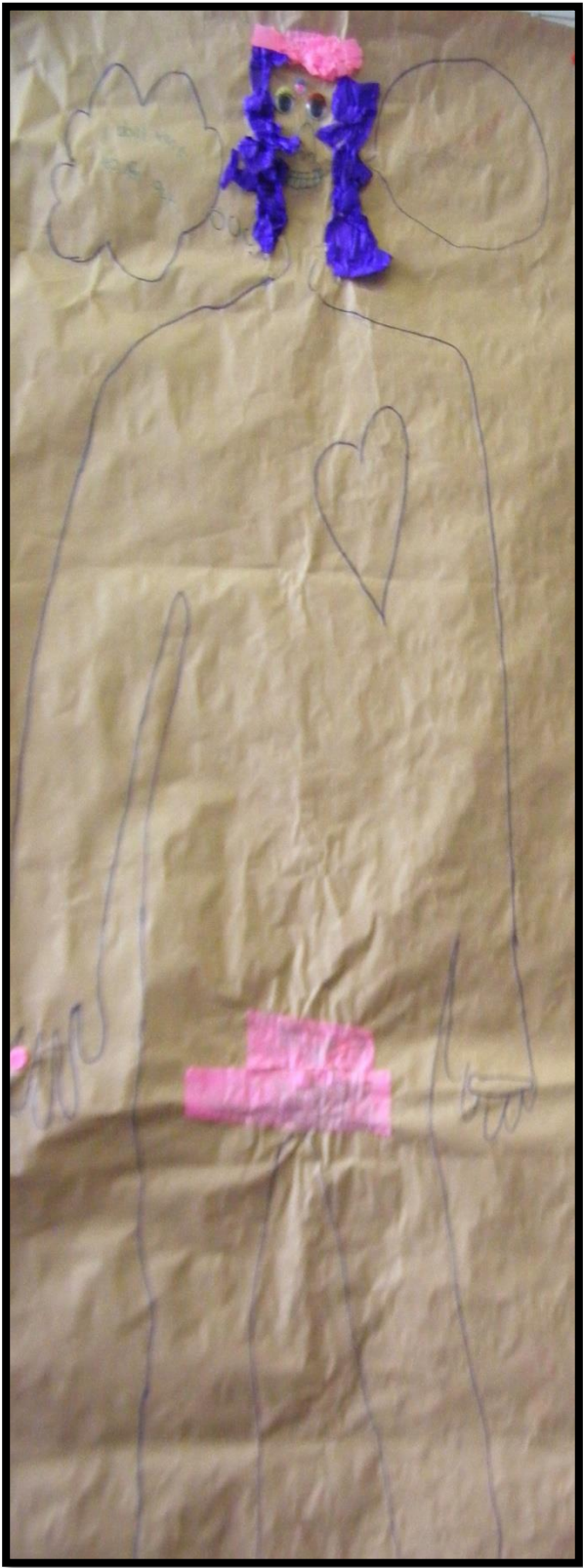


FIGURE 6: A MODEL OF THE BEST SCHOOL IN THE WORLD



FIGURE 7: A PLAY OF THE BEST SCHOOL IN THE WORLD



FIGURE 8: A PLAY OF THE SCHOOL FROM HELL



The motivation to develop the ‘best school in the world’ workshops was not only due to the need to develop methods to interact with students without reifying a position of authority over them, but part of the broader methodological approach and political commitments that stand at the base of the research. As Lather (1991, p. 172) puts it:

We who do empirical research in the name of emancipatory politics must discover ways to connect our research methodology to our theoretical concerns and political commitments.

As I believe in praxis as a cycle of theory and practice it seemed necessary (and indeed desirable) to incorporate radical and inclusive engagement with students with diverse abilities into my own research practice. The aim was both to gain insight from students’ own ideas about their desired education, and to try and “practise what I preach” by using what might be called *prefigurative research*.

As discussed in chapter 4, the term prefigurative practice is used in radical political movements to call for

The embodiment within the ongoing political practice of movement, of those forms of social relation, decision making, culture and human experience that are the ultimate goal

(Boggs, 1978, p. 100).

In other words, the possibility of a different world should not be seen as a distant place we will one day dramatically arrive at, but as a set of principles and values that guide the process of liberation. Applied to research, the term ‘*prefigurative action research*’ was coined by Burton (1983) as a way of combining these utopian and critical tendencies. Similar to ‘critical action research’ (Lather, 1986a) it was defined as the attempt to ‘*simultaneously create images of what could be possible while exploring and documenting the actual limits imposed by the current system*’ (Burton, 1983, p. 67). Kagan & Burton (2000, p. 4), have further developed the concept, defining it as ‘*a way of conceptualizing the active process of learning, in a systematic way, from the experience of attempted progressive social innovation*’.

Adopting Harding's (1987) claim that methodology is ideology, I use the term *prefigurative research* to mean research that is committed to changing social reality rather than just describing or representing it, ***and that its very methodology embodies the desired change***. In other words, in prefigurative research the method employed is not just a tool to arrive at data, but in itself constitute a major part of the data and analysis. In the case of my research, embodying the desired change meant looking for a methodology that could open up different ways of interacting with participants, data and audience, which strive for connection while maintaining difference and separateness, and that value embodied and emotional aspects of experience just as much as the verbal and rationale. Further, I wanted to engage with students while resisting the strong adult child hierarchies of the school culture and allowing for multiple and accessible ways for critical reflection and collective imagining. In chapter 8 I will explore how this design, and in particular the use of group activity, multiple creative methods and a playful utopian goal have contributed to a methodology that stresses four of the core values guiding this research – inclusivity; rhizomatic interdependency; reciprocity of power; and commitment to social change.

A word of caution is needed here; I do not argue that there is some universal methodology that is inherently and completely democratic, non-hierarchical and inclusive. Methods, just like people, are never without context, and any method in any research is always embedded in social structures and power dynamics, from the specific relations between the researcher and the participants and between participants themselves, to the institutional relations (in my case being an adult working with young students in a school) and the larger social relations such as gender, class, ethnicity and dis/ability; which are often (but not always) anything but democratic and inclusive. Indeed, I discuss in chapter 8 the possibilities that were opened up by the use of these methods as well as the shortcomings and moral dilemmas that came up during the research process. However, I do argue that

constant reflexive engagement with the process of producing and analysing data is necessary for research committed to minimising the amount and degree of its oppressive consequences.

ANALYSIS

This section outlines the two different approaches to analysis taken in this research. First I will discuss the use of framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) to analyse the content arising from the ethnographic work at the school (including observations, interviews with teachers and ideas expressed by the students during the creative workshops), as well as the themes arising from the interviews with activists in the DPM. Second, I will explain how the use of prefigurative methodology that aims to embody alternative social relations requires a different understanding of what constitutes data, and therefore a different approach to analysis, as the *process* of doing research constitutes in itself a focus of analysis. Lather's (1986b) configuration of validity in openly ideological research is used to justify the choice of these approaches to analysis.

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS AND SCHOOL ETHNOGRAPHY

In answering research question 2 (*What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the analytical accounts of activists in the DPM movement and in campaigns for inclusive education?*) and research question 3 (*What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from looking at the educational practices in a "special needs" unit in an innovative secondary school?*), a framework analysis approach (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) was used to explore data from interviews with activists and from the ethnographic research in the school. Framework analysis allows for the inductive interpretation of content emerging from the data, within a priori identified frameworks. This approach suited my epistemological

position (outlined earlier) that understands knowledge as co-constructed, subjective and embedded in experience, and as operating through a web of often unequal power relations. Such epistemological position requires a system of analysis that is driven by meanings, interpretations and experiences of research participants, while remaining aware of the wider social relations in which those meanings and interpretations are created (Lather, 1986a).

Framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) involves a systematic process of sifting, charting and sorting materials according to key issues and themes. This process includes 5 stages:

- *Familiarisation*: through transcription and reading of the data.
- *Identifying a thematic framework*: this is the initial coding framework which is developed both from a priori issues and from emergent issues from the familiarisation stage. This thematic framework is developed and refined during subsequent stages.
- *Indexing*: the process of applying the thematic framework to the data, using codes to identify specific pieces of data which correspond to differing themes
- *Charting*: the process by which data is lifted from its original context and organised according to the identified themes.
- *Mapping and Interpretation*: the process of searching for patterns, associations, concepts, and explanations in the data, aided by visual displays and plots. Ritchie and Spencer acknowledge that '*this part of the analytical process is the most difficult to describe*' (1994, p. 168), and depends on the nature of the specific research questions and data.

For the purpose of this research, the data from the interviews and ethnographic research in the school were read with regards to the theoretical framework outlined in the

researcher template. This allowed for a dialogical construction of concepts, influenced both by the researcher's theoretical background and ideological commitments and by meanings and interpretations arising from participants. For Lather (1986b), this dialogical construction of concepts is necessary for ensuring the construct validity of openly ideological research. It is necessary to explicitly describe how theoretical ideas have been changed and reinterpreted through engagement with research participants in order to avoid what Lather calls '*theoretical imposition*' (p.67).

In a cyclical process of familiarisation, identification of frameworks, indexing, charting, and going back and forth between the two sets of data, four broad issues were identified:

- The politics of difference
- Belonging and relationships
- Approaches to learning
- Power, authority and autonomy

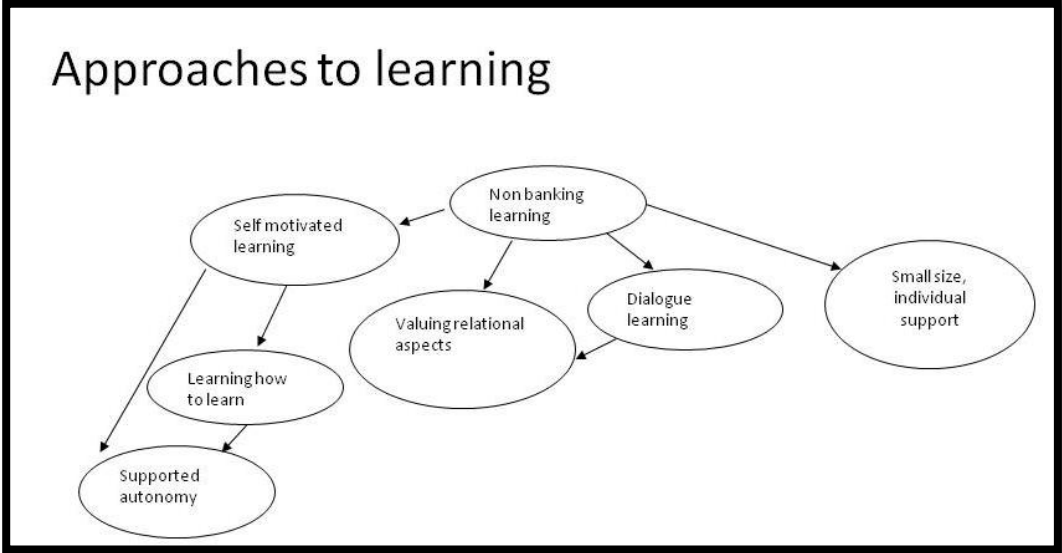
Each of these is explored and discussed in relation to the interviews with activists (chapter 6) and the school ethnography (chapter 7). The exploration of these four issues across the two sets of data, is in accordance with Lather's (1986b) demand for triangulation between different sources of data as a condition for validity.

To aid the process of analysis and writing, the issues were represented using thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001)⁷, which explore the relations between different themes making up a certain issue, as well as between the different issues. As an example, figure 9

⁷ This method was used as a visual aid to assist in the stages of charting and mapping outlined by Ritchie & Spencer (1994). However, it is worth noting that my approach to analysis is different than the one advocated by Attride-Stirling, who takes a more inductive approach that does not explicitly allow for a researcher template or framework.

shows the thematic network for the issue ‘*approaches to learning*’, taken from the interviews with activists. While many of the themes outlined in this diagram specifically concern this issue, two of the themes – ‘*valuing relational aspects of learning*’ and ‘*supported autonomy*’ – are also major themes under ‘*belonging and relationships*’ and ‘*power, authority and autonomy*’ respectively. These diagrams were used as a tool for organising and identifying the data, and thus assisted the writing up of the analysis.

FIGURE 9: THEMATIC NETWORK OF *APPROACHES TO LEARNING* BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH ACTIVISTS



PREFIGURATIVE ANALYSIS

As argued above, the “best school in the world” workshops were a form of prefigurative research, i.e. an attempt to produce, within the boundaries of the research project, those very relations that I argue constitute radical inclusive pedagogy. Thus, prefigurative research requires an approach to analysis that is focused on the *process* of doing research rather than merely on the verbal and visual content that is produced by participants. The creative workshops were designed to create an inclusive and enabling environment that would allow

for learning and co-producing knowledge about education. They provided a space for supported critical reflection and for collective explorations of experiences and the social structures in which they occur, and thus needed to be explored as a site of radical inclusive pedagogy.

In chapter 8 I seek to answer research question 4 (*What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the process of conducting playful research workshops with a group of students in a “special needs” unit?*) by using vignettes to explore how the different aspects of the workshops (play, group setting, multi method) enabled specific pedagogical relations. In other words, this prefigurative analysis explores what an educational environment that takes radical inclusive pedagogy as its starting point might look like in practice (for further details see chapter 8, and particularly table 5, p.258).

The use of reflexive analysis that focuses on the process of doing research also sits well with Lather’s (1986b) concept of validity, which stresses the need for reflexive subjectivity of the researcher, as well as attention to what she calls ‘*catalytic validity*’. Catalytic validity refers to the degree to which the research process re-orient, focuses, and energizes participants in what Freire (1972a) terms conscientization, knowing reality in order to better transform it. For Lather, the need for catalytic validity is premised not only on a recognition of the reality-altering impact of the research process itself, but also on the need to consciously channel this impact so that respondents gain self-understanding and, ideally, self-determination through research participation. At the end of the workshops, many of the students have testified about the importance of the process itself (rather than any specific content) to their empowerment and learning. In response to my question whether they have learnt anything new Jeff had testified that he learnt how to ‘*handle things*’ and ‘*how to have fun*’, while Rachel commented that she learnt to stand up for herself and that ‘*I don’t have to*

give up on things'. Thus, the meaning of research lies not only in its "findings", but also in the kind of relations that are enacted through it.

CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined my methodological influences, how these affected the methods over the two contexts of my research, some of the ethical dilemmas I have faced along the way, and finally how I have approached analysis. Following my arguments in previous chapters, I understand knowledge (and research as a form of knowledge production) as a political process imbued in multiple relations of power. Negotiating ethically through this web of power requires commitment to reciprocity, gain and empowerment (Oliver, 1992), as well as constant reflexivity and explicit discussion of the researcher's positioning within the research (Lather, 1986a, 1986b). Conducting the research was a multi-layered process of dialogue, which began with identifying tensions between my practice as a speech and language therapist in Israel/Palestine and my political commitments as an anarchist feminist, continued in an extensive literature review to inform my thinking about what I meant by, and what I wanted to know about, radical inclusive pedagogy. The dialogue between my personal, political and professional experience, and theory and findings from the academic and activist literature had led to the creation of the researcher's template. This template had informed not only the kind of questions I was asking research participants, but also what I noticed in the answers, or indeed what constituted "data". It had also influenced the way I interacted with participants, and the ways I thought about those interactions, adopting a stance of inspiration and using prefigurative research to critically explore not only education as it is, but also as it could be. Also the analysis process, while not conducted with participants, still included a dialogical element, not only between the researcher's template and the ideas emerging from participants, but also between the different sets of data. Thus,

in chapter 6 I outline issues arising from the interviews with activists, and in chapter 7 I draw on these insights to analyse the practices in the SNU. Chapter 8 explores the process of conducting the creative workshops with the students, arguing that this process in itself can be read as a site of (attempted) radical inclusive pedagogy.

CHAPTER 6

ACTIVISTS' VISIONS OF EDUCATION AND HOW THEY MAY INFORM RADICAL INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

INTRODUCTION

In chapter 4 I have argued for the relevance of ‘*movement knowledge*’ (Cox & Flesher Fominaya, 2009) to radical inclusive pedagogy, which understands education as an on-going, inter-subjective and *political* process. This chapter will explore the themes that emerged from interviews with activists in the disabled people’s movement and in campaigns for inclusive education, asking how these can inform a vision of radical inclusive pedagogy (research question 2). As discussed in chapter 5, my reading of the analytical accounts provided in the interviews was done with particular attention to issues identified in the *researcher’s template* (Goodley, 1999), which included an understanding of disability as socially constructed, valuing interdependence and *distributed competence* (Booth & Booth, 1998), and a view of education as a relational and political process committed to minimising relations of domination and oppression. This process of reading as a dialogue between “data” and researchers’ interests and positions meant that while a wide range of issue came through the interviews, in this chapter I will focus my analysis around four major themes – *the politics of difference*, *contextualising learning*, *resisting hierarchies*, and the understanding of *education as a relational process of becoming*.

Exploring the way educational practices engage and inscribe categories of difference is a major aspect of critical pedagogy. Giroux (2003, p. 10) calls attention to the way ‘*issues related to gender, class, race and social orientation*’ are often contained in schools through ‘*a systematic pattern of exclusion, punishment and failure*’, that oppress and marginalise students. Notions of difference and diversity have emerged strongly in interviews with activists, revealing complex understandings of the social processes of othering and identity construction, as well as pointing to the need to value diversity as a starting point for inclusive education that may overcome “*the repetition of exclusion and the use of a complex system of pathologies to define, divide and treat difference*” (Allan, 2008, p. 65). While many of the interviewees stressed the importance of diversity as an ontological state of human existence and as central aspect of their political engagement, they have also pointed out to the hardships of being constantly seen as different and described their struggles to find an identity group based on feelings of sameness which they saw as validating. Interestingly, this was expressed in a mixed approach to identifying with an impairment label, moving between a discourse of pride and self-validation that had emerged from being part of an “impairment group” or a more general group of disabled people, to a discourse that challenges the labelling process as stigmatising and sees disabled people as being “just like anybody else”. Those different positions were often taken by the same people at different points of the conversation and can be seen as representing a reaction to a social order that insists on imposing normalcy and classifying difference as something that needs to be neatly explained or justified through medical categories.

The need to celebrate diversity as a core feature of human existence was stressed by many of the interviewees as an important part of their political agendas:

I think diversity is something I have always seen in my own perception and something I want more acceptance of. To me, the nature of life in the universe is diversity.

(Interview with Damian Milton, p.5)

I'd say the headline [of the ideal world] is everybody is different but equal. The fact that you are just breathing... you start from the premises that everybody's got something to contribute, regardless of whether that's of economic or any other value. So it's about recognising that we all are on this world together, we all have different areas of strength that we possess, and we all have something to offer.

(Interview with Simone Aspis, p. 4)

This is a concept of diversity that is not just a euphemism for disability. Diversity was not seen as stemming from the bodies or minds of those socially identified as 'Others', or tied to any specific group, but rather as an ontology of human (and non-human) existence. This, Allan (2008) argues, is similar to Deleuze's affirmative concept of difference, one that is not defined in negative relation to some norm or sameness, but is seen as the ontology of every phenomenon:

Every phenomenon refers to an inequality by which it is conditioned...Everything which happens and everything which appears is correlated with orders of difference: difference of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, difference of intensity

(Deleuze, 2004, p. 280 cited in Allan, 2008, p.66)

For some participants, having an impairment label, i.e. being identified as categorically different from the norm, meant spending all or some of their education in segregated special schools. They all described this experience in negative terms, which was mostly related to the feeling that their skills and abilities were not appreciated or developed in the special school, thus deskilling and disabling them further:

In the primary special school I remember being in a standing frame all day and having a lot of physiotherapy but not a lot of learning. In the mainstream primary school it was different than boring special school.

(Interview with Kate Caryer, p. 2)

In elementary school I was in a special school. They basically made us into basket weavers and secretaries and I didn't feel like it. [...] and I was talented and I wanted eventually to go to college, you know. Also mainstream society, I wanted to be in a mainstream school.

(Interview with Marianne, p.8)

I went to a special school and through being in a special school I became disabled and had fewer opportunities, vocational, academic. [...]The thing with special schools is that it breeds prejudice, it breeds ignorance, it breeds a sense that you are less worthy than other people, you have less opportunities, it reinforces stereotypes against disabled people, reinforces a self-fulfilling prophecy – you know, if you are not in mainstream you aren't good enough to be in mainstream, and therefore you are in something that is clearly second best.

(Interview with Simone Aspis, p. 8)

As can be seen in these quotes, the experience of segregated education was disabling and denied research participants access to a broad curriculum and the development of knowledge and skills. Ironically, while the justification for special schools is their supposed *accessibility*, these testimonies clearly show that they work to restrict their students' learning and life chances, acting as barriers rather than enablers and further marginalising their students. This process of '*self-fulfilling prophecy*', by which students who are identified as likely to fail mainstream schooling are being failed by special schools, was elaborately discussed in chapter 3. It constitutes serious material barriers to students' education and socialisation and therefore can be easily interpreted using the classic social model understanding, which locates disability in *structural* aspects of society rather than in internal processes of the individual (Oliver, 1996; and also see chapter 2).

Educational segregation excludes difference and makes social participation conditional on satisfying bodily, cognitive and emotional norms. This exclusion does not only work materially to reify disability by providing disabled students with less

educational opportunities and thus preventing them from important means of participating in current society; but also works to maintain the status quo and discourage change by screening out difference thus reifying the notion that sameness and normalcy are natural facts and that changing society is therefore unneeded and impossible (Michalko, 2009). With disabled students out of sight, in special schools or special units, the need to drastically change the education system can be dismissed as an idealistic dream of some out-of-touch do-gooders rather than recognised as a burning social issue.

The framing of disabled students or students with ‘SEN’ as constituting a categorically different group from the majority of the school population also works to reinforce ‘psycho-emotional aspects of disability’ (Thomas, 1999, and see also chapter 2). Reeve (2002) builds on Foucault’s (2000) understanding of subjectivity as the manner in which identity emerges from the interactions of discourses, ideologies and institutional practices rather than being a product of the self-governing conscious self, to explore disability identity. Reeve argues that the interplay of the different relations of power together with current economic and socio-cultural processes that work to marginalise and de-value disabled people play a major role in shaping people’s disability identity. This notion of internalised oppression as shaping desires and identities was echoed by research participants, both those who attended special schools and those who attended mainstream settings –

*I did identify as a feminist but not as a disabled person. I think it was because I went to a special school; **there were always negative connotations to being disabled** when I was younger. I was sent away from my family, I didn’t have the confidence – I wasn’t performing like non-disabled people so I got less than non-disabled people. [...] **It was all about being less worthy, I was segregated, the emphasis was about what was different about me in a negative way, and in my holidays the focus was on getting me to doctors and psychologist trying to fix me [...]** I was getting a lot of negative perceptions from my school, from my family, from society, I was always the problem, not that I was segregated, I was getting less opportunities, nobody saw that as justified anger but I was seen as having emotional difficulties because I was not accepting the way things are and should be. **And because of that I internalised a lot of the negativity.***

(Interview with Simone Aspis, p. 3, emphasis added)

*My social life... I had to spend the majority of breaks and lunch time cooped up in the special needs area of the school just to get away from people [...]I also had to deal with bullying because **I was socially inapt and of course an easy target.** [...]I was also taken out of lessons when things just... **I was trying desperately to keep up appearances, keep up face,** but there were times when things just got so upsetting for me. [...] I'd be taken out of classes because I was nearly on the verge of breaking into tears or in tears, and then **I'd resent the fact that I had been taken out of class and I was trying desperately to behave in ways that would stop me from being persecuted** [...] I had some assistance and they [other students] didn't have any classroom assistance, they rise and fall by the merit of their own work and **I wanted to be judged like everyone else was judged.***

(Interview with Tom, pp.3-4)

*I think **I just felt really stupid** and ... they were trying to teach me how to read phonetically, and I ended up having to go out of class quite a lot. And that also kind of didn't help the situation when **I didn't have any friends and had to be excluded, going away from class.***

(Interview with Lily, pp. 1-2, emphasis added)

*It's mainstreaming but it's not mainstreaming. You do things together but you do things apart. And there was a **differential treatment.** [...] We had this thing, they called it rest PE which meant that you didn't have to go outside for any exercise, and you just went to the library or in my case back to the home room. And all these areas in which socialisation would occur were absent for me, **ghettoised** again. And you know, a kid doesn't have the social resources or understanding... **there is probably in many kids with disabilities a sense of embarrassment or shame about their disabilities, and this practice was kind of inductive or sort of enabling of that.** Again, under the guise or intent of kindness, or care, but what it did is **it removed me every week from the hours other kids were having social contact and isolated me.** I'm a social guy and I like people and all that. The blind and visually impaired kids that I had contact with who didn't have these resources further played into this **spiral of self-doubt and isolation.***

(Interview with BB, p.2, emphasis added)

This 'spiral of self-doubt and isolation' and the feeling of self-loathing described by many of the interviewees alongside the taxing work to 'keep up appearances' and be more like 'everyone else' described by Tom, is not attributed to difference in itself. Rather, it is the singling out of specific forms of difference, tied to a notion of difference as a negative lack, that produces this form of internalised oppression. Research participants' experiences of school were of an environment that

assumes normalcy as natural, and acts to enforce and encourage sameness (Davis, 1995; Michalko, 2009). Against this backdrop, difference can only be interpreted as a problem, stemming from the body or minds of specific individuals –

Having a problem is not a strange experience insofar as we all have them. Being a problem, in contrast, is a different matter. What is both different and strange about the experience of being a problem is that some of us – ... disabled people in [this case] – is one of the problems (troubles) that other people have.

(Michalko, 2009, p. 67)

In all the quotes brought above, participants tie together the experience of being singled out from the supposedly homogeneous group of “everyone else”, being identified as the *only* one with the problem, and consequently embodying or being the problem. As Michalko (2009) argues, the norm is identified in this discourse with “reality” – a “real” school experience is the one that non-disabled students have, and disabled students experiences are a somewhat distorted version of this reality. As research participants testify, they came to understand and conduct their experience through this discourse, thus leading them to understand themselves as the problem and rejecting the identification of disability, either by hating their disabled self or by trying to “pass” (McRuer, 2006), working on themselves to appear as normal as possible.

However, the Foucauldian analysis of the working of governmentality and the regimes of power/knowledge in the creation of subjectivity is not unilateral. Rather, Foucault (2000) argues that people’s use of knowledge/power as ‘technologies of the self’, in which they act in relation to available knowledges to shape their identity, can also include elements of resistance to the current social order. Many of the activists who participated in the interviews, reported on a sense of validation and pride that came from having an impairment label *combined with* getting acquainted with the social

model of disability. This validation is described by Cameron (2008, p. 23) as the affirmation model, which he defines as

An affirmative understanding of impairment as valid difference provides a basis within which to root claims for inclusion as equals within a diverse society; while an understanding of disability as socially-imposed restriction of activity involves an acceptance of the need to address barriers to equality.

This combination of the politics of difference with the politics of equality has allowed participants to connect their experiences with those of others, enabled a sense of agency, and allowed their difference to be conceptualised as a source of power rather than as a negativity to be eradicated:

After my son was diagnosed, I started to self-identify as autistic by reading autobiographical kind of accounts. Because when I first looked at things like the diagnostic criteria I didn't think they represented my son at the time either, so by trying to get my head around what it all meant I was trying to read the narratives of people on the spectrum and I started to realise they had a lot in common with my own. [...] There's a kind of a name for it, for my way of being. Before then I felt like I was kind of an oddity in a sense of how my brain works, and it didn't seem to fit in anything. [...] Meeting other autistic people, I suppose, made me think 'yes, this is the kind of groups I want to be involved with'. It's a political thing because how it has affected me in life and also my son. So there is this kind of personal connection there. And then it's identifying with autistic people more generally and thinking that a lot of the bad stuff that happened to me over the years have also happened to other people and so that's kind of a public issue to speak of, it isn't just me who is going through this, it is a lot of people like me who I identify with and get on well with who are having very similar struggles to what I have. And so it sort of inspires the political part in oneself to do something about it, or make things a bit better for autistic people more generally.

(Interview with Damian Milton, p.2)

This quote from Damian captures the essential differences that many of the participants pointed to between perceiving their difference or impairment as a negative burden and a source of stigma, to positively identifying as disabled and actively seeking engagement with disability or impairment based groups. For Damian, finding a name for his difference through identifying with people's autobiographical accounts rather than through medical criteria based on deficit language, had allowed him to identify with the label as describing his 'way of being', rather than as something that restricts

him from fully being (see also Milton, 2012). This identification is based on the understanding of (in this case) autism as a part of life rather than as a distorted form of life or a signifier of death (Glennon, 2012; Michalko, 2009). This positive identification is an act of resistance against the hegemonic bio-medical discourse in that it opens alternative ways to understanding the experience of being autistic, thus impacting on the process of subjugation – becoming a subject. As Reeve (2002) argues, the affirmative culture produced by the disabled people’s movement is an effective means of resistance to psycho-emotional aspects of disability. Further, positively identifying as autistic motivated Damian to form a political analysis of autism and actively challenge oppressive social structures, thus widening the influence of identification from being a technology of the self that changes subjectivity, to inspiring resistance on a social level. In chapter 4 I have discussed the role of the disabled people’s movement in supporting these processes of ‘*conscientization*’ (Freire, 1972a) – the understanding of personal experiences within their wider political contexts – which, according to Freire, is a necessary step towards challenging oppression.

Most of the activists who were interviewed for this research described similar experiences to those of Damian. While they all rejected the compulsory segregation of disabled students, many of them valued the opportunity to meet with other disabled people or people with similar impairment labels when these meetings were *chosen* rather than imposed on them. For example, BB described how the experience of meeting with other blind adults had changed his life and led him to think back about his schooling experience. While in the mainstream school he felt he was expected to hide his blindness to the greatest extent possible, in “blind training” he did not only learn to use an array of assistive technologies that enabled him to take more control of his life, but has also gained a positive identity and a sense of confidence which were contradictory to the

shame and embarrassment he felt in school. This led him to reflect on the need to change the underlying philosophy of educational mainstreaming which conditions inclusion on keeping an appearance of sameness:

The movement to mainstream is based on the idea that the blind kids would look as normal as possible. [...] The fact that you are physically present in the room with students without disability does not give you the capabilities that are at the true heart of self-confidence. [...] 15 years ago they didn't give you a white cane as a blind person until you graduated high school. They thought students would use that as swords or be disruptive or god knows what. But behind that was a sense of ... these are not tools, these are stigmata, these are shameful signs of disability rather than... and I say – load them up! Get that identification out of the way and get people to be able to do things!

(Interview with BB p.6)

Similarly, parent activists have described how getting a diagnosis for their children had worked to relieve anxiety and deflect criticism of their parenting. While even the diagnosis in itself provided some relief by shifting the cause of “the problem” from the parent to an “objective” impairment, for the parents interviewed in this research it was discovering the social model that allowed for a real sense of empowerment:

Before [hearing about the social model] I thought that there was something the matter with my son and that it was my responsibility to fix it. [...] And I thought medical experts can help solve this problem. Learning about the social model made me realise it wasn't his problem, it was my problem, and the society that was setting barriers for him. And that was the significance; it was such a relief actually. I knew when he was about 4 months old that there was something different, and first it was 'there's nothing the matter you are just being anxious, then there was something matter which was clearly my fault because he wasn't developing properly, and I was under pressure to make him close the gap to normal. And then I suddenly discovered – oh no, I don't have to take any of this shit, because actually he is who he is, and other people just need to adjust, not me adjust him which was what I thought I needed to do before.

(Interview with Darth Vader, p. 4)

What is evident in this quote is the shift of blame and shame associated with difference. First, before her son received an official diagnosis, it was Darth Vader who was identified as the source of negative difference, being seen as an anxious mother whose concerns are not worthy of attention by social agents such as doctors and welfare

professionals. In their research about acquiring the diagnostic label of learning disabilities, Gillman et al (2000) argue that a common response to the embeddedness of the medical discourse in our society is to understand difference as deviance that requires medical assistance. Thus, many parents and carers that were interviewed for their study were relieved when acquiring diagnosis for their children, as this provided them with a scientific (read: “socially respected”) word by which to explain their children’s behaviour. This expert word was used to deflect constant questions and curiosity to which they were exposed in social situation, as it tied the difference to a realm of scientific or medical expertise rather than to lay parenting advices. However, while the official diagnosis serves as effective means to resist the public gaze, it leaves parents exposed to professional gaze and intervention which aims to improve diagnosed children’s lives by making their parents into mini- professionals (Leiter, 2004). For Darth Vader, as well as for other parent participants in the research, it was the social model of disability that allowed a positive identification with difference, making the environment the object of change rather than striving to normalise the child’s behaviour.

So far we have seen that, while all research participants have objected to segregated special education, they agreed that the practices of individualising and pathologising difference continue within mainstream educational settings, even when the official discourse is that of inclusion. Further, they have demonstrated the power of self-chosen interaction with other disabled people as a way to legitimise difference and validate their experiences. Campbell (2008, p. 155) discusses the importance of distinguishing between segregation, which is a process that is enforced on the subject as part of what she calls ‘*diagnostic apartheid*’, and separation, which is a process of creating sanctuaries where members of marginalised groups can interact with one another and heal the wounds of internalised oppression. The physical presence of

disabled students in mainstream classes is not enough to make these classes inclusive as long as they depend on a view that affirms normalcy and classifies difference into bio-medical categories of deviance. All research participants have thus called for a pedagogy that assumes difference and diversity as core aspects of human existence.

This re-configuration of difference requires schools and policy makers to develop an understanding of how differential positions of people “*affect the way they affect and are affected by different social, economic and political projects*” (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 4). To this end, Simone Aspis argued in the interview, disability should be included in the curriculum not just as an object of pity and charity or as an inspirational moral tale, but as a historical and political phenomenon:

In an ideal school you would want to see representation of disabled people across a range of materials. If we are talking about social action why are we not talking about the disabled people's movement? Why are we still talking about the negative images of disabled people in literature, you know like the hunch back of Notre Dame? So it's about looking at the literature, what we teach, how we teach within schools, and giving young people the opportunity to question this. And maybe through their learning they can reconstruct and be using disabled people as positive role models.

(Interview with Simone Aspis, p. 12)

Further, many of the interviewees have insisted that the inclusion of diverse staff and in particular of disabled teachers within schools is a key feature of inclusive education. Inclusivity is not just measured by the presence of disabled students alongside their non-disabled age peers, but requires a shift in curriculum and culture that will open up different opportunities and roles to disabled people. Including disabled staff in schools can allow students and other staff to interact with disabled people in positions of relative power and authority and not just as recipients of help. This is not say that disabled teachers should only be those who rely on little help or support, to the contrary, by employing teachers with a wide variety of support needs in schools, the binary oppositions of dependency and independency, power and weakness, can be challenged and blurred, and interdependency and mutual support can be recognised as

central to human existence. Further, the insistence on encouraging the employment of disabled teachers as part of inclusive education policy is a prefigurative action that changes social reality not just by potentially changing the attitudes of staff and students towards disability, but also by forcing schools to become more accessible and by creating real employment opportunities for disabled adults.

I have opened this section with the quote from Giroux (2003, p. 10) urging critical educators to challenge the ways categories of difference are contained within schools through ‘*a systematic pattern of exclusion, punishment and failure*’, arguing with Allan (2008) for an understanding of difference as ever present and ever changing, an inherent feature of existence. Yet, while such a view of difference suggests the need to do away with fixed and essentialist categories (such as man/woman, blind/sighted, white/black, “normal”/“special”), the interviews with activists have offered complex positions on the role of such categories in the process of challenging disablism in education. Identifying as disabled on a political level allowed activists to counter the internalised oppression that stems from discourses of disability as an individual tragedy, and the interrogation of disability as a *collective* political and historical phenomenon was seen as a necessary step for radical inclusive pedagogy. This means that, as argued in chapter 4, the cultural, analytical and organisational knowledge that is being produced by the disabled people’s movement, can provide an invaluable resource for educators who are committed to inclusive practice in its broadest sense.

The tensions between promoting strong and positive identity and the valuing of difference will be further discussed throughout the following chapters. I will now turn to exploring activists ideas about how learning should be organised in radical inclusive pedagogy.

All of the respondents were critical of the current structure of schools that does not allow for valuing of diversity, with the main culprit being identified as the heavy reliance on standardised testing and the creation of norms and percentiles by which students are measured. Standardised tests privilege some forms of knowledge over others, and judge students attainment in these areas according to predetermined goals (Aspis, 1998). Further, the centrality of test scores to the school's position on league tables and OFSTED inspections affects the whole organisation of the school and leaves little room for any 'non-measurable' activity (Ball, 2008; Lipman, 2009, and see also chapter 3). It is important to stress that the objection of interviewees was not to assessment per se, but rather to the standardised and limited ways by which it is carried out, and to the centrality of test scores in the planning of the whole schooling experience:

So at the moment the only thing that seems to be valued in the education system is children's attainment and qualifications and passing tests, but it isn't going to be conducive for inclusive schools. So unless you pass exams, unless you reach particular standards your contribution to a learning environment is not valued. So the first thing you need to do is to do away with the whole assessment and qualification system because it influences how you organise your school, your learning, the learning techniques that you use and it dictates what you value and what you don't value in terms of the grades and levels you give students. If your focus is just about passing exams and testing than you've got less space and opportunity and less value put on important things such as relationships between teachers, children and parents, relationships between children themselves, less emphasis on extra curriculum activities where young people learn because they want to learn without the pressure on achievement and they are experimenting in their learning environment. So what you really need to do is to be looking at a much more personal way of assessing people and accrediting what they do, not against any predetermined standards. It's not that you shouldn't be doing this, because we all got to be assessed, but it's just about values.

(Interview with Simone Aspis, p.10)

I kind of appreciate the need for certificates in things and GCSEs and A levels although the goalpost just keeps moving away. 20 years ago you might have needed A levels for something and now you need a degree. I think the schools are doing their best to appease OFSTED and get the magic 5 A-C for their kids so it all becomes like a machine, the teachers the pupils, they are all part of the automation. And you get some good teachers, [...] but even then every teacher is still confined by the curriculum. But at the same time you do need some way of measuring, maybe not success as such but development, how ready is this child for life outside of a school. But league tables just cause all sorts of havoc*

(Interview with Tom, pp.5-6).

Thus, for research participants, the problem with the testing and assessment procedure of the school does not lie in the attempt to provide students, parents and teachers with feedback about their work and progress, which appears as positive and necessary, but rather with the values and assumptions that underlay the use of *standardised testing*. The logic of standardised testing relies on a functionalist approach to education (Skrtic, 1995). As discussed in chapter 3, this approach understands education as means for the distribution of knowledge, which is seen as a certain and objective body of facts about a single reality that is independent of humans' apprehension. This leads to what Freire (1972) calls the 'banking model of education', a model under which the role of the teacher is understood as a neutral transference of knowledge to students. The good teacher needs to effectively break down and deliver "packages of knowledge", and the good student needs to patiently receive, memorize, and repeat that knowledge. Education is thus not understood as a unique and relational *process* that supports students in constructing their subjectivities and becoming part of society, but as an end *product* that needs to be effectively manufactured and sold.

It is easy to see how understanding and planning of education as a product with the functionalist logic of an assembly line stands in contrast to the ideal of valuing diversity, as it assumes a finite and knowable in advance set of skills that each student needs to acquire and perform in similar ways. Further, understanding knowledge as objective and existing independently of human apprehension ignores critical pedagogy's

perspective which views knowledge as firmly rooted in a nexus of power relations (McLaren, 2009). This means that knowledge is created within social structures and has a social function in maintaining or challenging those structures. As argued in chapter 3, policies that call for inclusive education while ignoring the power knowledge relations try to integrate students into an oppressive structure rather than aiming to transform that structure. The “objective reality” reflected in standardised tests often represents white, middle class, non-disabled (possibly even disablist) culture and experience. Students whose experiences differ from that assumed universal reality, or who express their knowledge in diverse ways not recognised under the standardised testing system, might fail the tests and be seen as non-knowers or as having SEN (Reid & Weatherly Valle, 2004), thus locating the problem in the student rather than in the education system.

It is not only that tests are designed to assess only a limited range of human knowledge, but that the insistence on performing in detached and decontextualized ways fails students who actually know the subject matter but rely on other ways to demonstrate such knowledge. This point was raised by Alex who testified to the confusion between performance on standardised tests and the actual learning of the subject matter. She described how her son’s learning was misjudged by his school due to their insistence on measuring knowledge through standardised performance:

They say they can't get him to work, they can't assess his levels; they say he can't read, you can't understand anything he says. But actually this is completely rubbish; my son does applied science while he is playing in the soft play area. He was doing a science game about friction and two weeks later he is playing and says I just need to go down the slide with my socks off, I say 'why?' and he says 'the speed would be different'. He likes me timing him while he is running around doing things. So I asked him why is the speed different when you take your sock off and he said it is slower because of the friction. He learnt that in a science game. So he is clearly learning, he is clearly capable.

(Interview with Alex, p.5).

Illich (1971) warns against the dangers of schooling society, a process by which knowledge is institutionalised and comes to mean the attainment of certain

qualifications that represent performance on tests and the length of attendance in certain institutions. In the schooled society participation in many social arenas becomes dependent on gaining the right qualifications, and this, Illich argues, makes schools function as gatekeepers for knowledge rather than its disseminators, as it breaks down the relation between knowledge and the activity for which it is gained. The experience described by Alex serves as a powerful reminder of the danger of measuring performance in narrow pre-specified and de-contextualised ways – it is not only that the school did not support Alex’s son to learn in ways that are accessible to him, but also that the knowledge he did demonstrate was ignored and he was subsequently considered as incapable of learning. Thus, for research participants, the move towards inclusive practice in schools has to include scrapping standardised testing in favour of developing more flexible and personal approaches to both assessment and learning, which can support and value learning and development of a wide range of human capacities.

Many participants objected to the segmentation of knowledge into discrete subjects and its presentation in abstract context stripped from real life situations, arguing instead for learning that is based on problem solving and embedded in real life situations:

Most of the things I learnt in life I taught myself through reading, through observing more than interacting I’d say. [...] I learnt a great deal just by watching people and what they did. And I think my family was very important, my mom and my dad, because they encouraged my learning in my own way and for myself, and if they didn’t have an answer for something they’d take somewhere to find out. So I was always going to libraries, museums, galleries, historical sites. Everything I was doing outside of school had an educational value. And I guess interactions with my family taught me a great deal more than what I’ve learnt in school in terms of stuff I connected to.

(Interview with Damian Milton, p.10)

Marianne, remembered how as a teacher in a special education class in an inner-city in the USA, she found relating learning to students social environment and positioning

proved much more conducive to education than the reliance on de-contextualised text books:

I was supposed to teach reading from really inappropriate reading books, childish, and I didn't do that. I started teaching things that were really meaningful in life instead of 'when Johnny went down the little tree'. I started teaching what to do when you get stopped by the police or how to recognise a job ad from a scam ad.

(Interview with Marianne, p.5)

These experiences connect with Freire's (1972a) notion of pedagogy as the process of reading the world – exploring the connection between personal experiences and social context in which they are embedded – thus exposing the causes of social injustice bare and more readily challenged. Related to disability and different educational needs, participants insisted that teaching and exploration of the world should always be committed to acknowledging and fostering varied ways of participation and learning.

The majority of the respondents stressed the need for a diverse curriculum that incorporates a vast area of abilities and skills, including academic subjects, vocational training, art and performance and relational abilities (which will be further discussed in the next section). For example, Lily describes the school of her dreams, stressing, among other things, the need for a varied curriculum:

It wouldn't be really focused on getting a job, and wouldn't be focused much on reading and writing. It would be more focused around building community, I think, so things like, you know... learning to cook with each other or learning to build things with each other, or learning to write your experiences or interview people, or communication skills.

(Interview with Lily, p.12)

However, as the majority of the respondents argued, having a variety of options is not enough, but these options need to accorded equal value, in the school and in wider society, as Darth Vader puts it:

I think it's sort of wider than the school, it's about our attitudes towards what we value about people in education, [...] if we set up an education system that privileges certain ways of being more than other ways of being we are bugged really. Schools do that to an extent, the school my son is in does it to an extent. They have a very full curriculum, a car mechanics route and a hair dressing route and that's in with the people who are going on to Oxford and Cambridge, all those things are going on in the school so there's a blur. But when I went to the options evening for my daughter's [non-disabled] GCSEs, my son's route was not even on the program and it should have been there.

(Interview with Darth Vader, pp.11-12)

Thus, while the school in question offers different routes, it advertises certain routes to disabled students only, under the assumption that such routes will not be desirable by the non-disabled student population. There is a danger that without wider transformation of roles, relations, pedagogy and curricula within the school and within society, this kind of 'diversity' of routes, while presented as promoting choice and equality, might in fact become a form of stratification (Archer, 2007).

Closely related to the normalising regime of standardised testing are issues of age segregation and the school reification of age norms and developmental psychology discourses. Age segregation, while being an important aspect of social divisions, is rarely discussed in inclusive education literature. However, it is a key point in progressive and democratic philosophies of education (e.g. Holt, 1981; Medlin, 2000), which argue that socialisation is best achieved in age-integrated settings and object to the assumption that all children should learn certain things at *certain times* and in a certain order regardless of their interests and preferences. Schools are organised according to age cohorts, with the expectation that all children born on the same year will have similar needs, abilities and interests. Such heavy reliance on age as the main organising factor of school is based on a view of cognitive, social and emotional development as a standardized, almost universal process that is organized in stages and progresses in predictable and known ways. As Burman (2008) argues, such discourses

work to naturalise and individualise development, in which the child seems to progress alone, with the social context seen as a mere container or modulator of some internal processes that are on the move. Adherence to age grouping and age norms restricts diversity by forcing children to socialise within narrow age groups, which are assumed to be a sufficient common denominator. Children whose interests differ from those of their chronological age group are then exposed to social isolation and bullying from peers and to disabling judgments cast upon them by teachers and professionals. For example, Tom describes how the process of transition to secondary school has intimidated him due to the expectation that upon becoming a teenager he will immediately develop an interest in perusing sexual relationships:

I think the way they prepared us to secondary school and adolescence frightened me. All the stuff they said about adolescence and going out with girls, well, I'm happy sort of on my own reading a book or obsessing about trains and stuff. [...] To an extent I had an aversion to any female company whatsoever. It took me a good way into year 8 to get that talked out of me.

(Interview with Tom, p.3)

It is not only that the reliance on age grouping excludes students who can't embody such norms and labels their behaviour as deviant, but it also works to construct children as qualitatively different from adults, thus legitimising their status as

property of the institutions; their rights to full legal citizenship is delegated to legitimate "owners" (doctors, teachers, parents and guardians) who decide on their charges' behalf what is good for them

(Gore, 2004, p. 148).

Thus, even those children who can comply with "age appropriate" norms are restricted from actively participating in many aspects of community life. This restriction is enacted through the confinement of children to schools for an extended period of their lives, and through the reification of the prevalent idea that the spaces of childhood are quantitatively different from the spaces of adulthood, and that the two should rarely mix. For example, Lily, a disabled activist who was home-schooled for many years described

how she was discouraged from taking meaningful part in campaigning and activism in the disabled people's movement, as fellow activists assumed her to be inexperienced and less capable due to her young age. Similarly, Linda Burnip suggested that school should have more involvement in wider community projects so that

children get to mix with people of different age groups, and from different backgrounds, and also those people get to mix with children, so that they don't have this hostility towards each other. It's about being part of society really

(Interview with Linda Burnip, p.9)

Further, the construction of children as "lacking" adults creates strict hierarchies that are imposed in schools, and were seen by some of the participants as humiliating practices that constrain children's development and educational participation regardless of dis/ability. Jennifer explained how '*being treated like an adult*' in college has made learning more accessible to her son, and recommended that such an approach should be taken from an earlier age:

In secondary school my son was considered as a bit slow and a bit stupid because he's got dyslexia. And that was a label he carried with him until he has gone to college and that label suddenly folded away because they seemed to treat him differently. And he is saying that it is easier to learn there because he is being treated as an adult and not as a child. So again it's the approach they take with them [...] In the UK there is a very protective almost paternalistic approach towards kids and bringing children up. And I don't think it does them very good, to be treated as someone lesser.

(Jennifer, pp. 8-9)

Thus, for many of the research participants, schools are disabling students through the construction of children as inherently subordinate to adults. Such construction leaves children without authority and control over their environments and their learning, which often results in disengagement from learning.

Illich (1971) describes the concept of the '*hidden curriculum*' which conditions becoming a member of society on the possession of '*certified knowledge*', thus creating an hierarchical dichotomy between those who know and those who don't, allowing

children no control over their life before they can prove mastery of certain skills and knowledges (see chapter 3 for further discussion). Ironically, as Jennifer described, this logic distances children from learning and from the product of their learning, while allowing this disengagement to be seen as a problem with the child rather than with the environment.

Put together, activists' understanding of inclusive approaches to learning included the rejection of standardised and universalised norms in favour of developing a flexible, real life approach to learning that engages students in a varied range of subjects, topics and skills, while fostering and valuing the many different ways to engage with those areas, and embedding learning in the wider social context. A wonderful illustration of how these principles work in combination with each other was offered by Simone Aspis who described in the interview how the commitment to inclusion lead ALLFIE to incorporate diverse tactics in their campaigns, which made not only for more inclusive actions, but also for more effective ones. While this example is not taken from a school context, I have argued in chapter 4 that the DPM can offer many insights for the development of radical inclusive pedagogy through its organisational structures that aim to create inclusive spaces of conscientization and praxis.

So we had disabled young people or adults who were able to tell their stories – that's great, that's one way of doing it, but not everybody there wants to do that. So they could do a banner making, there were no standards, there were people who did banner with writing on them, there was just art work that explained what they thought was inclusion. There were people who were able to march, people who may have no verbal communication skills could still march and could still have a presence and get involved. And so people were able to participate at different levels but all levels were equal. So people were able to argue with Lord Adonis [Minister of Education at the time] about the legislation, people could tell their stories, there were banners there, people were able to sing, shout, people were able to use nonverbal communication, so if people were very frustrated they could display that within a concise space so it's quite clear to Lord Adonis that people are uncomfortable by their body language. And if people would say this is not activism, well of course it's activism. Just because you

don't speak does not mean it's not activism. If you go there in this space and you feel uncomfortable about an issue then to me that's activism. The intent of telling somebody that something needs changed. And activism doesn't just come from one person taking action, it's a group effort. [...] Good campaign activism is about a range of tactics that you use in a campaign. And actually if you are honest there isn't one tactic that will get you where you want but actually a range of tactics that put pressure on government to change things.

(Interview with Simone Aspis, p.6)

As mentioned earlier, the understanding of education as a relational process of becoming was highly stressed by participants, and it is this that I will explore the last section of this chapter.

EDUCATION AS A RELATIONAL PROCESS OF BECOMING

All of the activists who participated in this research have accorded high value to the understanding of education as a *relational process*, and stressed the need for learning environments that support emotional wellbeing and belonging for all students. The neo-liberal discourse of schooling, which was explored in chapter 3, constructs good education as performance on league tables and standardised test, and adapts a market like language of “consumer choice” which commodifies education and renders it as a product (Ball, 2008; Burman, 2006; Lipman, 2009). As discussed in previous sections of this chapter, the activists have objected to this view of education, arguing for an understanding of knowledge as co-constructed through a process of dialogue between learners and teachers and between classroom experiences and the wider social contexts in which they are embedded. However, it was not only knowledge that was placed at the heart of the educational process, as activists stressed a view of education as a process of becoming (Goodley, 2007b) – becoming self through relations with others, and becoming part of a community. Thus, relational aspects of education played a major role in activists’ accounts.

Teachers' ability to sustain relationships of mutual respect and acceptance was considered by many of the respondents as a necessary basis for inclusive education that responds to children's individual needs rather than trying to mould them into normative social roles:

There was a really good teacher in the first school that my son went to. She used to watch children very carefully, and her opinion was that you've got to know the child and then you can work with them better because you understood where they were coming from. And that's how she worked with every single child, she got to know them as people and she worked with their strength. She did not put up with any misdemeanours but she was very kind in how she had approached them. She would take them and discuss with them – "why have you done that, and what do you think you could have done better?" And the kids adored her, it was obvious. She could get them to do practically anything, but she had also made the lessons fun, she sought a way around everything, she made them interesting for them, she thought of different ways of keeping them engaged. It wasn't just "I'm in charge", it was more interactive. Every process she did with them was very interactive, and she had a lot of respect for the children, and they had respect for her. She was a marvellous teacher.

(Interview with Jennifer, p. 7)

For me, the first thing on the list is my son's emotional stability. And actually the context of how his education was provided was a major stressor in his life [...] he can't learn anything if he is stressed or anxious. So his emotional welfare is the first focus for me. I want him to have the right level of nurturing, because compared to other children his age he needs quite a high level of nurturing and that's ok.

(Interview with Alex, p. 8)

Thus, for participants, fostering caring and nurturing relations with students was seen as an essential basis of education. This means ensuring that students' unique and individual emotional needs are recognised and responded to in a non-judgmental manner. This idea echoes well with the idea of 'ethics of care' explored in chapter 2 (Kittay et al., 2005; Tronto, 1993). The need to attend to people's individual care needs is explored by Kittay et al (2005), who argue that some people (particularly people with the label of learning disability) are being disabled by social structures that hide difference in care needs and only make certain provisions available in certain ways. Thus, Alex's son's

need for nurturing which might have been met in nursery is ignored (or at best not responded to) in the context of primary school.

The feminist pedagogue bell hooks (1994, p. 19) explores this idea in relation to education and calls for engaged pedagogy, ‘*a vision of liberatory education that connects the will to know with the will to become*’. Engaged pedagogy is about educational relations that are not just aimed at students’ minds but promote overall wellbeing, for both the students and the teachers. Such explicit recognition of the valued space of emotional and care needs can create a sense of safety and stability and encourages a sense of belonging so necessary for the creation of community:

instead of just moving children from the relative safety of primary, although some primaries have their problems too, into the deep end of secondary school, if there was just like building a community [...] try and put children in a place where they know they can have recourse to teachers, to parents and be able to see various peers and know that this people are sound people and are not going to hurt them

(Interview with Tom, p.9)

Yet, ethics of care is not just about making sure everyone’s dependency needs are met, and that people are not being made dependent in ways they do not need to be, but is also about recognising the relational character of human life and of self-conceptions. So far we have looked at how activists framed those caring relations that stand at the basis of inclusive education as derived from needs and promoting a sense of stability. Such framings might suggest an understanding of care as a simple, non-constructed and a-political commitment, which involves the identification and satisfaction of readily available and easily defined “needs” which may be understood as the property of the individual student. However, while the recognition of need and the commitment to care were seen as the basis of education, participants outlined a complex understanding of those needs as co-constructed through relational educational processes, which are embedded within a socio-political context. In other words, engaging with

emotional relations and needs was not just the basis of education, but in itself constituted an important educational process of learning to live together with others:

I think it's important to learn to mix with other children, and, as in any sort of relationship in life, to learn to sort of give and take, so that you're not in sort of constant battles. And then it's important to learn to have respect for other people, and I think it's important to be treated by teachers with respect as well

(Interview with Linda Burnip, p. 8)

I think that schools have been used historically as ways of controlling young people and oppressing young people and training them to be in a particular class position, that's how it is in general. So I don't think that that's useful. I think it would make sense to do things in organised groups and have people who maybe knew certain things or wanted to say certain things or wanted to learn certain things help setting this up, so it will maybe become kind of institutionalised, but it would be much more, any age, any type of things. You would teach about what you wanted to teach about and learn what you wanted to learn. And it wouldn't be really focused on getting a job, and wouldn't be focused much on reading and writing. It would be more focused around building community and learning to do things with each other

(Interview with Lily, p. 12)

Thus, for activists, inclusion or belonging was not seen as something non-disabled students “have” and disabled students are struggling to “get”. Inclusion is a process of learning to live with one another and learning to treat each other with respect and support. It entails viewing children, disabled or not, as full subjects whose support needs and dependencies do not detract from the imperative to respect their autonomy. It is important to clarify here that I by using the phrases ‘full subjects’ and ‘autonomy’ I do not refer to modernist notions of the subject as self-contained, self-sufficient and fully rational, but draw on feminist understandings of personhood and autonomy as relational processes rather than in the possession of the self.

Ikaheimo (2009) argues that personhood is a *relational* phenomenon in the sense that it requires being seen by others in the light of person- making significances.

Perceiving or accepting someone as a person is thinking of oneself and the other in terms of a moral community or a ‘we’, constructing an ‘*I-thou relationship*’ in contrast to a ‘*I-it relationship*’ (p.77). This means treating someone with respect and recognizing

him/her as having authority over oneself. It means understanding that people might have a different view of what is good and valuable. Finally, I-thou relationship means recognising the other as actively contributing to the relationship. In other words, according to Ikaheimo, personhood is not a fixed trait possessed by the individual, but is constantly reconstructed through social relations and political and legal mechanisms. As personhood is constituted through relationships, the experience of not being seen as a person by others diminishes one's personhood.

In the interview with Alex she described her main worries about mainstream education, which assumes teachers have inherent authority over students, thus denying them respect, and the recognition of their authority over themselves, which are defined by Ikaheimo (2009) as key aspect of relational personhood.

It's the way they treat children, Anat, it's horrible. They patronise them, they give them almost no power, they separate them into really artificial groups, they treat them in ways they'd never treat another adult in their own life. I hate the way they treat them, that's what I find hard[...] Me and my partner used to laugh and say they talk to children like they were dogs – good girl, good boy – and they don't even know why.

(Interview with Alex, p.6)

Similar experiences and concerns were described by Jennifer

And then a member of staff told me your child is like an animal the way he sits on the table and puts his shoes on. She gave me examples of things like he wouldn't put his shoes in the shoe bag. But she just decided to put her will over his, and unfortunately she had a strong willed child here, and he wouldn't do things until he was ready to do them or until he is approached in a particular way and then he does do them. Then she asked me how do you ask him to do things? I said, well, I explain what I want him doing. She said do you just command him? And I said no, I say 'can you put that in because someone will fall over or it will get lost, I give him the reason why.

(Interview with Jennifer, p.3)

As discussed in the previous section, the strict school hierarchies were seen by activists as a barrier to radical inclusive pedagogy. Like Jennifer, several participants have advocated for an approach that explains to children the reasons behind adults'

requests or prohibitions, and negotiating solutions when these requests are in conflict with children's wishes. This strategy is similar to that described by Sinclair (2010) in his analysis of autistic spaces (see discussion in chapter 4). In those spaces the reasons behind the rules are made explicit in an attempt to support both autistic people who rigidly stick to rules and those who tend to object to any arbitrary external impositions. Explicitly explaining the reasons behind rules allows the autistic participants in those spaces to understand when and why to apply those rules. This is an example of the relational nature of autonomy (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000b; Nedelsky, 1989) that increases a person's ability to choose and act through mutual recognition of people's authority over themselves. By explaining to her son why his shoes need to be put away rather than just commanding him to do so, Jennifer has not only shown respect to her son thus not validating his personhood, but has actually increased his capacity to make informed choices, to object to arbitrary demands and to negotiate solutions when conflict occurs.

It is important to note that this view of relational autonomy takes interdependence rather than independence as its basis. It is not that one has to be independent in order to be considered autonomous, but rather that autonomy is created through relations of interdependence (Reindal, 1999), and obtaining assistance when and how one requires it. Radical inclusive pedagogy seeks to promote students' autonomy without making that conditioned on achieving some level of "independent" performance. An example of what this relational autonomy might mean in practice is described by Lily:

Even someone who is quite mature and knows what they want, you still need support in making those decisions. You know, there is this thing about you making your own decisions, autonomous learning and bla bla bla, but actually you need, well first you need to feel really supported in doing that.[...] They were reading for me and writing

for me. But there was one woman who I actually stayed in touch with and she was teaching me how to dictate as well, how to better use my support.

(Interview with Lily, p.2)

Thinking about radical inclusive pedagogy through feminist ideas means fostering relations of respect and support, being sensitive to students care needs while supporting them to understand themselves and others, thus enabling a growing range of choices and developing relational autonomy. It means understanding education as a process of ‘*becoming-in-the-world-with-others*’ (Price & Shildrick, 2002, p. 62), in which adults and children engage with each other in a continuous process of learning to live together as a community.

CONCLUSION: UNITY, DIVERSITY, AND THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION

In this chapter I have explored research question 2– what can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the analytical accounts of activists in the disabled people’s movement and in campaigns for inclusive education. My reading of the interviews with activists suggests a focus on the on-going tension, or perhaps negotiation, between notions of being and becoming, difference and identity. The understanding of personhood as constantly constructed through relationships, and the understanding of education as a lifelong process by which people come to be as part of a community, stand in opposition to the notion of disability/ability as clearly bounded dichotomous categories. Activists’ understandings of difference as what stands at the basis of life, and of identity as always in flux and never fixed, stress the need for developing educational practices that “*constitute alternative political identities that do not reproduce the oppressive binaries embedded in liberal theories of citizenship that continue to exclude people with severe/cognitive disabilities*” (Erevelles, 2011, p. 161).

Yet, activists were careful to point out that the creation of relational educational spaces in which people can engage in processes of ‘becoming’ is always connected with the materialist politics of distribution and the struggle against oppression and inequality, and that coalescing around categories of difference is often a necessary step for such struggles. My argument is, however, that these tensions and contradictions between identity and difference should not be seen as evidence of incoherency, but rather point to the need to embrace tension and contradiction as central to politics of difference that seek to allow spaces of meeting, interconnection and collective organisation across webs of difference. In the words of Subcomandante Marcos, the famous Zapatista-

We are ‘other’ and different . . . we are fighting in order to continue being ‘other’ and different . . . And what we are – far from wanting to impose its being on the ‘other’ or different – seeks its own space, and, at the same time, a space of meeting . . . that is why Power has its armies and police, to force those who are ‘other’ and different to be the same and identical. But the ‘other’ and different are not looking for everyone to be like they are . . . The ‘everyone doing his own thing’ is both an affirmation of difference, and it is a respect for other difference.

(Marcos, 1999, cited in Evans, 2010, pp. 148–9)

Both unity and difference are important. Valuing diversity means being allowed to be different and be equally valued in difference. It means valuing difference from others but also difference from the self – moving and changing subject positions and identities in different times, places and relations. Valuing diversity means seeing difference as productive, as the essence of life in the universe. Yet it means creating spaces and opportunities to meet, to unite, to feel at home, known and understood. Every communication is communication across difference, but with some people (and things), sometimes, this difference diminishes and the connection feels good. Feelings of sameness, of shared experiences – even when these experiences are bad – can be empowering and validating. Many of the interview participants testified that getting

together with other disabled people constituted a positive change in their life, enhanced their sense of self-worth and inspired them to act for change.

Connecting personal experiences with the social structures in which they occur and by which they are inscribed is a key issue in critical pedagogy that seeks education that empowers the learners to bring about change in their own lives (Freire, 1972a; McLaren, 2009). Coalescing around the politics of disability, collectively exploring and fighting against disablist culture, are crucial in removing barriers to inclusion on the material and attitudinal level (Campbell & Oliver, 1996) as well as to changing aspects of psycho-emotional disablism (Reeve, 2002; Thomas, 1999). Thus, by placing students in mainstream education classes while leaving the normative and disablist culture upon which they are based unchallenged, disabled students and their families are isolated and separated from one another in their fight for material resources and social recognition. Real commitment to valuing difference and diversity requires access to shared identities and collective explorations.

While the role of coalescing is crucial, essentialist identity politics cannot form the basis of radical inclusive pedagogy. A paradox is born from relying on a sense of a stable, unified identity when this claim to stability and unity is in actuality the source of oppression for people who have been declared inferior (Corker, 1999; Davis, 2002). This paradox rests on the fact that, as Galvin (2003) argues, identity politics bases its claims on essentialist assumptions that result in the maintenance of the modernist, dichotomous thinking which has been responsible for the creation of dividing practices in the first place. Further, as feminists have argued, by focusing politics around such unified identities other experiences of oppression are marginalised (Yuval-Davis, 2011) and disempowered positions are naturalised and reified. Young (1986) reminds us that the politics of difference are crucial for democratic communities. Schools should

therefore foster opportunities for students (and staff) to act as agents within a community of difference. This means opportunities to realize different positions, roles and interactions within the group, but also opportunities to withdraw or disengage from the group, to act independently or to choose to be alone. This also means constantly looking for, and valuing of, diverse ways of being together and apart, and of negotiating relations of interdependency. As Goodley (2011) argues, schools should aim to challenge ‘*the tyranny of disabling environments and ableist embodied knowledge and practices*’ (Marks, 1999b, p. 133). Pedagogy must be an encounter with the disabled self (Gabel, 2001, p. 33) that promotes understandings of disability not as a constituency of special education but as the product of a hostile environment and organisational pathology (Ware, 2009). Radical inclusive schools should provide students with the opportunity to meet with many disabled people – children and adults – in varied roles and positions. Radical inclusive curriculum should draw on the wealth of disability culture, performance and writing that were created by the disabled people’s movement in the last decades (see chapter 4) which can serve as the basis for affirmative discussion around experiences of disability that do not take as their starting point tragedy and charity discourses. Such interactions can open possibilities of affirmative understandings of impairment (Cameron, 2008). If education is a process of ‘*learning to live together as a community*’ (interview with Lily), then those ‘*encounters with the disabled self*’ (Gabel, 2001, p. 33) become a way of changing relations within the community, asserting the agency of disabled students while rejecting rationality or independence as the pre-condition of agency or personhood (Ikaheimo, 2009). Radical inclusive education calls for a valuing of diversity that is based on coalescing around shared experiences while exploring differences, and that is conscious of the need to constantly be aware of power dynamics and how these shape the realm of the possible and the desirable. The

knowledge and experience of activists in the DPM, therefore, have much to offer radical inclusive pedagogy.

CHAPTER 7

READING ONE SCHOOL THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF RADICAL INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to address research question 3 – What can we learn about inclusive radical education from looking at the educational practices with students with SEN in an innovative school? In answering this question I will draw on the findings from the ethnographic research in the school, which included observations, interviews with teachers, and creative workshops with students (see chapter 5, and specifically table 4). The process of conducting the workshops is further explored in chapter 8.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, the research setting was a special needs unit (SNU) within a mainstream secondary school, which operated more or less as a separate space from the school. Exploring inclusive practice through a focus on alternative provision outside the mainstream classroom may indeed be problematic, and there are real questions as to whether such settings can be considered inclusive (some of which are discussed throughout this chapter). Yet, as Gabel (2002) explains, adopting a critical pedagogy lens on the debates about inclusive education necessitates an understanding of education as deeply social and political, not the subject of technical rationality. Thus, she argues –

The first question [for inclusive education] is not whether a student is in an ability diverse inclusive classroom. The first question is whether the student (and his or her family, when age requires it) wants to be where they are and whether that classroom is a place where students and teachers are free to struggle to become new people and to live self-constructed lives as much as possible.

(p.194)

Thus, I argue in this chapter, there is much to be learnt from the work carried out within the unit, as it stresses reshaping learning in accessible ways and promoting strong relations of support and belonging amongst its members. Further, I am not alone in arguing this. Several recent papers in the field of inclusive education (Mcgregor & Mills, 2012; Nind, Boorman, & Clarke, 2012; Vadeboncoeur, 2009) have focused on alternative educational settings within which students who have been excluded from mainstream schools are meaningfully engaging in learning. This engagement is fostered by a view of education as a relational process, which entails respect for students as subjects and the promotion of honest and supportive relationships between students and staff. In a way, these understandings and relationships are enabled by such provisions being small scale institutes, separate from the often bureaucratic reality of much of mainstream secondary school life. These inherent tensions of practices of inclusion that are contingent upon educational segregation are one of the main focus points of this chapter, and are discussed throughout the different sections.

The second focus point that is discussed throughout the different sections is power relations and the political context of education. It is important to stress here that the questions that are raised through the chapter are not meant as a judgment or ranking of the unit. While the issue of inclusion was of high priority to the unit's staff, they did not by any means consider themselves practicing radical education. Thus, while a major part of the analysis is concerned with the lack of critical engagement with power and the de-politicised approach to education, these were never mentioned as important by the unit staff, and were not a goal they were working towards. As discussed in the methodology chapter, taking a '*stance of inspiration*' towards the research meant that the analysis did not attempt to convey a comprehensive description of life in the unit. Rather, it was an attempt to engage in a dialogue with the data, reading through it with attention to issues that were raised in the

'*researcher template*' (Goodley, 1999), as well as issues that were raised by the activists who were interviewed for this study.

As discussed in chapter 5, the process of reading the data with a stance of inspiration resulted in the identification of 4 major themes

- The politics of difference
- Approaches to learning
- Belonging and relationships
- Power, authority and autonomy

Drawing on examples from the field work, these themes will be analysed and discussed in relation to the academic literature, as well as in comparison to the views of activists discussed in the previous chapter.

THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE

In this section I explore the ideological basis that underpins the creation of the SNU and the practices within it. As argued in chapter 3, educational practices are not the objective or neutral consequence of scientific truths, but are representative of organisational cultures and values. This does not imply a monolithic culture or one coherent set of values that dictates practice, but a process of negotiating fragmented, sometimes contradictory understandings and practices on many levels and amongst many actors including pupils, parents, teachers and management, as well as the local and national context of educational policy (e.g. OFSTED inspection) and the wider social context (e.g. the location of the school in a socially deprived ex-mining community). In this sense the school can be understood as ideological apparatus, that works to produce productive and governable subjects (Masschelein & Simons, 2005).

The head of the unit described its inception as a possible solution for a lot of ‘*low level disruptions in lessons*’ which were identified in the OFSTED inspection as a cause for concern. She identified the source of this low level disruption in

Students who we felt were not accessing the curriculum. It might have been for a variety of reasons; it might have been for their learning needs, emotional needs, social needs, behavioural needs, or a combination of those

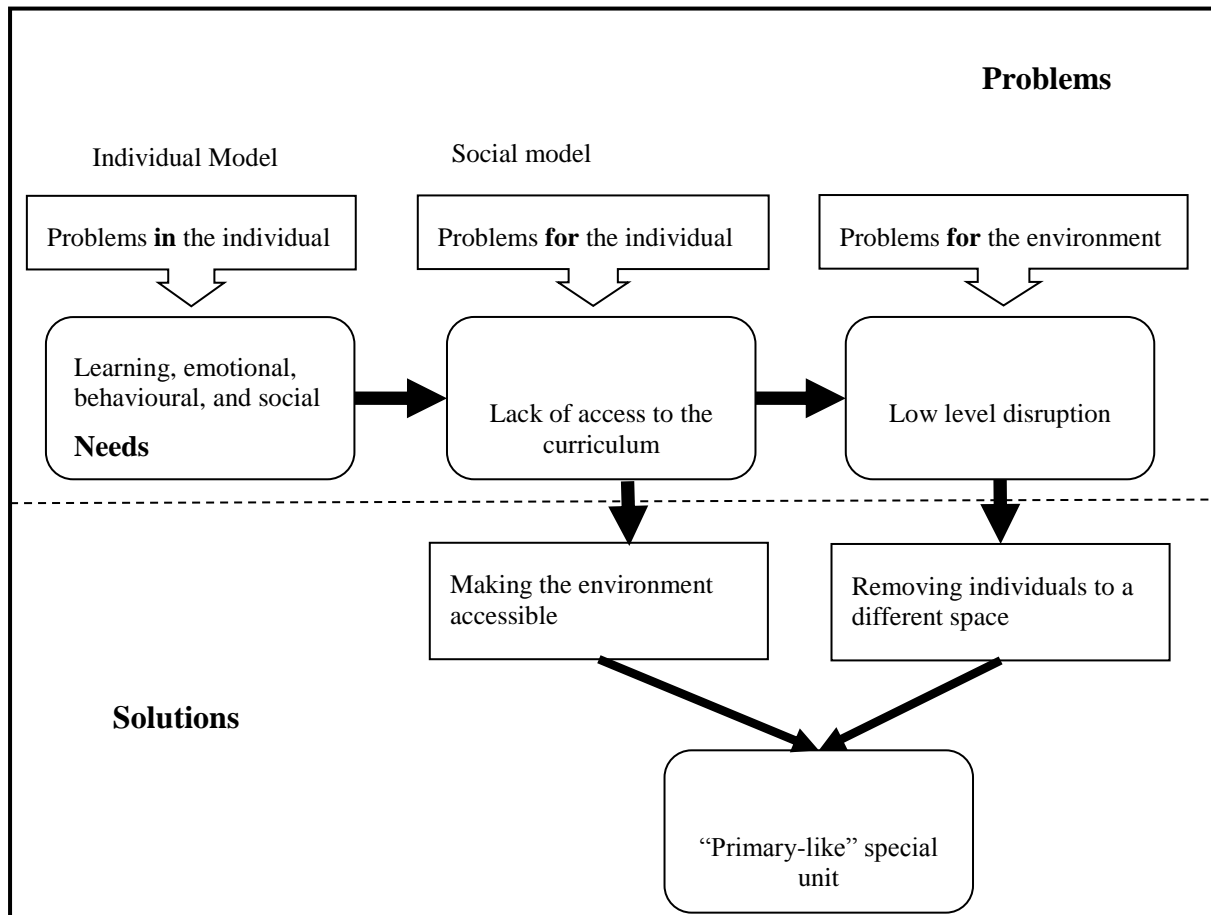
(Interview with Mrs K.)

As an answer to these identified problems a special unit was established based on a model of a primary school – a smaller scale establishment that provides more individual attention in the form of heightened support but also heightened surveillance (this will be further elaborated in the following sections).

This thinking could be seen as incorporating several approaches to difference (see figure 10). The special unit was established to solve a *problem*, which Mrs K. identifies as originating from the students’ difference that prevents them from accessing the curriculum. This is in line with an individual model of disability (Oliver, 1990b), which sees difference as a problem located in the individual’s body or mind. Under such model specialised treatment is needed to remove and contain recalcitrant students (Skrtic, 1995). Yet, unlike the traditional individual model, the students’ difference is framed in terms of varied needs (including social and educational needs) rather than in terms of biological or psychological disorders, and the solution to the problem lies in changing the environment, not the individual, to one that better fits the students’ needs and supports *access*. This focus on creating accessible environments incorporates ideas and terminologies from social model of disability (Oliver, 1990b). Thus the imperative to change the environment carries here a double meaning – while the unit’s environment is made more accessible in a variety of ways (see following sections), it is the

individual students who are removed from the main school environment to be placed in a separate unit.

FIGURE 10: INDIVIDUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS



Spatially, the unit is located in a completely separate building at the back of the school. To get there one has to pass through the main entrance, walk through the corridors of the school, exit the building and pass through a gate in a second fence which leads to a smaller yard. Students in years 7- 9 spend 20 out of 25 school hours in the special unit building that consists of 3 rooms. Most of them also spend their break time in the small yard adjacent to the unit or in one of the classrooms where they are offered a variety of games. With the unit located at the back of the school the atmosphere created is that of a school within a school,

with the majority of students in the unit passing through the main building twice a day (upon arrival and departure) only to exit it immediately and to arrive at their place.

This is not just a technical issue. Space is more than a mere container of social life, it is produced through social activity and it reproduces social relations in ways that seem natural and “common sense”. Spaces construct and restrict the ways people can act in them and shape notions of centre and margins (Lefebvre, 1991). As Kitchin (1998, p. 345) puts it, spaces are organised to put people ‘*in their place*’. In the case of the SNU this place, while still within the school boundaries, is distinctly separated. Furthermore, the small yard in which the unit is located is also home to the ‘*Student Support Centre*’ – a service dedicated to solving immediate problems (e.g. nursing wounds, calling parents, providing food, soothing tempers), and the ‘*Isolation Unit*’ – a punitive classroom for students who committed serious offences. In other words, students in the unit are relegated to the area of the school where “problems” are dealt with:

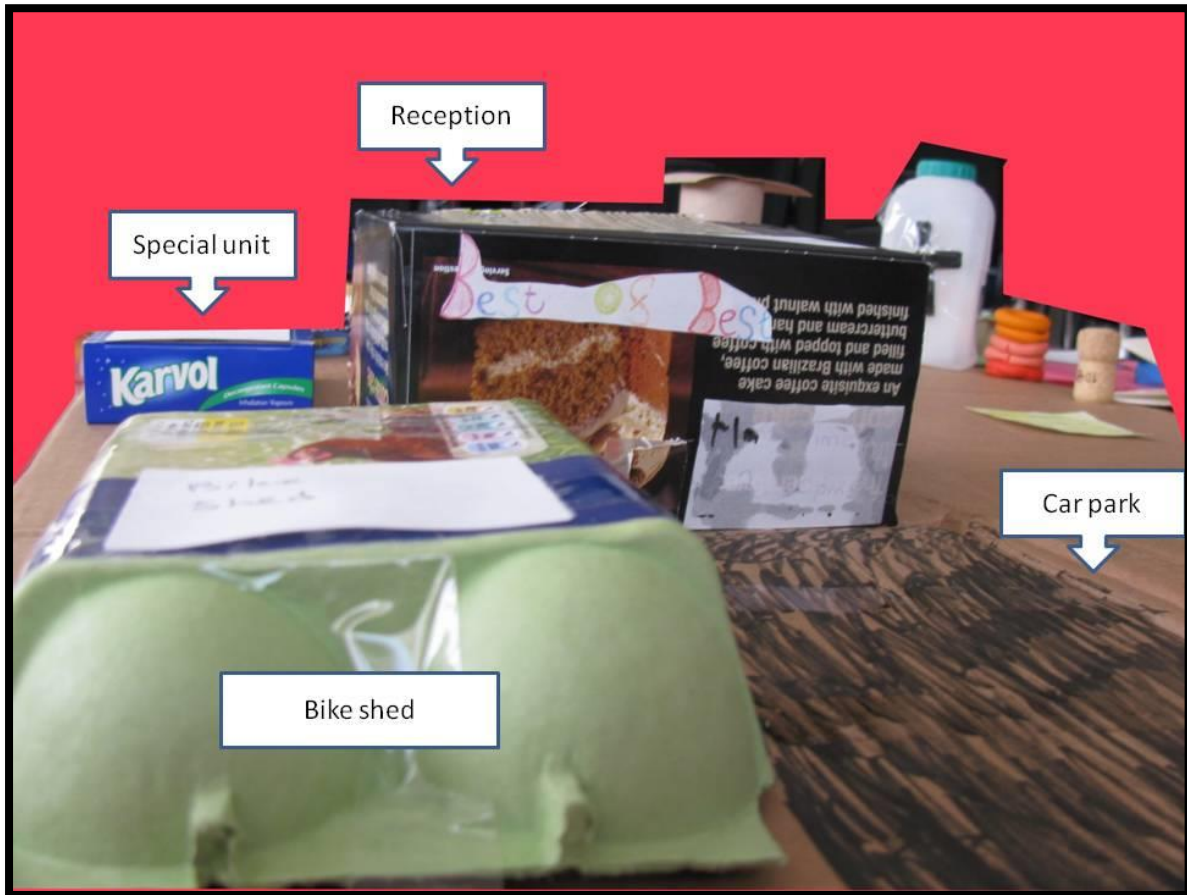
*Students who could cause **problems** [...] in main school, because of their learning or their behaviour or their vulnerability, are catered for **across here**.*

(Interview with Mrs K., emphasis added)

This clear spatial distinction was also discussed by the students in the creative workshops, and particularly in the workshop dedicated to exploring the spaces of the school and constructing a model of the ideal school. In their model the students decided to get rid of the main school building all together, placing the special unit immediately behind the reception (see figure 11). They have also insisted the school should have a big sign in the front declaring ‘*we have a special unit*’ (workshop V). In this, the students have reiterated the clear distinctions between the school and the SNU and underscored their disidentification with the main school as a place of belonging. Yet, by placing the unit and the sign declaring its existence in a highly visible space at the front of the school, they have challenged the

marginalisation of the unit and its position as an “other” space. Instead, they have created a world in which ‘their place’ is not just the norm, it is the only option.

FIGURE 11: A MODEL OF THE BEST SCHOOL IN THE WORLD WITH THE SPECIAL UNIT BEHIND RECEPTION



While the SNU is clearly spatially divided from the school, thus constituting its students as categorically different from the main school population, within the SNU there is a de-medicalised approach to difference. The name of the unit contains no reference to SEN (see discussion in methodology chapter about the limits of anonymity), and some of the students have no statement or formal diagnosis (though the majority of students with statements are placed in the unit). In a conversation with the SENCO she described the process of placing students in the unit as a process of identifying those who may benefit from a more “primary-like” structure. In other words, the placement in the unit is not driven by a

diagnosis but by an attempt to map learning styles to the teaching environment, with a focus on school structures and relations rather than relying on psychological tests. In this it differs from the functionalist process of pigeonholing described by Skrtic (1995), in which professionals match a presumed client need to one of the standard practices in their repertoire. This is manifested by the choice of staff working in the unit, which is focused on relational and educational attitudes and the ability to engage students rather than on any “specialised knowledge”. Indeed only one of the teachers in the unit possesses formal SEN qualifications.

I look for staff who I think have the right relationship with students in the unit . . . who communicate well, interest the children [. . .] who want to teach students with learning and behavioural issues [. . .] understanding, patient, a good listener.

(Mrs K, head of unit)

We need to get the right kind of staff with the right personality so it works, and we do that.

(Miss D., administrative coordinator of the unit)

These statements testify to a view of education as a unique relational process, rather than the application of a certain methods of teaching to students with certain diagnostic labels. Florian & Rouse (2010) are critical of teacher training programmes which seek to prepare their students for inclusive practice by promoting what they call ‘diagnostic-perspective teaching’ (p.189). Instead of dividing and categorising pupils by their diagnostic labels, a process that creates exclusion and segregation even when peers are physically present under the same roof, Kaikkonen (2010) calls for inclusive teaching that starts from the experience of learning and is based on trying different methods to support and promote pupils’ understanding, regardless of whether or not they have acquired a diagnostic label. This idea was also expressed by teachers in the unit who spoke of a culture of ‘*not blaming the children for not getting it*’ but constantly looking for different ways to explain, thus striving for accessibility rather than labelling –

It's about going back, and trying to do things differently, and I think there's definitely got to be a culture of not blaming the kids. If they don't get it, it's not their fault - which I think some of them have experienced in the primary school, you know, why are you not getting that, and... you need to find another way of doing it, cos it's not their fault, it's probably yours for not doing it differently. So, it's trying to just be... I suppose open minded about it just look for other different ways

(Mrs F, teacher)

Ironically, while the students in the SNU were constructed as categorically different from their main school peers through the creation of two distinct spaces, within the unit differences and constant change were seen as positive and productive features –

It's never the same 2 days running, in fact it's never the same 2 hours running [laughter], and that's really good. Some people probably wouldn't like it, but I like the fact that you have to be on your toes and every day, every hour is different'

(Mrs A, teacher)

Such a view of constant change is the opposite of diagnostic perspective teaching, which, while recognising the need for different methods of teaching, seeks to fix a particular method to a particular student. What the teachers in the unit describe is a commitment to change and difference that allows room for many methods of teaching to exist together in a flexible environment. Such an environment does not only allow for difference between students, but also recognises that the students are themselves in a process of constant change and becoming. The commitment to constant change and the use of varied ways of learning created a sense of high energy in teaching and learning, which was also highly valued by students who described much of the learning in the SNU as 'fun'. However, this openness and celebratory approach to difference practised within the unit was conditioned upon it being constructed as a separate space from the school.

Vadeboncoeur (2009) discusses these very tensions of inclusion, exclusion and participation within alternative educational provision programmes aimed at students who dropped out or were excluded from schools. By creating alternative spaces outside the remit of traditional schools, these programmes offer opportunities for students and teachers to

explore different ways of relating and interacting, which are not limited to the institutional practices of the school. This exploration allows for meaningful engagement in learning for a diverse body of students. Yet, this openness is created by the categorical distinction between such spaces and the regular schools, and the view of alternative settings as a ‘*last chance*’ (p.294) rather than a viable option for all. By distinguishing between regular provision and such alternative spaces, as well as placing the latter further down the educational hierarchy, mainstream provision is naturalised and justified in two ways –

First, it ensures that schooling appears to be operating democratically, by offering educational support even after youth have “failed” in some way; the system itself is not at fault, and second, it ensures that difference is reified as an “individual” problem, locating attitude, behavioural, or emotional problems in the individual, rather than in social relationships and relations.

(Vadeboncoeur, 2009, p. 294)

The SNU, while working within the boundaries of a mainstream school, seem to be operating in a similar manner. Its distinction from the school allows it to operate as a small scale and flexible institution, but this flexibility and difference are conditioned upon maintaining strict boundaries between the unit and the school. When these boundaries were crossed and a student moved from the SNU to the main school, this was considered a progression, a success, an overcoming of a difficulty. Thus, while within the unit difference was valued, and if the student didn’t understand it was the teacher’s fault for not trying things differently, being in the unit as opposed to the main school was still seen as a problematic difference, an indication of difficulty rather than an equally valued alternative.

As indicated by many of the activists interviewed for this work, having different environments in which students can study is not problematic in itself. A diversity of educational settings and programmes is essential for democratic education of a diverse body of students with diverse needs and desires. However, this different provision must be equally

valued, if it is to avoid becoming another form of stratification that further marginalises already marginalised groups (Fielding and Moss 2011). Further, according to Young (1989), segregated spaces can only be considered a part of inclusive politics of difference when they are self-organised and embedded within social structures that also allow for integration. The school's unit, while providing an accessible and engaging environment and a strong sense of belonging, is not based on students' choice, and provides little opportunity for interaction with main school students. This is particularly interesting considering the fact that the vast majority of students, though not initially asked about their placement, prefer to be placed in the unit and see it as a supportive place that allows them to flourish, and actively avoid interacting with mainstream students. This tension will be further discussed in a later section.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

As described in the previous section, the main aim of the special unit was to allow students access to the curriculum, which was operationalized through the establishment of self-contained small unit in the model of a primary school. About 50 students in years 7-9 attend the unit, and the majority of teaching is delivered by the same 3 teachers. This small size and structure allows for personal relationships between staff and students. The team works in close collaboration to coordinate teaching across the unit and learn from each other's experience. This is in contrast to the reality of the main school, where hundreds of students are taught by a large number of teachers and in many different rooms, a situation that can often be confusing –

They struggled with 6 teachers a day, and understanding that the 6 teachers want different things. And it was just simple things like one teacher would want the date on the left hand side of the page, and another teacher would go on the right hand side of the page, and they couldn't remember

(Interview with Mrs A., teacher)

Thus, the small scale of the unit did not only support the development of personal relationships, but also provided continuity and coherence across the provision, in line with the learning style of many of the students.

The converging data from observations and interviews indicated a continuous effort to make learning both accessible and enjoyable in a variety of ways. Some of the tasks were based on games that tended to engage students and offer some opportunity for movement, and art and drama were frequently incorporated into the learning. Almost every lesson included times of formal lecture, individual work and group work. This gave students the opportunity to learn in different ways and with different people, to fulfil different roles in the group, to be supported by peers and to support others.

In interviews with staff they have all stressed that students' happiness and enjoyment are at the top of their priorities

*I want them [students] to **enjoy** coming to school, I want them to **want to be here** so that they can get the best out of it. I want them to **enjoy** the lessons, so there's quite a lot of pressure on staff to create lessons that are **challenging, enjoyable, interactive**. [...] It's also important to me to keep the staff **happy** as well, because you know, a **happy staff** hopefully makes a **happy team, happy students**. I want them to **want to come to work**, to **enjoy** the experience they have in their job at the same time as keeping everything in it.*

(Mrs K, head of unit, emphasis added)

*I think that for a lot of students that's a major success – that they **enjoy coming**, they **want to come** and they're **happy** when they're here”*

(Mrs F, teacher, emphasis added)

This approach stresses learning as a relational process in which both students and teachers are engaged in learning from each other and discovering ways to work together. The measurement for success is not just in the amount of skills mastered, but in the level of engagement, motivation and enthusiasm. This broadening of the scope of education corresponds with hooks (1994) idea of engaged pedagogy and with feminist ethics of care

(Kittay et al., 2005; Tronto, 1993). On top of stressing enthusiasm and joy, fostering a sense of belonging was highly evident in the research, and is explored in the next section.

So far I have discussed how the small size of the unit supported access to learning. However, the unit is not only distinguished from the main school by its size, but in many of the structures and methods of teaching and learning. In years 7-9 the majority of the teaching is not organised in the traditional school fashion of teaching core subjects in separate lessons to students of a certain year group⁸, but is organised around two main formats which the teachers refer to as ‘Sage Not Age’ and ‘Topic Based Curriculum’. These are further explored below.

STAGE NOT AGE APPROACH

Literacy and numeracy are taught through the ‘Stage Not Age’ approach. This means that for these lessons students are grouped into 3 level groups rather than year groups. All groups follow the same curriculum constructed in collaboration with the English and Maths departments (e.g. Myths, Shakespeare), but the level of independent reading and writing required from students on each of the groups is different. For example, while studying about Shakespeare, students in the lowest ability group were asked to author a play. The work was carried out in two groups, each assisted by a staff member. The students authored the play orally and the staff member did the writing. This example shows how combination of level differentiation with adherence to a shared curriculum allows for all students to learn rich curriculum and develop complex literacy and language skills, regardless of their spelling or reading level. The level differentiation also allows for students to practice basic skills such as

⁸ Drama, physical education and science and technology are taught in the traditional subject/year group format. The lessons are often located in the specialised facilities of the main school (e.g. science lab, football pitch) but taught to SNU students separately. In recent years PE has been taught to a mixed group of SNU students and main school peers.

phonics and spelling, without being pulled out of lessons and without the focus on basic skills overshadowing their entire learning. Furthermore, because the different groups study the same topics in accordance with the national curriculum, students can easily move between the groups when their level changes, and their chances of succeeding in GCSEs are increased.

This approach can be seen as addressing some of the main concerns and suggestions raised in the interviews with activists. It rejects the strict age segregation normally enforced in schools (though only in literacy and numeracy lessons). The adherence to age grouping was considered by many of the activists to be a disabling attitude that subjects students to a linear model of development (Burman, 2006, 2008) as well as dictating a uniform rate of progress. Under a linear model of development, students who do not perform to the expected level on certain skills are pathologized and their access to other aspects of the curriculum (which are considered to be “higher level”) is restricted, and often conditioned on achieving mastery of those skills. For example Aspis (1999) describes how in an attempt to make school subjects accessible to students with the label of learning disabilities complex issues are avoided, and no attempt is made to engage students in critical thinking which is considered too complex. Similarly, Alderson & Goodey (1998) discuss how placement in special schools creates a vicious circle in which children who are assumed as incapable of complex learning receive limited instruction often confined to rote learning and “life skills”, which in turn further decreases their educational chances. The *Stage Not Age* approach offers a model that combines basic skills practice with complex curriculum which is made accessible not through “dumbing down” of the content but through decreasing the reliance on reading and writing. Under this model students are allowed a chance to practice and develop different skills at their own rate, and acquire knowledge in different aspects of the curriculum, without access to one being conditioned on achievement on the other.

TOPIC BASED CURRICULUM

All the humanities subjects were taught in year groups through a topic based curriculum. This means that teaching the national curriculum in geography, history, religious education etc. was not organised according to subjects but around topics such as Brazil, World War II and also the World Cup and the Olympics. Topics were taught for 5 hours a week and changed every half term. Each topic covered several subjects – for example, when studying about Brazil students covered geography, biology (rain forests) and art (creating masks for a Brazilian carnival). This structure aims to counter the fracturing of learning into subjects that are taught for an hour or two a week and minimise the amount of staff and random requirements. The topic curriculum also allows for the incorporation of exciting projects, such as staged battle activity when the topic was World War I, or making a Chinese dragon when studying about the Beijing Olympics. Many students have remembered and mentioned such projects as positive aspects of studying in the unit, even several years after they took place.

The substantial amount of time dedicated to each topic allowed students time and space for in-depth reflection on the issues, and supported students who process information in a slower pace. Further, it was not only written assignments that were the focus of learning and assessment. The incorporation of projects, arts and drama allowed for a variety of ways to actively engage with the subject and express knowledge and learning. This approach sits well with the progressivist critique of the de-contextualised approach to knowledge that underlies traditional school practice and agendas of standardisation. In chapter 3 I discussed how such school practices work to disable and marginalise many students, especially those from working class and ethnic minority backgrounds (Erevelles, 2000; Freire, 1972a; Giroux, 2003), and enforce a uniform and technical style of learning (Lloyd, 2008; Skrtic, 1995). This

was also the view of many of the activists interviewed, who suggested organising teaching around issues meaningful to students and allowing for a variety of ways to engage with the topic.

On certain levels the topic based curriculum rejects the ‘banking concept of education’ (Freire, 1972a), as it abandons the de-contextualised and standardized structures of the national curriculum and allows for knowledge to be constructed in a dialogue with students, and contextualised in “real life” experience. However, a major aspect of critical pedagogy models is the understanding of education as a political tool that aims to support learners in collectively challenging social injustice. While students were supported to participate actively in learning, they were not involved in choosing which topics to cover. The topics were chosen in accordance with the national curriculum, which still represents white, middle-class culture. Thus, Shakespeare and World War II were covered, but not, say, the miners’ strike (which, with the school located in an ex-mining community, could have been a highly relevant topic). Similarly, teaching about Brazil included geography, biology and football, but not colonialism or economics. This was the case also with politics closer to the students’ experience. For example, when reading the book ‘Flour Babies’ (Fine, 1994), which is set in a SEN unit, the students were invited to imagine and draw what the characters looked like, but no discussion about the need for a special unit or the experiences of being placed in one had ensued.

Put together, the approaches to learning and teaching that were practised in the SNU (Stage Not Age, topic Based Curriculum, and a focus on inter-personal relationships) worked to allow students a sense of stability and security, and supported them to participate meaningfully in studying the curriculum. Teaching in the unit can be considered inclusive in that it valued diverse ways of learning and meaning making, and supported students to progress in their own rate. Yet, these approaches cannot be considered radical. The social reality represented in the curriculum, with its excluding aspects, is left unexplored, making it

seem natural and neutral. Students are not encouraged to explore processes of marginalisation or take action to challenge them.

This approach, of facilitating individual access while leaving the political and collective outside the scope of the debate, is part and parcel of neo-liberal policy discourse. This discourse, as discussed in chapter 3, works to increase “human capital” and the economic contribution of disabled people in advanced capitalism (Lloyd, 2008), through making sure everyone develops an entrepreneurial relation to the self and aims to achieve to the best of their ability within the “free market” of global economy (Masschelein & Simons, 2005). Since the change of UK government in 2010, the policy discourse emphasises the stick rather than the carrot as the motivation for developing such entrepreneurial selves, but the basic assumptions remain the same. As Masschelein & Simons (2005) argue, in advanced liberalism people are seen as responsible for the “production” of their own well-being and self-actualisation. Skills and knowledge have to be regarded as capital, and everyone should be willing to offer their capital, to sell at a large profit these competencies and knowledge that they possess, and invest in one’s learning, health and security. Focusing on access, without taking the political context into account, individualises access and reifies global capitalism and its inherent exclusions and exploitations. Radical inclusive education is a political endeavour, that does not only seek to allow students access within the boundaries of one classroom or one school, but also work to empower students, disabled and non-disabled alike, to challenge the social structures and relations that produce inequality, oppression and marginalisation. This requires making the political an explicit focus of reflection and action within teaching and learning.

BELONGING

Belonging is a key issue in debates about inclusive education. The shift from integration to inclusion means that schools should function as communities of belonging regardless of attainment on any specific measurement (Howe, 1996), rather than making attendance in the school a privilege granted only to those able to satisfy certain norms. All of the activists who were interviewed for this research saw the promotion of positive relationships between staff and students as well as peer relations as key aspects of education. These were valued both for their role in facilitating a safe emotional space where students feel respected and accepted for who they are, and as an important outcome of education, an understanding of education as a process of learning to interact with others and live together as a community.

This attitude was strongly evident in the research, with the majority of both students and staff testifying to a strong sense of belonging, and even pride, in the unit. In this section I will explore the ways those feelings of belonging were constructed within the unit, analysing it on two levels – belonging as space, a sense of being in one's place, feeling stable and contained; and belonging as an on-going relational process, a way of being in the world with others, interacting in situations of cooperation but also of conflict.

BELONGING AS A SPACE

The importance of space as an active agent in social life is stressed throughout this chapter. The '*spatial turn*' in social theory is a reconfiguration of space as the point of interaction between place, power and identity (Helfenbein & Taylor, 2009, p. 236). Kitchin (1998) argues that public place is organised in ways that make disabled people feel 'out of place', intruders in the non-disabled world. In many studies of alternative educational settings for excluded pupils the authors report of a strong sense of belonging to the segregated setting,

that is constructed against feelings of deep alienation experienced in mainstream provision (McGregor & Mills, 2012; Nind, Boorman, & Clarke, 2012; Vadeboncoeur, 2009). The autistic activist Amanda Baggs (2006, n.p) aptly describes how this “out of place” message is used to drive disabled pupils out of mainstream schools, making them feel acceptable only in segregated settings:

It seems to me, sometimes, that there were things more “inclusive” about the segregated environments I was in, than the supposedly-integrated ones I encounter in the outside world. There’s this sense, out here, that non-disabled people, and maybe a few of the elite among disabled people, own the world and the rest of us are intruders in it, who must be on our best manners at all times to keep from getting tossed out... [In the special school] We didn’t have the option of running off in a huff to some other school. Pretty much, that was the last stop for people schools didn’t want... Therefore, we had to learn to at bare minimum put up with each other, one way or another. An attitude that I find way too lacking out here, because most people have the option of saying “No (insert kind of person here) allowed.”

This strict binary between spaces of exclusion and spaces of belonging was also highly evident in the SNU. Students expressed a strong sense of belonging and even pride in the unit, often characterising it as a place of respect and a safe haven from bullying and name-calling that were associated with the main school. They valued the support and close relationships that were fostered by the small and intimate structure of the unit, and its stress on accessibility:

It’s like a place where, you know, if you struggle with something like learning or writing or if you are just too scared to go in mainstream, you just go to the SNU and there it’s like child friendly and all that’

(Jeff, year 9)

The SNU is the place you go and you don’t get disrespect and we are all working together [...] It’s where you feel nice, you feel safe

(Rachel, year 9)

As described earlier, when students built a model of the ideal school they insisted on keeping the unit and getting rid of the main school all together. In several occasions, when discussing the unit as a safe space of belonging, Billy, a year 8 student, named several students in the

SNU that he didn't like, and felt were being disrespectful, name-calling and annoying (he was always naming students who were not part of the project group). These students, he argued, should '*just go back to main school*', thus protecting the boundaries of the SNU as a safe space of respect (for him), and constructing the main school as the space of exclusion, where those who don't measure up to the rules should be sent to. There was only one student with the opposite interpretation. This student resented his placement in the unit which he thought was a place for '*spaks*'. Unlike the other students who saw the unit as the solution to bullying and a place to make friends, he understood it as the very reason for bullying, the very reason for him being treated as a "spak". Also unlike the other students, who experienced the main school as the site of their exclusion, this boy had friends outside of the unit, in the main school and in the neighbourhood.

These examples, while testifying to a strong sense of belonging and offering a positive alternative to the common feeling of alienation and failure many disabled students experience in secondary schools (Allan, 2008), are also slightly worrying as they portray a view of dichotomous belonging that reifies fixed perceptions of "Us" versus "Them", where one can either belong to the main school or to the unit, but never to both. Yuval-Davis (2007) points to the need to carefully engage in such politics of belonging, which, while carrying significant importance to the social and emotional well-being of individuals, also serve to construct the Other, often as a threat to the well-being of the community. The small and bounded space of the unit supported the safe and stable atmosphere of a closely knitted community. For students in the SNU the main school students were the threatening Other that needs to be kept out – '*they are in main school because they are stupid. They can't come to the SNU 'cos they don't understand anything. They just stay in main school*' (Jeff, year 9). For Billy, some of those

enemies have already infiltrated, and need to be transferred back into the main school, the space of disrespect and bullying⁹.

There appears to be no easy solution to this dilemma of belonging and excluding. The majority of students in the SNU have come there wounded with experiences of alienation, failure, social exclusion and even violence. They enter into a space that offers a supportive and accessible environment, where the staff value joy and engagement and foster relations of care (which are further explored below). The small scale of the unit, and its location away from the busy school corridors, supports the construction of a close knitted community that can be run through face to face communication and interpersonal relationship rather than through bureaucratic rationality. While students are free to go into the main school yard during break time, the vast majority of them choose to stay in the unit's own yard or in one of the classrooms, and avoid interacting with the main school students. Yet, this separation and avoidance reify the notion of the SNU students as a different kind to their main school peers, as well as the positioning of one of those kinds as superior to the other (though, in the eyes of the majority of students, it is the SNU and not the main school which is seen as the superior place). While separation promotes the othering of students, mere proximity or contact is not enough to counter negative attitudes towards the 'Other'; much depends upon the nature of this contact and the quality of the structures that support it (Beckett & Buckner, 2012). The question for inclusive education is how to foster a more flexible model of belonging, in which one can belong to multiple groups simultaneously, and have the freedom not just to participate, but also to disengage, moving back and forth between different positions.

⁹ Interestingly, on a different conversation Billy expressed analogous views about immigrants, infiltrating the country and bringing in violence: *'...and they all thought that they can come to us but they are repaying us by disrespecting us by burning poppies and calling us [...] It's like all these people, cos they are not allowed in, cos they'll start violence here and that, and because of the immigration scheme and all'*

A more porous and flexible model of belonging necessitates an understanding of belonging as an ongoing relational process. The studies of alternative educational provision cited above all indicate that the break from the space of the school has also allowed a break from the technocratic and functionalist ideology that governs teacher pupil relationships within the school (McGregor & Mills, 2012; Nind et al., 2012; Vadeboncoeur, 2009). In these studies, successful alternative programmes were characterised by relations of mutual respect and caring, in which teachers listened to students rather than just instructed them.

The teachers' commitment to listening, and more importantly, the willingness to make changes in response to what they have heard, was a strong characteristic of the SNU. In my field notes I described the following incident that took place during a numeracy lesson at the early part of the year –

The students are handed individual whiteboards and are asked to write the answers to some multiplications. [...] Later they are asked to copy the date, learning objective and the definition of a multiple into their notebooks. [...] Ben, a year 7 student, finds copying extremely difficult. He confuses letters and gets very frustrated. He complains to the teacher about his neck hurting from copying (he copies each letter individually and has to move his head up and down many times). In response the teacher copies the sentence to his whiteboard so he can copy without moving his head. I'm impressed and it seems Ben is relieved and feels his complaints are taken into account. By the end of the lesson he only managed to copy the learning objective and I copy the definition for him. He thanks me and seems far less frustrated than he was at the beginning of the lesson. I really feel the teachers here try to accommodate to students needs and think creatively on how to do so. I think Ben feels that too.

(Field notes, 21.9.2010)

This excerpt describes a process of *getting-to-know*, in which the teacher does not see herself as the “knower”, the sole professional authority who has the power to identify, define and “treat” the student's needs, and the student's role is confined to following her lead in order to “overcome” their difficulties. Instead, she opens a dialogue and seeks to learn from the student what his needs are, and negotiate ways for accommodating them. Ben's complaint

(which was made in an angry tone that can often be taken as “rude”) was not dismissed as an excuse to get away with work, and the ability to copy from the main board was not enshrined as some “fact of life” that the student just needs to learn to put up with. Instead, the teacher recognised Ben’s complaint at face value, and practically engaged in finding a solution to the difficulty which would still allow him to participate in the task. One may question the need for copying “learning objectives” into notebooks, or the power relations involved in setting them (and I do, indeed raise those questions in the next section), but nevertheless, by listening to Ben, openly and responsively, the teacher opened a space of communication that allowed them to ‘*re-see each other as persons rather than as role occupants*’ (Fielding & Moss, 2011, p. 79) and negotiate their different needs and wishes within the situation. It is this stance of getting-to-know, an understanding of education as an ongoing attempt to share meanings across difference, which stands at the heart of understanding belonging as a relational process.

Promoting belonging as a relational process, as a way of being with others in the world, was not only evident in the relationships between teachers and students; teachers in the unit were ‘*actively seeking inclusion*’ (Allan, 1999) by also putting an emphasis on promoting supportive peer relations. The weekly timetable included two hours of teaching the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) curriculum, which explicitly addressed topics such as conflict resolution and skills for team work (as well as self-esteem and self-determination). Group work was incorporated in many lessons, allowing students to interact with each other in different roles, offering support and asking for assistance. The phrase “*there’s no I in team*” was repeated by teachers so many times that it was later echoed by students during the research group activities.

In interviews, teachers have repeatedly stressed their high commitment to students’ emotional needs, and saw the development of supportive relationship with students as an

important part of their role. This unconditional commitment was often framed by using the metaphor of family–

I think the young people know the staff here to be worth looking after them, perhaps more than their own families sometimes.[...] When we were at the residential trip someone said to Mrs K – “it’s not because they don’t love you, cos they do, that’s why they are like that with you”. It was like, you are the mum so they are allowed to tell you that they hate you, because that’s what you do with your mum. There’s that unquestioning commitment to them that they’ve got here. And I think that is what makes it special because I think those people [teachers] do go above and beyond, but not in a sort of a martyr way but a sort of this is what they [students] need and this is what I will give.

(Miss D, Unit administrator)

The family metaphor fits well with hooks’ (1994) call for ‘*engaged pedagogy*’ in which teachers’ engagement is not limited to students’ minds, but is also sensitive to their emotional and material needs. While the notion of community is problematized further down this chapter, I would now like to attend in detail to the transition from the metaphors of “community” and “team” used by teachers when discussing students’ peer relations, to the metaphor of the family used to describe student-staff relations. Though not intended, this transition implies an essentialist sense of belonging. While “communities” might represent voluntary assemblages with the option to opt in or out, the family represents unquestioned and unchangeable belonging which is seen as natural and self evident, not a matter of constructed and contested social structures. Further, while the discourse of community assumes more or less horizontal peer relations, the discourse of family, and in particular that of parenting assumes hierarchy. It is exactly this that allows Miss D. in the above quote to interpret students’ hostility as an expression of love and trust rather than as resistance. While students highly valued the support and close relationships enabled by the small and intimate structure of the unit, and generally characterised teachers in the unit as ‘*more fun and more better*’ (Chris, year 11) than their main school colleagues, they did note on a few occasions that the small size of the unit also offered teachers many more opportunities for control and surveillance relative to the large main school. Unlike the teachers’ metaphor of family, which

implies benevolent authority, in the few instances of critique of the unit's teachers, the students were using policing metaphors –

'You can get away with murder there [main school]. They [main school teachers] don't care.'

(Jenny, year 11)

'It's like you are having a parole officer, like watching you all the time.'

(Billy, year 8)

This serves as a powerful reminder to the inseparable link between care and power. As feminist scholars argue, an analysis of power is a crucial part of ethics of care – it is not only that social divisions relegate care work to people further down the hierarchy of power, but that care relations in themselves are fraught with power struggles, which can be both empowering and constraining (Tronto 1993; Kittay, Jennings, and Wasunna 2005; Yuval-Davis 2011). This means that the willingness to openly engage with instances of struggle, conflict and resistance is necessary for fostering care relations which are empowering and seek social justice.

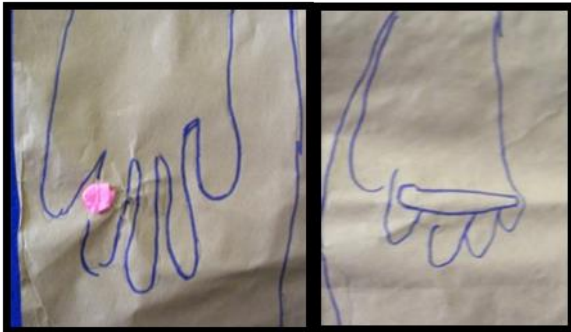
While the teachers were working towards a model of belonging as a harmonious and unchallenged relationship, students' understandings of the relational and emotional space of the unit were more complex, with positive value allocated not only to harmony, consensus and care, but also to conflict, resistance and defiance. During the creative workshops, when students were asked to build models of the ideal teacher, the ideal student and the ideal friend, the students suggested that the ideal student is *'loving and caring'* (Jeff, year 9), and someone who doesn't want *'to fall out with anybody'* (Rachel, year 9). When I asked what the ideal student carries in his hands Jack (year 8) suggested that in the ideal world the student would be wearing a wedding ring, which Rachel thought was a good thing because it means *'you*

found the person you love'. Yet, a few minutes later Jack drew on the student's other hand a knuckle duster, which he argued was the ideal ring (see figures 12-13).

FIGURE 12: THE BEST FRIEND LOVES EVERYONE AND DOESN'T WANT TO FALL OUT



FIGURE 13: WEDDING RING AND KNUCKLE DUSTER



Some of the students seemed to create and enjoy an atmosphere of “taking the piss” towards one another during the workshop activities. Jack in particular, seemed to favour an attitude of defiance, often expressing unusual views and enjoying the “shocked” reactions of his friends. He wanted the ideal teacher to be a *freak* (see the following chapter for a detailed discussion of this incident), and suggested it would be fun if everyone came to school naked. Despite the other students constantly calling him a pervert, he continued to hold this view and seemed to thoroughly enjoy the situation. In the workshop dedicated to creating the rules of the best school in the world the following dialogue ensued:

Anat: *let's start by asking in general if you think we even need rules?*

Jack: *no*

Rachel: *yea*

Billy: *yea, to keep things in order*

Anat: *why do you (Jack) think we don't need rules?*

Jack: *I don't like them in general*

Anat: *you don't like them? Why don't you like them?*

Jack: *'cos they are rules*

Anat: *they are rule and...?*

Jack: *(???)*

Anat: *they are annoying? They are unfair? They are boring? Why don't you like them, what's the reason?*

Jack: *they are boring*

Anat: *they are boring. What would you do if they weren't any rules?*

Jack: *do something fun*

Anat: *like what?*

Jack: *I dunno*

Lara: *(mockingly) jump off a high building*

Jack: *yea, with a parachute*

In all these examples Jack is resisting the social order by promoting difference in provocative ways that outright defy assumed norms, and treats these situations of difference, defiance and conflict as “fun”. Jack is not necessarily trying to promote some alternative order in which he can better “belong” in the sense being part of a harmonious unity or “norm”, where he wouldn't have to resist. It is difference, defiance and resistance for their own sake that he values – for him the best teacher does not mean “*brilliant and beautiful*” as Jeff suggests, but a ‘*freak*’, someone who is ‘*a little bit different*’, and he hates rules ‘*in general*’ just ‘*because they are rules*’.

The importance of resistance and defiance sits well with Young's (1986) critique of the ideal of community as a place of unity which denies difference. According to Young, many left-wing radicals invoke the ideal of community as an opposition to the neo-liberal social order that constructs individuals as atomised and alienated from one another. The

appeal for community imagines subjects that can relate to one another through non-mediated face to face communication aiming to ‘*understand one another as they understand themselves*’ (p.242). However, as Young points out, this ideal assumes a subject that is readily knowable to the self, and that can communicate such knowledge clearly and accurately to others, and in so doing it denies difference between and within subjects. Further, promoting face to face community relation as a universal ideal and an end to history, a state beyond which human society has no further stages to travel, denies that violence and oppression can (and do) also exist within such small face to face communities. While Young recognises the need for intimacy, connection and a sense of unity, she stresses the need to develop a politics of difference that recognises the fact that sharing between subjects is always fragile and that ‘*the same difference that makes sharing between us possible also makes misunderstanding, rejection, withdrawal and conflict always possible conditions of social being*’ (p.242).

I strongly agree with the points raised by Young, but argue that an acceptance of these does not entail a whole sale rejection of the notion of community or the need to foster belonging as an on-going relational process. What I do argue is that these relations should be guided by a stance of getting-to-know, openness to communication that recognises that difference can never be fully erased, and that sees conflict and resistance not just as inevitable within human relations, but as a productive positivity. It is this resignification of defiance, resistance and conflict as productive that I would now like to explore.

When I described Jack to a colleague in a conversation about my data analysis she asked me – but does he *really* mean that?! Does he really want to come to school naked or is he just enjoying being “shocking”? But is the desire to be shocking, the ‘*will to be against*’ (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 216) any less real than the desire to come to school naked (or dressed, or to do any other specific thing), any less real than the desire to be loved, or successful or admired? The understanding of the desire to be shocking as less “real” than the

desire to be, for example, successful, is an excellent example of the way power/knowledge works to make some choices or desires easier than others (Foucault, 1980). However, according to Foucault, resistance is always present within relations of power; individuals, as vehicles of power, do not only comply with hegemonic rules, but also resist and transgress them, alone or as part of mobilised collectives. Subjectivity is constructed through the dynamic relations of power, which include domination and compliance but also resistance and defiance (Gallagher, 2008). By insisting on difference, defiance and transgression, Jack constructs his subjectivity within a web of power relations.

Shildrick (2005) argues that every law always produces its exclusions, which means that there is no alternative system that can be fully just and inclusive. Transgression, then, is an '*originary state of being*', that should be resignified as a '*productive positivity*' (p.39). Jack's insistence on difference as defiance, and his characterisation of these as "fun", can be seen as a productive positivity that promotes social inclusion and justice, rather than as signs of mindless vandalism or attention seeking behaviour. Difference as defiance is productive because it insists on constantly opening up new possibilities; it entails conflict and disturbance of taken-for-granted assumptions, and thus is essential to the process of social change.

Careful social analysis and strategic planning of resistance are required for removing barriers to inclusion and participation and promoting relations of belonging, but the value of defiance will not end with changing the current social order. Oppression can never fully disappear, and often takes on new forms within new roles and relationships (Chomsky, 1986). A postmodernist understanding of power entails that in the very act of emancipating ourselves from one social order, we are reconstructing ourselves as subjects of another. There is no 'natural essence' to the self to be liberated from the grasp of power. This does not, however, make the ideal of emancipation outdated; rather, it implies that the *struggle for* emancipation is a never-ending process. This process of emancipation includes fostering relations of support

and belonging, but takes into account that resistance and conflict are vital components not just of the struggle for emancipation but of any human attempt of communicating across difference.

For critical pedagogues such as Freire (1972) and Giroux (2003), the role of the teacher is to respond to moments of conflict in the classroom through engaging students in a dialogue and connecting personal experiences with the social contexts, histories and struggles in which they occur, thus challenging oppressive structures. While this is clearly important, several feminist writers (such as Bell, Morrow, Marina, & Tastsoglou, 1999; Ellsworth, 1989; Young, 1986) warn us that the focus on dialogue and rational deliberation, which assumes subjects that are fully knowable and describable through language, also serves as a tool of self-regulation that can deny difference and stifle resistance. It is precisely because of the double-edged function of power/knowledge to both construct and constrain individuals, that diverse and embodied forms of resistance, motivated by rage and desire, are needed. As Pickett argues in his 1996 synthesis of Foucault's work on resistance, 'bodies and pleasures' should be *'the rallying point for the counterattack against the modern power regime, ideological critique in itself is insufficient for this counterattack'* (Pickett, 1996 p.460). While these forms of resistance can and should inform the politics of schooling, we need to resist the urge to instantly pacify them or transform them into intellectual deliberation, but rather adapt a valuing stance towards expressions of anger, resistance and desire in their "raw" form (Holloway, 2002). Understanding belonging as an ongoing relational process means adopting a stance of getting-to-know towards the other, recognizing difference as well as connection as desired parts of the relationship, and valuing conflict and resistance as productive in their opening of new ways to communicate across difference.

In this last section of the chapter I would like to render visible the practices of authority that teachers in the unit were exercising over students. As argued throughout this thesis, equalising power relations is at the heart of radical inclusive pedagogy, and is a necessary step towards the inclusion of disabled people in schools and in society. Also, as argued throughout the thesis, power relations in the modern era are often exercised in subtle and difficult to pinpoint ways. While I have pointed to the need to engage with power relations and promote a valuing stance to conflict as well as to harmony throughout the chapter, I will focus in this section on the specific ways teachers' authority over students was practiced in the school. My main argument in this section is that much of these relations of authority are inscribed through the spatial organisation of the school that *'reflects societal and legal rules which view children as subordinate to adults'* (Shilling, 1991, p. 32). This spatial embeddedness of authority rendered it in plain sight during observations, yet maintained it almost invisible, a taken for granted fact of school life (Gulson & Symes, 2007; McGregor, 2004). This was reflected in the silence around issues of power relations, and specifically relations of authority and compliance, which were never explicitly discussed in interviews with teachers and staff. This may seem surprising, as the staff within the unit did elaborately engage with questioning many other aspects of the *'hidden curriculum'* (Illich, 1971), such as the fragmentation and de-contextualisation of learning, and extensively explored new ways of interacting and relating to students and to one another. This silence has allowed for the construction of authority as natural and benevolent under the trope of family-like relations (see discussion in previous section). It is precisely for this reason that detailed attention to those socio-spatial processes of domination can shed light on discussions of critical pedagogy (Ferrare & Apple, 2010), and, I argue, on the development of radical inclusive education.

The space of the school works to reproduce adults' authority and to teach students to "know their place" (Gulson & Symes, 2007). I use the term adults, rather than teachers or staff, because many of the spatial privileges within the school apply also to adult visitors (such as myself), and are not conditioned upon being a teacher or even a member of staff. The classrooms in the school are designated to teachers and called Mrs X's class, and students move between the different classrooms according to the different lessons in the timetable. This, as McGregor (2004) describes, is a common practice in mainstream schools, which, through the fragmentation of space and time and the allocation of pupils to certain areas at specified times, serves an important function in constructing disciplined subjects and rendering them docile (Foucault, 1977). This may seem as the technical reality of the school, but this technicality, inscribed by architecture and reproduced through social norms and rules, did not just come to be in an ideological void. Much of the current school structures (both physically and metaphorically) were constituted in the 19th century, following the change in economic production and in the role served by popular education in supporting and enabling this economic production (Jones & Williamson, 1979). The symbolic rather than technical function of this allocation of space is highlighted within the unit. As the special unit only consists of 3 teachers working in 3 rooms where the majority of lessons are taught, it often happened that students were taught consecutive lessons of different subjects in the same room. But even in these instances the students were not allowed to stay in the room but had to leave it with all their stuff and line up outside of the building to be called into the class by the teacher. Such spatial routines function almost invisibly to display teachers' authority and ownership of the space and reinforce control over movement and behaviour. One morning on my way to the special unit I passed by a teacher speaking to a student outside of the class. The teacher told the student that this is her class and he has to do as he is told *'if I want you to stand at the back for the whole hour you will do it because this is my class and my rules'*

(observation notes, day 5). I heard the phrase “my class” used by a teacher towards students as a justification of authority at least once more during my time in the school. This shows the circular way in which space is socially produced in accordance with hegemonic power— the school is designed as a space where teachers exercise control over students, and this design is then framed as a “force major” that entails such control.

The space of the class itself is organised in such manner to assert the teacher’s prominence. Desks and seats are aligned in a way that insures all students face the teacher but not each other. Some students share a desk with a colleague, but, depending on the number of students in each lesson, several of them don’t. Making seating arrangements is a prerogative of the teacher who often uses it as a means of discipline, moving students closer to her or further from peers to allow closer surveillance and as a form of punitive action. Although almost every lesson in the special unit was composed of periods of individual work and pair or group work alongside periods of frontal lecture, the students still spent most of their time in a physical setting and bodily position that favoured teacher-student interaction over peer interaction. Working in groups sometimes merited physically moving desks or chairs, but the class was always rearranged back to its original setting at the end of such tasks marking them as deviations from the ‘normal’ course of events. Needless to say, the shifting between lecture and group work was always initiated by the teacher. This spatial organization isolates students from one another and allows the teacher clear sight of any student at any time. It resonates well with Foucault’s description of the panopticon prison which he used as a basic metaphor for the gaze of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977). Further, this layout reinforces the role of the teacher as the “knower” who transmits knowledge onto the students and restricts students access and participation in learning and actively constructing knowledge (Ferrare & Apple, 2010).

Other elements of spatial control included the limited freedom of movement students enjoy in the school. During lessons they are expected to sit down and stay in one place while the teacher can walk around freely and choose whether to sit or to stand. The SNU was unique in that, in an effort to make learning more accessible, students were often asked to move around, usually one by one, through such tasks as coming to the board or handing out equipment to other students. However, just like with the furniture arrangement, incidents of moving were abbreviations from the norm. Students were expected to sit at all times unless given specific permission (or often instruction) by the teacher to move in a specific way and direction. Even sitting was regulated, and rocking on the chair or sitting in certain positions was foully looked upon. Also during breaks the students needed specific hall passes to grant them admittance to different parts of the school. Though I've never witnessed an incident in which the teacher refused to give such a pass, the very act of having to ask for a hall pass is a strong indicator of the fact that students do not "own" the space.

While teachers remained silent around these practices of domination, students were explicitly challenging them, occasionally through verbal content, but more often through embodying space. During the course of the workshops the students produced 3 short plays that represented their imagination of the best school in the world and the school from hell. Although my instructions to the students were broad, asking them to play out a scene from school life while stressing this does not necessarily mean a lesson, they played out 3 scenes of lessons. This may not be surprising considering the fact students spend the overwhelming majority of their school time in lessons. It was also not surprising (though slightly disappointing) that all 3 scenes started off with a traditional classroom setting, including students sat in rows facing a whiteboard, and a teacher standing by the board, claiming their authority to dictate the activity. However, in all 3 plays the plot evolves to break down this spatial authority in different ways. In the play of the best school in the world (see figure 14)

the teacher uses her authority to concede the space for students' control. She declares the learning objective is to have a party and then, as the students come to the front of the class to occupy the space previously reserved for teachers, she goes to sit down in one of the students' seats. She is later invited by a student to come and join the dancing. In the 2 plays of the school from hell (see figures 14 above, and also figure 8 in chapter 5) we see an active struggle over space, as students forcefully invade the teacher's space and eventually drive him out of the classroom. It is interesting to note how, like the teachers in interviews, the students did not explicitly challenge the prominence of the authority of the teacher in their representation of the ideal school. However, they did, in all plays, challenge the restrictions imposed on the use of the space, and the clear cut distinction between the ways students and teachers were occupying the classroom.

Through subtle spatial structures such as furniture layouts, certain behaviours are encouraged or suppressed, which function almost invisibly to display teacher expectations and reinforce adult control (McGregor, 2004). Resistance to these forms of power relation can then be seen as "behavioural needs", and coercion masqueraded as actions in the "best interest" of an individual. Radical inclusive pedagogy, therefore, requires explicit attention to relations of power, and a valuing stance towards, anger, disobedience and conflict which are invaluable in turning our attention to hidden practices of domination.

FIGURE 14: SHARING SPACE IN THE IDEAL SCHOOL



FIGURE 15: FIGHTING OVER SPACE IN THE SCHOOL FROM HELL



CONCLUSION

This chapter has addressed research question 3, which seeks inspiration for radical inclusive pedagogy through looking at the practices in an innovative special unit and analysing them with reference to the literature on critical pedagogy, feminist ethics of care and inclusive education, as well as drawing on ideas from activists in the disabled people's movement. The research findings have indicated that working against the functionalist approach to education through organising the curriculum around topics and resisting arbitrary segmentation, combined with an approach that values diverse knowledges and promotes relational aspects of learning such as joy and belonging just as much as academic achievement, can produce an accessible and enjoyable learning environment in which students can fully develop and enjoy a sense of pride and positive self esteem. These achievements can provide some inspiring alternatives to the realities of exclusion common to much educational provision (Allan, 2008). However, a lack of critical engagement with the wider social structures that produce these realities of exclusion, as well as the absence of explicit attention to relations of domination and authority, even when these are constructed as benevolent authority, can make this alternative vulnerable to recuperation.

Implicit practices of domination work within the school to hide the workings of power/knowledge and minimise students' authorship over their own education. Further, social inequalities and educational inequalities are reciprocally linked, and it is impossible to change education while leaving wider social structures intact. Lower socio-economic status is connected to poorer attainment in school, and poor attainment limits students' economic possibilities (Lynch, 2001). Similarly, cultural assumptions and norms are being reified through education and in the process reproduce subjects who want to fulfil these norms.

It is here that critical pedagogy is most promising to inclusive education through its stress on praxis – the connection of knowing and acting through understanding personal

circumstances in relation to social structures. Inclusive education entails more than a “once and for all” end to disabling practices within any particular educational provision. It entails an understanding of the struggle for emancipation, as well as the attempt to connect and belong across difference, as a never ending process, and the fostering of honest and open relationships that support the process of getting to know one another in all its fragility. This requires prefiguratively practising relations that resist domination and allow for rhizomatic connections. It also means including in the curriculum and in educational relationships the knowledge and attitudes required for actively resisting injustice and providing a space to practice such resistance. In the following chapter I explore how the creative workshops with the students, through their use of play and multi-methods, worked as an attempt to prefigure such relations which stand at the heart of radical inclusive pedagogy.

CHAPTER 8

PREFIGURATIVE RESEARCH – PLAYFUL METHODOLOGY AS A SITE OF RADICAL INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

INTRODUCTION

In previous chapters I have explored how the experiences of activists in the disabled people’s movement (research question 2), and those of students and staff in an innovative special needs unit (research question 3) can inform our thinking around radical inclusive pedagogy. The four main themes that arose from these explorations were

- The need to value difference and resist practices that seek to make all students follow a uniform, linear and predefined educational path.
- The need to value interdependence rather than independence and the understanding of education as a complex and on-going relational process.
- The need to contextualise learning in diverse aspects of experience as a way of supporting conscientization and accessibility.
- The need to promote dialogue between teachers and students and resist authoritarian school practices.

This vision of education as an on-going relational process of ‘*becoming -in-the-world- with- others*’ (Price & Shildrick, 2002, p. 62), a journey of change that does not seek to follow a pre-defined path or destination, echoes the political concept of prefigurative action. As discussed in chapter 4, prefigurative action – the understanding of revolution as an on-going process that requires the creation of alternative social relations “in the shell of the world”, rather than waiting for them to appear in the “post-revolution” society – is a central idea in new social movements political discourse, particularly amongst more anarchist strands of liberation and anti-globalisation movements (Gordon, 2008). This insistence on inter-personal relations, as well as the

view of change as an on-going process rather than a before and after binary, make prefigurative action a highly useful concept for theorising and practicing radical inclusive education as a lifelong process of learning to relate to one another in ways that promote support and interdependency, but also allow for separation and difference. Thus, as I have argued in chapter 5, researching radical inclusive pedagogy was not just about describing and analysing participants' understandings and experiences, but about embodying within the research methodology those pedagogical and relational practices I am arguing for, what I have called *prefigurative research*.

This conceptualisation of research as a prefigurative pedagogical practice had led to the formation of research question 4 – *what can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the process of conducting playful research workshops with a group of students in a “special needs unit”?* – which will be addressed in this chapter. The process of conducting the creative workshops with the students in the SNU was an attempt at prefiguring the four main themes of radical inclusive pedagogy, i.e. engaging *with* students in a process of learning that enabled encounters through creative practice (Hellier-Tinoco, 2005), that supported critical reflection and invited a diversity of responses and actions, and that resisted the reification of the adult-child hierarchy so common in schools. This process was not only an opportunity to explore with students their ideas around education, but also a chance to learn together new ways of relating to the world, to oneself, and to others in the world, and thus were in themselves a pedagogical site attempting to practise in radical inclusive ways.

This chapter focuses on the *process* of the workshops, and asks what we can learn about radical inclusive education from that site. In what follows I will examine how different aspects of the workshops – the playful space that was opened up by the

invitation to imagine the ‘best school in the world’; the use of group setting rather than individual interviews; and the incorporation of different methods, such as arts and crafts, drama, photography and board games, have worked to enable certain kinds of knowledge and relations, and supported critical engagement with reality, thus incorporating the main 4 themes of radical inclusive pedagogy (see table 5). I will also draw attention to the limitations of the workshops and the dilemmas that arose while conducting them. Placing the ‘action’ of research at the centre of analysis also sits well with Freire’s (1972a) notion of praxis, which sees knowledge as geared towards action and produced through a cycle of action and reflection.

TABLE 5: THE "BEST SCHOOL IN THE WORLD" WORKSHOP AS A SITE OF RADICAL INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

Aspect of research workshop		Theme of radical inclusive pedagogy
Play	Socially embedded yet distant from current social order	Contextualising learning for conscientization
	Socially conceived as a child-led space	Resisting authoritarian practices
	Flexible and open	Valuing difference
Group	Diminishes adult control	Resisting authoritarian practices
	Provides opportunity to act in different roles and relationships	Education as an on-going relational process of interdependency
	Collaborative and multi-vocal story telling	Valuing difference
Multi-method	Accessible to people not comfortable with the sole use of language	Contextualising learning for accessibility
	Opens different aspects of experience for consideration	Valuing difference; Contextualising learning for conscientization
	Resists the privileged role of language in education	Valuing difference; Resisting authoritarian practices

Throughout the thesis, and in particular in chapter 3, I have argued that radical inclusive pedagogy is not about developing ways to better fit disabled students into the functionalist and hierarchical school structure, but is rather about developing forms of education that support all students in participating in learning and social life. In this sense, education is about social change. Conscientization, the process of reflecting on personal experiences and relating those to the social structures within which they are embedded, is a key aspect of radical inclusive pedagogy, and, according to Freire (1972a), a necessary step for social transformation. Many of the activists interviewed in this research have stressed the importance of spaces that allowed for peer interaction and reflection, and argued that teachers need to develop practices that support students with a diversity of cognitive styles and abilities to engage in such critical reflections.

As discussed in chapter 5, I came to the field equipped with a critical view of the education system, seeking to gain inspiration for alternative practices that are committed to social change and justice, rather than trying to produce “accurate” descriptions of the current state of things. In interviews with adult participants (both staff in the SNU and activists) I have explicitly asked for their educational visions, a question that many of the participants found challenging to answer, often asking for some time to gather their thoughts. I was well aware that, in order to engage in such critical and reflective thinking, students in the SNU would require some support and context, some experience in the “here and now” that could provide a reference point for discussing complex and abstract ideas. In this section I will explore how the use of play and the utopian goal of the workshops – designing the best school in the world – opened up a unique social space that, while being embodied and contextualised in concrete activities, still invited participants to imagine otherwise and supported critical reflection.

Winnicott (1971) describes play as located in a potential space between the real and the imagined. It is a social activity happening between several people and governed by social rules that, in order for play to be successful, must be adhered to by participants. However, the rules governing play, though connected to wider social conventions, are not identical to them and are much more flexible. Playing often involves detailed negotiations of the rules of the game that can be changed and reinterpreted time and time again by different players. Play is social reality “in the making” that, at least temporarily, can subvert the existing social order by “suspending” the rules of reality and opening up alternative space of experimentation, and is therefore a promising site for producing knowledge that transgresses existing hierarchies.

Choosing a “utopian” aim to the workshops – designing the best school in the world – created a distance from the actual reality, a distance which, as Halpin (2003) is essential for any critical reflection. The playful utopian aim invited students to examine their values and ideas about education under different circumstances from the current ones, and had therefore created a potential space for subverting existing norms and assumptions. For example, the session dedicated to making models of the best teacher student and friend, provided a surprising opportunity for discussing complex and abstract ideas about normalcy and freakiness, as can be seen in the following transcript:

Anat: *Ok, now let's use all this equipment and think what we want the best teacher in the world to have*

Jack: *Green hair*

Billy: *Leather jacket*

Rachel: *Green hair, blue eyes and a leather jacket*

Anat: *You want her to have green eyes?*

Jack: *No, green hair blue eyes*

Jeff: *Black hair*

Billy: *Most definitely black leather jacket, Miss*

Anat: *Why does she have green hair?*

Jack: *I want her to look like a freak*

Jeff: *We want to make a brilliant beautiful teacher, not a freak*

Jack: *Not beautiful, she didn't say beautiful*

Anat: *Well maybe someone likes being a freak, what does it mean if your teacher is a freak?*

Rachel: *Pink eyes*

Jeff: *Here you go*

Jack: *She's a little bit different*

Anat: *Is it nice to have a teacher that is a bit different and crazy, what do you think?*

Jeff: *Yea, probably, you know, a bit more pizzazz.*

This excerpt shows how the use of a playful task provided a concrete context against which abstract ideas could be discussed. The conversation moved between different levels, starting with the very concrete choice of materials from which to produce the model, moving to interpreting the demands of the task and renegotiating the social meaning of “freak”. I opened with a vague instruction to use the materials (colours, coloured paper, glitter glue, fabrics, rolling eyes buttons...) to create the best teacher in the world, without specifying how to do so or what is the meaning of “best”. Probably prompted by the visual and bodily nature of the task the students immediately came up with ideas about the physical appearance of the teacher such as clothes, hair and eye colour. However, these concrete choices represented social and cultural understandings. While Jeff understood “best” to mean brilliant and beautiful, Jack’s ideal teacher is a freak, one who transgresses the norm. They then went on to renegotiate their contrasting view with Jack toning down from ‘*freak*’ to ‘*a little bit different*’ and Jeff reconciling difference and beauty as ‘*pizzazz*’.

This is an example of a process of conscientization that involves the identification and dialogical contestation of normalising and ableist assumptions. Just like the reclamation of ‘*crip*’ by McRuer (2006) as a form of productive difference that can work against the limiting discourse of ‘*compulsory able-bodiedness*’, the discussion around the best teacher in the world allowed students to critically consider and actively challenge socially constructed ideas of beauty and difference. In this process they have created knowledge through dialogue – a dialogue between different students, and a

dialogue between experience and the socially constructed meanings attached to such experience. Thus, the playful distance from the lived reality, while being contextualised and embodied in the here and now, allowed for critical discussions of taken for granted social norms in a non-threatening and accessible way.

Further, as described by many methodological texts on group research, the interaction between participants diminished the involvement and control of the researcher and allowed for themes and ideas that weren't pre-considered by the researcher to emerge as a point of discussion (Baker & Hinton, 1999; Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Madriz, 2000). The emphasis on imagination and creativity that come with the social convention of "play" had further elaborated the scope of issues that could be discussed. A short while after the ideal teacher was declared a freak the following dialogue ensued –

Billy: *that can be a moustache*

Anat: *the ideal teacher has a moustache?*

Jack: *yea (laughing)*

Anat: *the ideal teacher is man or woman?*

Rachel: *both, man and woman*

Jack: *cool, freaking*

Jeff: *I don't think I want to see that*

Billy: *what?*

Jeff: *a man and a woman*

Rachel: *yea... (laughing...)*

Jack: *what are they called, a man and a woman? What's the name? (Billy and Jack are gluing the felt piece)*

Anat: *do we want the ideal teacher to be an androgynous or a trans...?*

Rachel: *(completing my unfinished word) gender*

Jeff: *I think it's better for her to be straight, a woman*

Anat: *the ideal teacher is a straight woman?*

Jeff: *(at Jack) a weird looking lip, don't you think*

Jack: *yea, well she'll be having a moustache in a minute*

Jeff: *the ideal teacher, that?*

Jack: *what?*

Jeff: *teachers don't have moustaches*

Rachel: *it might be a man and a woman*

Billy: *that's just wrong*

Anat: *what's wrong?*

Billy: *a man in a woman's body*

I must admit that this incident took me by complete surprise. When Billy suggested the teacher should have a moustache my instinctive response was to wonder if the teacher is a man or woman, constructing that as a binary choice, completely oblivious to the existence of any other options. While Rachel's suggestion surprised me, I still tried to validate it and contribute to the conversation, using what I thought was my "adult" authoritative knowledge, by asking if the ideal teacher is '*an androgynous or a trans...*' where I stopped mid-word suddenly unsure how to continue, scared of breaking the social order too much, perhaps being expelled from school. But Rachel quickly came to my aid, naturally completing my '*trans...*' with '*gender*'.

This lack of confidence and embarrassment that I felt during the discussion corresponds with Corker's (2001b) claim that the reproduction of heterosexual norms in the education system is often carried out by well meaning adults caught off guard and embarrassed by openly discussing issues relating to sexuality, and particularly gay sexuality. The playful situation allowed enough distance from the social reality to provide a safe space for discussions of queer sexualities in ways that are not often available within schools. It is interesting to note how the students were much more comfortable with slipping into this world of suspended norms than I was, which was indicated by my embarrassed and hesitant attempts to validate the contribution and have some control over the discussion, rather than joining in with imagining such reality. While not all students responded positively to the idea of a transgender teacher, they were all vividly engaged in a discussion considering this possibility. The looseness of play, it's location between the real and the imagined, allowed for an experimental take on bodies, which could be experienced and interpreted creatively and critically.

So far I have demonstrated how the distance of play from social reality helped to open a critical space of reflection and conscientization. However, Freire (1972a) argues,

the process of conscientization needs to lead to praxis – the application of knowledge to action, which, on a collective level, can bring about social transformation. This begs the question, to what extent such imaginative reflections, created in the potential space of play, can indeed support change in “real life”, a question that stands at the heart of radical inclusive education. A possible criticism of the “best school in the world” workshops is that they created very little material change in participants’ actual school life. Yet, as Slater (2012a) argues, critical pedagogy is not only about creating tangible changes in the external reality, but is also about supporting critical investigation of the world and one’s relationship to the world. Engaging in ‘*utopian thinking*’ can act as a spur for change in that it undermines the sense that the way things are is inevitable, and supports the consideration of alternatives (Halpin, 2003). Mackenzie (2000) stresses that ‘*imagining oneself otherwise*’ is an important aspect of developing agency and choice making. While she mainly constructs her argument around individuals, Mackenzie argues that agency, autonomy and choice making are not traits in the possession of individuals, but are produced in social and relational contexts. The things one can imagine, the situation and scenarios that are available to the mind, do not arise in a vacuum, but are limited and enabled by the cultural imagery available to us, and the social recognition different options may receive. Thus, engaging in *collaborative* imagining broadened the scope of available options on the individual and collective level, positioning difference, freakiness and queerness as productive possibilities. The openness of the workshops and the invitation to “go wild” was not only highly productive as a source of data, but also created a supportive space of becoming, in which students could experiment with their relations to the world, to themselves and to others in the world, and was thus a form of radical inclusive praxis.

In previous chapters I have discussed the metaphor of the rhizome, which, following Deleuze and Guattari (1980), is used to describe a view of the world as a system of multiple connections, in which entities are not fixed and neatly separated from one another but are always involved in creating new assemblages, linking and breaking from one another. This metaphor has been recently embraced by several writers in disability studies (e.g. Allan, 2008; Goodley, 2007b; Roets, Reinaart, Adams, & Van Hove, 2008; Shildrick & Price, 2006) who argue that through emphasising connection and interdependency, the rhizome can offer a way out of deficit models of disability, what I have called in chapter 2 a *dis-ability perspective*. Unlike the modernist understanding of the humans as atomised and bounded individuals the rhizome always ‘*connects to something else; rhizomes are heterogeneous not dichotomous; they are made up a multiplicity of lines that extend in all directions; they break off, but then they begin again (either where they were before or on a new line)*’ (Goodley, 2007a, p. 324). Similar ideas were expressed by activists, who, while not explicitly using the metaphor of the rhizome, have none the less argued for a pedagogy that stresses relational processes, values interdependency, and sees students as embedded within a social context (see chapter 6). In this section I will explore how the group setting, together with the epistemological looseness of play, have worked to support such rhizomatic pedagogy, allowing me and the students many opportunities to interact with one another in various roles, support and challenge each other, and co-author complex and multivocal stories. Such rhizomatic relations, I argue, stand at the heart of radical inclusive pedagogy.

Wilkinson (1999, p. 64) suggests that focus groups are a useful methodology for feminist research that seeks to challenge oppressive social relations for two reasons:

First, focus groups are a contextual method: that is, they avoid focusing on the individual devoid of social context, or separate from interactions with others. Second, focus groups are a relatively non-hierarchical method: that is, they shift the balance of power away from the researcher towards the research participants.

In a later section of this chapter I will discuss how the use of group play affected the adult-child power relations in the workshops and loosened some of the strict hierarchies that working within a school context imposes. Here I would like to elaborate on the different peer relations that were enabled by the group structure, in which both support and rivalry were used in surprising, creative and productive ways.

Group setting is also recommended in the literature as an inclusive and accessible way of engaging children and/or people with language and cognitive difficulties in qualitative research (Booth & Booth, 1996; Eder & Fingerson, 2002; Fargas-Malet, McSherry, Larkin, & Robinson, 2010). Group interviews provide an opportunity for participants to support and challenge each other in the construction of complex ideas. Booth and Booth (1996); Goodley (2001) and Wickenden (2010) have all described how people with learning or communication difficulties can utilise other people's speech to exercise their own voice. Wickenden (2010), working with young people who use AAC, described how her interpretation of parents talking instead of their children has shifted during the course of her research. In many instances the AAC users called upon family members to tell a story they wanted to share with her. Initially, she interpreted these occurrences as parents taking over the authentic voice of the children, but has gradually come to realise that by asking others to speak for them on specific subjects participants were exercising autonomy and agency and communicating

through assisted modes that were more effective at those moments of conversation than Voice Output Devices.

In a similar way, participants in this research were using each other's speech and non-verbal communication in a variety of ways to support the formation and expression of ideas. These included, completing each other's sentence and supporting a peer in search of specific words and terms, relying on shared context and experiences (for example stories from class, references to fellow students and teachers, references to music, films and TV characters), and even teasing and challenging which in many occasion provided opportunities for further developing an idea. Mirroring Booth & Booth (1998) notion of distributed competence explored in chapter 2, the group interaction can be seen as a form of distributed voice. As argued in chapter 3, critical pedagogy's concept of voice is problematic, because it assumes subjects who speak in easily identifiable ways, each person exercising a unique and single voice (Ellsworth, 1989; Gabel, 2002). Including students with a variety of cognitive and communication needs in practices of radical pedagogy requires a rhizomatic, distributed and interdependent concept of voice, agency and autonomy.

An example of this rhizomatic distributed voice can be seen in the following dialogue, in which students were planning the scene depicting life in the "best school in the world", which they were about to perform –

Lara: *I want to be the emo person*

Billy: *you are*

Rachel: *yea, let's say Lara is the emo one, like she's on her own and we all come up to her and say come hang around with us*

Jeff: *yea, I'll take that idea*

(some laughing in the background)

Lara: *he's laughing*

Jeff: *(at Jack and Billy) any ideas you two?*

Jack: *I wanna dance*
?: *that's not a good idea*
?: *he can be the crazy record dude*
Rachel: *so one of us can say come with us we are having a party*
Billy: *or we can all sit there and then the teacher says 'our L.O today is PARTY'*
?: *the best school in the world, man, you must party*
Jack: *yea, every lesson is a party*
Billy: *yea*
Jack: *science, yea, we party, all right*
Billy: *burn the board* (miming torching the board)
Anat: *to burn the blackboard? You want to use the burner, is that what you said?*
 (silence)

This excerpt is one of many in which students have co-constructed ideas building on each other's speech. Whilst each student only says one sentence at a time, the joint effort produces an elaborate script that involves several different roles (the "emo" girl, the crazy record dude, the teacher) incorporated into one plot with several dimensions. Lara and Rachel's initial focus is on the emotional relations within the peer group. Lara is the 'emo' (emotional) which Rachel interprets as lonely and offers in response that the group will come to her and invite her to hang out with them. Jack and Billy are more focused on the activities in the school, suggesting that the best school is a place where 'every lesson is a party'.

The concept of party is also co-constructed amongst the participants – in response to Jeff's challenge 'any ideas you two?' Jack states that he wants to dance. He is then offered a character consistent with the school setting "the crazy record dude", and Rachel incorporates this into the peer group plot by suggesting that the students invite the "emo" girl to party with them. However, Billy and Jack's focus is on the activity during formal lessons, as they incorporate their party into the familiar script of a teacher entering the classroom and stating what the "learning objective" is, and go on to demonstrate through a combination of words and mime how the equipment in the science lab can be utilised for partying by using the burner to torch the board,

transforming the concept of party to something more closely resembling a riot. This is an example of what Goodley (2007a, p. 324) refers to as the ‘weaving’ aspect of rhizomes whose points are constantly connecting to produce heterogeneous ‘*composites and a language that reflects its own essential ‘disparateness’ and improvisational character*’. Thus, through group interaction, play and creative methods, the group weaved together rhizomatic stories that diverged and converged on many points.

It is interesting to note how my intervention in the conversation immediately breaks this process of weaving. I am not sure if the silence that followed my turn in the conversation had to do with not wanting to admit arson fantasies to an adult, or with singling Billy out and asking him to clarify in words exactly what he meant by his spoken and gestured interaction with Jack, but throughout the group workshops it was clear that participants were much more willing to elaborate in their responses to one another than when answering my direct questions. The horizontal peer relations and the shared social context of students have allowed them to support one another in this process of weaving in many more ways than I could. This was not only done through agreement and encouragement, but also by arguing and challenging one another. A conversation with Jack at the workshop dedicated to discussing the rules of the best school in the world provides an example of this –

1. **Anat:** *let’s start by asking in general if you think we even need rules?*
2. **Jack:** *no*
3. **Rachel:** *yea*
4. **Billy:** *yea, to keep things in order*
5. **Anat:** *why do you (Jack) think we don’t need rules?*
6. **Jack:** *I don’t like them in general*
7. **Anat:** *you don’t like them? Why don’t you like them?*
8. **Jack:** *’cos they are rules*
9. **Anat:** *they are rule and...?*
10. **Jack:** *(???)*
11. **Anat:** *they are annoying? They are unfair? They are boring? Why don’t you like them, what’s the reason?*
12. **Jack:** *they are boring*

13. **Anat:** *they are boring. What would you do if they weren't any rules?*
14. **Jack:** *do something fun*
15. **Anat:** *like what?*
16. **Jack:** *I dunno*
17. **Lara:** *(mockingly) jump off a high building*
18. **Jack:** *yea, with a parachute!*

In an effort to understand Jack's idea of a world without rules I was trying to support him by asking a series of questions, gradually decreasing their level of complexity by rephrasing open questions into multiple choice format (lines 7-12). This strategy, which I have often used in my practice as a speech and language therapist, and which was also suggested by Booth & Booth (1996) as one possible way of supporting people with language and communication difficulties in interviews, was partially successful. Through my rephrasing of the open question '*why don't you like rules?*' as a multiple choice, Jack identified the reason to his objection to rules as boredom and their absence as fun. However, when I tried to understand exactly what kind of fun he meant, it was Lara's intervention that saved the day. Although intended at mocking and challenging Jack, it served to spark in him an exciting idea. It was not only that now he found an answer to my question (what is '*something fun?*'), but the whole tone of the conversation, which cannot be conveyed through transcripts, had shifted from briskness to excitement. The peer interaction, which was much more horizontal and infused with comradeship, had allowed for the challenge – '*jump off a high building?*' – to be transformed into a productive positivity, rather than having the effect of authoritatively dismissing the idea and closing the discussion.

Beyond the emphasis on co-construction, connection and interdependency, the metaphor of the rhizome is also promoted for its stress on multiplicities. Madriz (2000) argues that focus groups are '*a collective rather than an individualistic research method*

*that focuses on the **multivocality** of participants attitudes'* (p.836, emphasis added).

This multivocality of groups was further supported by the use of play and fantasy as the research context. The unique epistemological position of play as located between the real and the imagined (Winnicott, 1971) had allowed for multiple viewpoints on multiple existing and possible realities. Thus, as explored earlier, the process of interpreting and re-interpreting reality and the rules of the game led students to negotiate the meaning of “freak”, ending with a new mutual agreement of freakiness as glamorous. However, when discussing the transgender teacher, no mutual understanding was arrived at. Rachel and Jack were enthusiastic about the concept while Jeff and Billy sustained their profound objection, with Billy arguing that ‘*that’s just wrong, a man in a dress*’. Yet, the moustache, which started this whole exchange, was pasted on the teacher by both Jack and Billy.

What this discussion goes to suggest is that the concept of rhizomes, which is often criticised as being hyper theoretical and abstract, and therefore carries little material implications to the real life struggles of disabled people, can in fact carry much practical implications for the creation of enabling and inclusive educational environments. Rather than promoting pedagogical practices that seek to train and measure individual skills, manifested through independent and unassisted performance, radical inclusive pedagogy is about supporting distributed voice and competence manifested through multiple relations of interdependency and rhizomatic weaving. It is about creating opportunity for peer interaction and dialogue that does not necessarily converge into a single, linear narrative. Johansson & Linde (2005) argue that a playful collaborative exploration suggests ways of interacting with the subject area that do not constrain analysis in a search for objectified knowledge on a certain reality. Instead, the ambiguous nature of play nourishes a dialogue between different actors in the

exploration process. The combination of the multivocality of the group with the epistemological looseness of play and imagination allowed for several stories to be told side by side without one having to vanquish the other.

MULTI- METHOD: TRANSGRESSING THE VERBAL-RATIONALE BIAS OF RESEARCH METHODS

The research workshops used several different methods to generate representations of the best school in the world including arts and crafts, photography, drama and tasks of sorting and ranking (see the detailed outline of the workshops in chapter 5). This multi method approach to research and learning, I will argue in this section, is of key importance to radical inclusive pedagogy for two reasons. First, it supports students with a variety of cognitive and communication styles to take part in the process of knowledge construction. I will demonstrate this point drawing on methodological discussions in disability studies and the sociology of childhood. Second, a multi-method approach allows different aspects of experience to come under the scope of discussion. As discussed throughout the thesis, “malestream” Enlightenment philosophy, which equated knowledge, education and even personhood with rationality and linguistic proficiency, has worked to marginalise and de-privilege many people, including women, disabled people and people of colour (Burman, 2006). Thus, challenging the exalted place of the written text in education and research is an important step towards radical inclusive pedagogy.

The use of multi-method research has gained prominence in recent decades as part of a methodological shift in the field of education and childhood research – from

research *on* children to research *with* children (Broström, 2012). The new sociology of childhood which understands children as competent agents with their own status, needs and rights, and not as incomplete versions of the adults they will become (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998), alongside international and national policies that recognise the need to involve children and young people in decisions about their lives (e.g. *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989) have led to the development of new ways to meaningfully engage children in research, and to allow for complex interactions that are not wholly restricted by agendas set by the adults who control the research questions and design (e.g. Clark & Moss, 2011; Cocks, 2008).

Booth and Booth (1996) describe how traditional narrative research demands that its participants construct elaborate and chronologically ordered texts, which also have an evaluative function of connecting past events to the present in order to construct the meaning of the present. However, those very features that are designed to give “voice” to participants, and thus challenge the power hierarchies between researcher and researched, can prove particularly difficult for children and/or adults with learning or communication difficulties. Providing detailed accounts of past events out of the here and now, being aware of chronological order and explicitly discussing cause and effect relations, all require skills that may not suit the cognitive styles of young children or those of people with learning and communication difficulties. This means that the onus is on the researcher (and educator) to find ways to engage in a dialogue that is open enough to allow participants to bring their unique voice and meaning-making into the process, while being structured enough to support their cognitive and communication style, and that is based in the “here and now” without compromising reflexivity. This need had led to the increasing use of creative methodologies within educational research and childhood studies (Mullen, 2003; Prosser & Loxley, 2007), through the

incorporation of methods like photography (e.g. Kaplan, Lewis, & Mumba, 2007), drama (e.g. Conrad, 2004), drawing (e.g. Darbyshire, MacDougall, & Schiller, 2005), dance and movement (e.g. Cancienne & Snowber, 2003) and more. The main argument for the use of such arts based methods is that, through the reliance of non-verbal communication, they allow for interrogating diverse aspects of lived experience with diverse groups of participants who might not be comfortable with the sole use of language.

The multiplicity of methods used in the best school project supported different ways of meaning making and contribution to the discussion (Clark & Moss, 2011). While the issue was quite abstract– the ideal school – much of the discussion was based on the here and now of the group activity, and the use of multiple methods enabled access to abstract social ideas that might not have been possible otherwise. In the earlier sections I have demonstrated how students built on the materials available to them and utilised each other’s speech to construct complex and multivocal stories. This resonates with my argument in chapter 7 for the use of multiple methods in learning and teaching as a way towards inclusion. Moreover, it was not only that the multiple methods have supported students in *verbally* discussing issues, but that they have also allowed for many *non-verbal* ways of engaging with ideas. The interactions between the students included much nonverbal communication such as facial expressions, singing, touching and making gestures. The use of music played out of cellular phones had a significant influence on the atmosphere of the meeting, the rate and amount of talking and the different ways of participation. Students used their phones to try and influence the atmosphere and interaction to better fit their current mood, and the process of deciding which song to play provided opportunities for students to negotiate and exercise power with the researcher and with one another, and to come up with creative solutions to

problems. The importance of music was also stressed by verbal content, when, in the session dedicated to discussing the best school's rules, all students have unanimously agreed that music should be played during lessons to help them concentrate.

Further, the different art based methods opened up different areas of experience. In a previous section I have described how the focus on bodies in the session dedicated to making models of the best teacher, student and friend, had led to an exploration of bodily norms of beauty and freakiness, as well as to some critical reflections on gender and sexuality, which were enabled through the concrete context of coloured paper and felt scraps (later used to create the teacher's green hair and moustache). While this task favoured bodily and visual aspects of experience, other methods brought about different points of focus. Thus for example, the drama workshop which was discussed earlier brought focus to inner characteristics and relationships within the school, with Lara declaring herself the 'emo' student, and Billy, further along in the conversation, suggesting he wants to be the '*lazy one*'. The incorporation of multiple art based methods had enabled many different aspects of experience to become the focus of discussion.

In chapter 2 I have argued for an understanding of dis-ability as an embodied relationship (Marks, 1999a), which resist the neat distinction between body and culture, suggesting instead that culture is experienced on and through the body, just as much as we understand our bodies through the cultural imagery and discourse available to us (Paterson & Hughes, 1999). Cancienne and Snowber (2003) describe how researching through dance opened new possibilities for understanding lived experience, in which the body is not simply flesh and bones but a living enactment of culture and social beliefs. Because the body is socially constructed, it communicates social practices and cultural

meanings through voice, gesture, and movement (Desmond, 1997, cited in Cancienne and Snowber, 2003). However, how we conceptualize the body intellectually is different from how we experience the living, breathing, pulsing body from the inside out. Thus they argue, the lived experience of the body is central to learning, being, knowing, and researching the social world. This implies that using multiple and art based methods in radical inclusive pedagogy is not just a form of facilitating access to verbal discussions, a “reasonable adjustment” that can make disabled students better fit the model of the rational and linguistically proficient subject. Rather, it is about engaging with and valuing different aspects of lived experience.

Valuing and engaging with multiple aspects of lived experience also requires changing the ways we represent knowledge in research and education. Trying to record and analyse “accurately” these many levels of interaction proved trickier than I expected. Initially my intention was to use playful and creative methodology in an attempt to generate reflective discussions in an accessible way. In other words, I was mainly interested in the verbal content of the students’ views and ideas, and was hoping to accurately reflect those through the use of audio recording and verbatim transcriptions. However, listening to the audio recordings clarified that there was much more going on in the group interaction than just the exchange of ‘words’. I found myself tediously playing the tapes over and over again, trying to discern the words from the noise of squeaking chairs, singing, laughing and playing music out of cellular phones; detangling the many simultaneous conversations to produce neat representations of linear dialogue.

This was a striking contrast to the atmosphere of working with the group. The work with the students was fun and exciting, both for me and for them. But in the

process of transcribing, many elements of this fun turned into “noise” that disturbed me from hearing the serious business of words. The frozen chains of characters on my screen could in no way represent the rhizomatic and dynamic experience of the group sessions, and the process of transcribing was reifying the very binaries that radical inclusive pedagogy seeks to collapse – embodied experiences vs. verbal representation, seriousness vs. fun and academic rigour vs. playful engagement. It felt like, being back in the adult world of “research”, I had to cut the very wings I was trying to grow in my engagement with the students, and I was adamant to resist this. I wanted to keep playing!

Transforming the videos of the role plays into comic strips was a useful way out of this conundrum. Though still and silent it allowed for much more representation of movement and sound, and most importantly, emotions – not just the students’ fun, but also my feelings of love and joy when engaging in this work. Finding ways of including emotions in what we take as “data”, “knowledge”, and “education” (St Pierre, 1997) is at the heart of feminist ‘*engaged pedagogy*’ (hooks, 1994). The stress on education as a relational process does not only entail creating safe and supportive spaces so that students are not distracted from the serious business of learning by being angry, hungry or frustrated. It is about engaging with relations and emotions as an essential part of education, contributing to “knowledge” no less than language and reason.

This shift in what could be represented, what constituted “data”, was illuminating, as it brought to my attention many aspects of the interaction that I did not notice before. As I have mentioned in chapter 7, when performing the plays of both the best and the worst school, the students have set the scene in a traditional class room format, with students all seated facing a board, and the teacher walking between them.

Yet, in both plays as the plot evolved this spatial distinction collapsed, with students either dancing with the teacher or driving him out of the room. It was only when editing the comic strips that I have noticed this use of space as an analytical point. It was also through the comic strips that Billy's non-verbal contribution to the best school play could be represented. Billy, who at a certain point in the discussion leading to the performance had stated that he wanted to be the '*lazy one*', plays precisely that role in the play. From the very start he sleeps in his seat, raising his head once when Lara comes to invite him to party with them, and immediately goes back to sleep. Through the use of comic strips both the party and Billy's ideal of sleep were being represented simultaneously, with Billy contributing to the creation of the ideal school by opting out of its activities (see figure 16). Sutherland (2010) describes a process of converting interview transcriptions into poetry. This process, he argues, involves a different set of selections, different distinctions between "noise" and data, which prioritise emotional potency over grammatical accuracy. These selections, as Sutherland argues, are not value free. In the case of the current research they represent my relational approach to social reality, which sees meaning as co-created between people through interactions on many levels. Thus, the music which when trying to transcribe was only "noise", turned into a major factor in the comic strip, drawing attention to aspects of the educational relationship which otherwise might have been ignored.

FIGURE 16: THE BEST SCHOOL IN THE WORLD - PARTICIPATION THROUGH "OPTING OUT"



Thus, resisting the identification of knowledge with language is an essential step for radical inclusive pedagogy which seeks to value difference and promote relational interdependency rather than rational independency. Alongside the group setting, the use of multi-method had allowed to elaborate the notion of voice and dialogue beyond the focus on language, understanding voice as *‘any attempt, even unrecognized or difficult to interpret attempts, to represent the self, regardless of whether they are enacted in conventional ways’* (Gabel, 2002, p. 190). The use of multiple and art based methods not only in generating discussion, but also in the representation of knowledge (as exemplified in the comic strips) provided an accessible way of interacting with participants and audience, creating knowledge representations that do not only appeal to the rationale intellect, but also engage the visual and emotional. It allowed for bodies, emotions and spaces to come under the scope of discussion, and supported many ways

(including, for example, Billy's sleep) of participation in the co-construction of meanings. It is our task as radical inclusive researchers and educators to broaden the scope of voice and dialogue as a crucial step for social justice and participation.

SHARING POWER AND THE 'ADULT ROLE'

Throughout this work I have stressed that the research and practice of radical inclusive pedagogy requires carefully interrogating and challenging complex power relations. As explored in chapters 3 and 4, I argued for radical inclusive pedagogy that aligns itself with the struggles of various liberation movements, with particular stress on the disabled people's movement, and thus aims at transforming social relations of domination and subordination. This is particularly important within schools, where adult-child hierarchies are often strictly enforced (see chapter 6 and 7).

Challenging the unequal power structures involved in knowledge and research production in favour of more horizontal and decentralised relations with participants has long been argued for by researchers oriented to social justice (see for example Lather, 1986 a; Stacey, 1988 for debates within feminism, and Goodley & Lawthom, 2005; Oliver, 1992 for debates within disability studies). In this section I explore the complex, multi-directional relations of power that arose in the process of conducting the workshops. I will first distinguish between different forms of power, arguing that changing power relations does not mean diminishing power, but implies a different approach to using, producing and sharing power. Following from that I will look at how the use of group play has enabled a negotiation of my "adult role" (Cocks, 2008), which did not, and could not, result in my complete denouncement of any adult privileges and responsibilities, but did open new ways for interacting with students *as an adult*. This

on-going reflective consideration of power relations, I argue, is a necessary process in the practice of radical inclusive pedagogy.

DISTINGUISHING RELATIONS OF POWER – POWER TO, POWER WITH, AND
POWER AMONG

The poststructuralist understanding of power as permeating through relationships rather than being the commodity of individuals, and as a productive force that works to construct individual subjects as bearers of rights and duties, willing and able to govern themselves (Foucault, 1977, 1980), requires nuanced interrogation of the demands to equalise power relations. First, if power is not a commodity, it cannot be shared in the same way that some material resources (e.g. money or food) could be. As power is constructed, embedded and reproduced through social relations and practices, it is not simply up to the willing individual to reject a privileged position. In chapter 5 I discussed how the complex hierarchies of the school affected my position as a researcher and my relations with some of the staff and with the students. Within the school I was recognised and referred to as a “Miss”, and trying to decline this position might have been imposing my preferences on the “local culture”. I am not even sure that had I indeed insisted on being called Anat rather than Miss, it would have prevented me from being perceived as a “Miss”, i.e. as someone having authority over the students. Radical inclusive pedagogy requires changing educational and social structures that reinforce adult authority over children in favour of more horizontal relations of mutual respect, negotiation and dialogue (see chapters 6 and 7). However, this should not be taken to mean that radical inclusive pedagogy is only possible *after* we succeed in transforming all hierarchical social relations. Rather, a prefigurative understanding of social change, combined with the recognition of power as located in

relationships and not the possession of individuals, requires an on-going attempt to share power with students not by denying the adult position, but by acting from this position with as much reciprocity as possible.

Second, an understanding of power as constructive, not just restrictive, means that the commitment to equalise power relation is not about diminishing the exercise of power, but about changing the direction in which it flows (Gallagher, 2008). Power is an essential part of both social life and political struggle. It is dangerous, but it is also full of possibilities, the instrument both of oppression and of liberation. This has led anarchist writers (e.g. Gordon, 2008; Starhawk, 1987) to distinguish between three forms of power. The most basic is *power-to*, or the capacity to change reality. This can vary from the power to move an object from A to B to the power of government to cut back on spending, or the power of the people to overthrow the government. This is seen to generate two further, and distinct, modes of power in its application to human relations. The first of these is *power-over*, a concept related to control, coercion, enforcement and domination, and the standard sense in which the term power is addressed in scholarly literature. Gallagher (2008, p. 147) defines domination as '*the exercise of one form of power to restrict other forms of power, thereby reducing the overall diversity and instability of power relations*', suggesting that the question of emancipatory ethics '*is not how to avoid using power, but how power can be used to resist domination*'. This leads to the second form of power, *power-among*, which is widely discussed by Starhawk (1987). This is a form of power related to influence, initiative and co-inspiration in non-coercive, roughly egalitarian settings. Building on this three-way analysis of power, what I was aiming for at the prefigurative research, and indeed what I believe stands at the heart of radical inclusive education, was engaging in relations that maximise *power-to* and *power-among* while resisting *power-*

over. In what follows I will discuss negotiating the ‘adult role’ (Cocks, 2008), with the privileges and responsibilities associated with it, while aiming to achieve such horizontal power relations.

PLAY AND THE ‘LEAST – ADULT ROLE’

The unequal power relations between children and adults pose a prominent challenge to inclusive research (Eder & Fingerson, 2002), and indeed to radical inclusive pedagogy. Cocks (2008) described how gaining access to children’s experiences required a prolonged and ongoing process of establishing trust through respecting children and refusing to take on adult roles, privileges and responsibilities. For Cocks, who conducted her research in respite care settings for disabled children, taking on a “least adult role” meant following children in their activities, including climbing over climbing frames, swinging through monkey bars, crawling through wet sand and sliding down a very wet and muddy slide, as well as refusing to intervene when children were fighting or breaking the rules. However, this approach seemed less useful in the context of a secondary school where my research took place, where the majority of “natural” activity consisted of formal lessons. In the methodology chapter I have discussed how the classroom setting limited my ability to interact with students. The least adult role, the student position, required me to sit behind a desk and not talk to other students for the majority of the school day. Walking around and interacting with students meant taking up an adult, teacher-like role.

The possibility of using play as a way out of this conundrum occurred to me through an incidental interaction with Jimmy, one of the students in the unit. On that morning I entered the classroom after the lesson had already begun with the intention of quietly taking a free seat at the back row of the classroom. When I got to the seat I

gestured to Jimmy to ask if I can sit next to him. In response he put his leg on the free chair, pretending to pull it and told me that the chair was stuck. As the lesson was ongoing I turned to sit at a different chair, resisting the urge to explain to Jimmy that he could simply tell me he didn't want me sitting next to him, there's no need to make up excuses, but for the rest of the lesson I contemplated upon this. Jimmy clearly knew he could refuse my presence; in fact, he did just that, using a playful, somewhat "cheeky" way. Gallacher & Gallagher (2008) argue that children often exercise their agency and social competence in unexpected, and sometimes defiant ways. One could suggest that, by using the social convention of play to "legitimise" refusal, Jimmy was using his social competence to subvert the social rules expected in that situation. In an earlier section of this chapter I have discussed how play was used to subvert the social norms of beauty and sexuality and open up new relations between students and the world. Here I will discuss how the social convention of play worked to allow adult-child relations and roles that differ from the strict binary of teacher and student.

Play is an easily understood way of resisting the initiation-response-feedback pattern that is characteristic of the majority of adult-child interaction within schools (Kirova, 2006). In this pattern, communication is initiated by the adult (usually asking a question), the child responds and the adult then gives feedback as to whether the response was appropriate. This mode of communication is often carried out in research situations, with an adult investigator initiating interactions through asking questions and waiting for the child to answer. Even when the researcher clarifies that there are no right and wrong answers, it is hard to avoid falling back into familiar adult-child communication conventions. Play, and in particular group play, is one of the few familiar situations which defy these expectations, with the common convention being that there are no right and wrong responses and that participants are welcome to

negotiate the rules. This is evident in many of the transcripts presented above, in which conversations (often more than one at a time) flow between students without my intervention, defying the imitation-response-feedback pattern. Indeed, in occasions when I did bring the conversation back to this pattern, for example in the conversation with Jack about the need for rules (see page 269), it had a stifling affect, with the conversation only coming back to life with Lara's intervention.

Thus, the use of play opened up new ways of relating to participants, which supported power-among and diminished power-over. This makes play, utopia, and collaborative imagination useful for educators interested in promoting radical inclusive education. Yet, the playful approach in itself did not make power inequalities disappear, as group interactions were embedded within wider social relations. In the next two sections I explore the potential of sharing adult privileges as a way for promoting power-among, and question the power relations embedded in the ethical obligation to protect research participants from harm.

SHARING ADULT PRIVILEGES

In the previous section I have explored how the use of play had enabled interactions with students that diminished adult authority over children's behaviour. However, the commitment to promoting more flexible and horizontal teacher-student relationships, which is central to radical inclusive pedagogy, does not end with authority. Adult privileges in schools also include access to and control over resources, which are often denied to students. As an adult researcher I was allocated a room and a time slot to conduct the workshops in, as well as having the authority to excuse students from regular lessons so that they can participate in the workshops. In other words I had the power to set up the group. As the initiator and the planner of the group activity I had

some power over the general areas of discussion and what behaviours and comments were welcome. However, as I described earlier, through the use of group play and creative methods this power was shared with the students who had much control over the content of activities and discussions. Further, the first session was dedicated to exploring with students their areas of interest and preferred activities, and this information was used to plan the following sessions. In many ways this strategy fits well with Gallagher (2008) call for the use of power to resist domination, using my adult privileges to open up spaces for more horizontal and rhizomatic relations.

Bringing food to the group meeting was another useful way of sharing adult privileges and “signalling” that the group space was different to regular school space, in which students eating times are highly regulated. It also provided precious opportunities for explicitly discussing the “boundaries” of our relations. When on the first meetings I placed a bowl of crisps and a bowl of biscuits on the table none of the students had touched it for about 15 minutes. Then Billy jokingly stretched his arm towards the bowl pretending to grab a crisp and quickly withdrew it back. Surprised at that, I informed the students that the food was there for them to eat while we speak. They were genuinely shocked and told me that they thought I placed the food there just to test them. On the following meeting Jack asked me if I had cheese and onion flavoured crisps. As I didn’t hear him I asked him to repeat and he answered *‘I was just joking Miss’*. I explained that I did not hear what he said and after he repeated the request I promised to bring this flavour of crisps next time. With the progress of the meetings and my face value acceptance of their “joking” remarks the students started taking more and more control over the “rules of behaviour” in the group, first by asking for things such as playing music from their phones during meetings or going out to the toilet, and later by doing these things without first requesting permission.

This is an example of prefiguring radical inclusive pedagogy within the current context of schooling. As Gordon (2008) argues, prefigurative action is not about imagining social change as a distant thing that would appear after the revolution, but is about creating spaces to practice horizontal and supportive social relations, challenging oppressive relations from within. As argued earlier, privileged positions cannot just simply be denounced, and the struggles to equalise power relations require an honest recognition of such privileges, as well as working to share them around in ways that subvert social domination. While aiming to create horizontal and rhizomatic relations with student, my privileges as an adult were still needed in order to maintain the space. Several times during the workshops, following the noise and music from our room, a teacher or secretary would open the door without knocking, peer angrily in and then when seeing me, would apologize for the interruption and leave. This served as a constant reminder that within the school students' group interaction is only allowed when monitored by adults. Another example of sharing my adult privileges with students was when Billy asked me to stamp their house points cards. In that, Billy, as a "local", used his knowledge to facilitate more ways by which students can benefit from my adult power.

Further, countering my position as a 'Miss' was an on-going process rather than a one-off decision not just because of school staff's expectations, but also because of my own compliance with some of those expectations. Even within the playful group context I had to take extra care not to instruct students to participate or behave in certain ways. This did not come naturally or easily, as I too have internalised adult-child hierarchies which are so prevalent in society and in schools (this was particularly true as I had experience of working in a school prior to conducting research, in which managing the behaviour of students was part of my job). As part of these efforts I

listened to the recordings of the sessions soon after they were finished, to try and identify authoritarian or inaccessible behaviours on my part and modify them. When practising radical inclusive pedagogy we need to be wary of uncritically assuming positions of power thus reproducing the oppressive relations they are trying to challenge (Lynch, 2001), but simply rejecting such positions risks leaving the situation unchallenged. Working “within the shell of the old world” to equalise power relations requires a strategy that draws on existing sources of power aiming to distribute it horizontally. Collectively sharing power and privileges (such as the one that come with the adult researcher position) while being mindful of their dangers and constantly aiming to challenge inequalities may be a further step towards radical and inclusive research and education.

ADULT RESPONSIBILITIES, ETHICAL AND POLITICAL COMMITMENTS

The role of the adult researcher or educator is not just a position of privilege, but also a position of responsibility. The British Educational Research Association (BERA) requires in its ethical code that

Researchers must recognize that participants may experience distress or discomfort in the research process and must take all necessary steps to reduce the sense of intrusion and to put them at their ease. They must desist immediately from any actions, ensuing from the research process, that cause emotional or other harm.

(2011, para. 20)

Similarly, teachers’ responsibility to the health and safety of pupils is inscribed through a vast array of CRB checks, risk assessments and health and safety policies, as part of what Power (1997) calls ‘*the audit society*’. These adult responsibilities and commitments are another form of power relations that add to the complexities and dilemmas of sharing power with students and diminishing adult domination.

The promise of confidentiality in research workshops was highly valued by the students as it provided them with a place of privacy and a relative hide-out from the constant surveillance they were exposed to in the school. On the first meeting I explained to the students that I will keep what they say confidential, but that they can tell anyone they want about what we were doing. Billy suggested that students should also keep the content of the group confidential from their peers, to which all students agreed. I left that meeting feeling proud and satisfied, as I took this negotiation of the rules of the group as a sign of my success in being “radical” and “inclusive”, relinquishing my control over the research setting and sharing power with participants. On later meetings Billy used this promise of confidentiality to confess his love to another girl in the school (not part of the group) and the students shared with him advice and encouragement about how to pursue the girl. However, on the last meeting, Lara told Billy that Rachel had told the girl in question about his secret love. He quickly replied “*so ... it only stays with the classmates*”, but I felt very embarrassed, unsure if I should react to this breach of voluntary confidentiality or indeed if there was anything I could do at this point – would scolding Rachel be an authoritarian use of power-over or a way of showing solidarity with Billy, a way of increasing power-among?

Parkes (2010) describes how her commitment to engaging with children and young people who participated in research in non-authoritarian ways had allowed her presence to be manipulated to reinforce gendered (symbolic) violence. In these instances, it was not exactly that the research caused harm directly, but that in the act of listening or observing without challenge, she became complicit with those acts of (symbolic) violence. These reflections also echoed in my mind when, during one of the sessions, the students went on a rant regarding other SNU students they did not like. I did not feel the need to intervene to stop or challenge those claims as no-one within the

group was mentioned. However, when Jeff was discrediting a disliked student for calling another (much liked) student black and accusing him of racism, Billy interrupted with a long and highly up-to-date speech about how the foreigners are destroying Britain and being let off the hook because of PC hypocrisy:

... And they all thought that they can come to us but they are repaying us by disrespecting us by burning poppies and calling us. But if we call them they get mad at us and then we all get in trouble, but they don't get in trouble because they come from a different country. It's like all these people, cos they are not allowed in cos they'll start violence here and that, and because of the immigration scheme and all. [...]it's because of the colour of their skin

While debating if the “problem” with foreigners was because of their skin colour or because they don't believe in Jesus, all students but Jack have agreed with Billy that foreigners are a problem. This left me very uncomfortable and unsure how to react. I did not know if an egalitarian approach would be to use my authority as a “Miss” to counter such arguments or to not intervene in the name of supporting students' own voice. Like Parkes, I ended up saying nothing, but I still feel that by letting such remarks go by without a challenge (while clearly hearing them), I was, rather than sharing power to minimise domination, working to enhance and legitimise it.

In concluding this section I would argue that working towards radical inclusive pedagogy requires complex readings of relations of power. Transforming unequal power relations, a commitment which stands at the heart of radical inclusive pedagogy, is not the result of a one-off decision of an individual or even a collective, but requires constant reflection and struggle. As discussed above, power inequalities are embedded in various social structures and cannot easily disappear through the intentions of well-meaning adults, whether researchers or educators. This however, should not be interpreted as deterministic statement that denies any scope for change. Prefiguring radical inclusive pedagogy means opening spaces within the current system in which power relation can be interrogated, experimented with and challenged. This requires

complex negotiations of power and privilege, and the use of different forms of power in order to create and maintain horizontal spaces and act in solidarity with students. It also means being careful about the use of such spaces to reify students' dominance over others. As researchers and educators we must be reflective about the use of power, bearing in mind that both using and avoiding the use of power-over can increase relations of domination.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have addressed research question 4 - *what can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the process of conducting playful research workshops with a group of students in a "special needs unit"?* The research workshops, I have argued, were not only tools to generate data *about* participants' views on education, but were in themselves a site *of* radical inclusive pedagogy, aiming to prefigure the very educational relations argued for in this work. I have therefore critically analysed different aspects of the workshops (using play and utopia, group work, multi-method), reading those against the framework of radical inclusive pedagogy explored in earlier chapters.

The first theme of radical inclusive pedagogy as explored in previous chapters is the need to develop pedagogy that conceives of difference as an essential part of human becoming, not as a sign of deficit or problem. The openness of play and its distance from the current social order had allowed for questions of difference, normalcy and queerness to emerge as a point of discussion in ways that are rarely available in schools. Further, the epistemological looseness of play (Johansson & Linde, 2005) had allowed for many different stories to be told side by side, weaving into each other and breaking off again in a process that Goodley (2007a) describes as rhizomatic becoming.

The social conventions of play with their requirement for diminished adult control, as well as the group setting, have also enabled many opportunities for interacting with one another in many capacities and roles, offering support, being supported, challenging others, and being challenged. This connects to the second theme of radical inclusive pedagogy, the understanding of education as an on-going relational process, a process of '*becoming-in-the-world-with- others*' (Price & Shildrick, 2002, p. 62), which embraces interdependency while supporting students' relational autonomy (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000b), voice and agency.

The use of multiple and diverse methods had served to contextualise the abstract discussions and support a variety of ways for engaging critically with social norms and conventions, and bringing different aspects of experience (including embodied, spatial and relational experiences) under the scope of investigation. The contextualisation of learning; the use of accessible and multiple methods for learning and teaching without compromising raising complex questions; and the need to explicitly politicise and problematise notions of disability and normalcy, are all part of the third theme of radical inclusive pedagogy – the need to contextualise learning in real life experience as a form of promoting accessibility and supporting processes of conscientization.

Finally, I discussed how the playful group engagement worked to increase power-among and resist domination within the research setting. This corresponds to the final theme of radical inclusive pedagogy, the need to resist the strict age hierarchies and authoritarian approaches of the school and promote a more horizontal division of power.

This discussion, however, should not be interpreted simplistically as a recipe for what education should be like under all circumstances. Rather, as argued in chapters 6

and 7, radical inclusive education means commitment to an on-going process of change. There are no specific educational practices, or research methods, that are in themselves emancipatory. We should always carefully and reflexively engage with the particular situations and with the particular power relations they are embedded in. While being constantly suspicious of domination, a simplistic understanding of equalising power is also dangerous. The research workshops were situated within many social contexts, including the relations between the students, the institutional relations of the school and the wider social issues, of gender, class, ability race and sexuality, challenging forms of exclusion and domination but also sometimes reifying them. This does not mean however that any attempt to change education is futile until an overall social revolution had been achieved. To the contrary, prefiguring in the “here and now” those social and educational relations that are the goal of our struggle is a necessary step towards change. Creatively experimenting with different forms of social relations, while being constantly reflective about their implementation and recuperation, is at the heart of radical inclusive pedagogy practice.

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss the main findings of this doctorate, synthesising them into a theoretical framework. I will begin by making the case for radical inclusive pedagogy, exploring the possibilities and obstacles of using radical educational theories to construct inclusive education. Then, drawing on the experiences of activists in the disabled people's movement (DPM), and of students and staff in the school, I will tease out the main issues and tensions for theorising education from a dis-ability perspective.

In the second section of this chapter I synthesise the findings from the different analysis chapters to offer a vision of radical inclusive pedagogy that supports learners in becoming in the world together (Price & Shildrick, 2002) and apart; values difference but also allows for coalescing and affirming shared identities; contextualises learning in experience and social structures; and aims to shift relations of power and to resist domination.

The third section of the chapter draws on the experience of conducting “the best school in the world” workshops”, which was an attempt to prefigure the principles of radical inclusive pedagogy to outline implications for research, policy and educational practice. I conclude with a short section that flags up the key messages of this thesis.

MAKING THE CASE FOR RADICAL INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT SO FAR

Throughout this work I have argued for the need to develop *radical inclusive pedagogy*, which draws on educational ideas from critical pedagogy and progressive and democratic approaches to education, as well as on ideas emerging from the disabled people's movement and disability studies. I began the discussion in chapter 2 by arguing that both disability and 'normalcy' (Davis, 1995) are socially constructed ideas, exploring how through the discourses of the 'psy-complex' professions (Rose, 1979) norms are constructed as scientific, natural and neutral facts. These discourses work as a form of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977) to enforce 'compulsory able bodiedness' (McRuer, 2006) and hide the material and psycho-emotional oppression incurred by disabled people. Following Thomas's (1999, p. 60) definition of disablement as '*a form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairments and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-emotional wellbeing*', I set out in this work to explore pedagogical practices that counter such oppression, removing restrictions to activity by supporting all students to engage in learning, and countering psycho-emotional disablism. As argued in chapter 2, these educational practices start from the understanding of dis-ability as a continuum rather than a binary (Ben-Moshe et al, 2009), and value difference and interdependency rather than sameness and independence as the core of social relations.

Focusing my discussion on education, I have argued in chapter 3 that the functionalist discourses of the school, and in particular the professional discourse of special education, work to exclude and disadvantage disabled students (Skrtic, 1995). Simply placing disabled students in mainstream education classrooms, however, is not enough to solve the problems of exclusion and marginalisation. Inclusive education is not just a technical issue of students'

placement and resource provision, but is an on-going process that demands challenging basic values and assumptions and engaging in the politics of knowledge and of difference (Allan, 2008; Slee, 1997). This political approach to inclusive education is explored through research question 1 - *What are the possibilities and obstacles in adapting radical pedagogy perspectives on inclusive education?* (see box 1).

Box 1: Summary of RQ1

RQ1: *What are the possibilities and obstacles in adapting radical pedagogy perspectives on inclusive education?*

Possibilities:

- Knowledge as co-constructed: understanding knowledge as multiple, interpersonal and related to experience rather than as objective reality independent of human apprehension.
- Power relations: fostering horizontal relations of respect and empowerment, rejecting practices of domination and coercion.
- Education as a political tool, focus on conscientization and praxis aiming at social transformation.

Obstacles:

Lack of engagement with disability and hence

- Positioning disability as natural and outside the scope of social transformation
- Assuming pedagogical subjects with similar cognitive abilities – rational thinking, language.

As argued in chapter 3, radical perspectives on education (particularly critical pedagogy that adopts a ‘*radical humanist*’ paradigm, and progressive and democratic education that starts from an ‘*interpretivist*’ paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979)) can support us in challenging many of the disabling aspects of functionalist education. These include the focus on learning as a process of dialogue, the understanding of knowledge as socially

constructed and contextualised in real life experience, and the insistence on education as a political process that can challenge oppression, domination and injustice. Yet, I argue, radical pedagogy texts too often start from the assumption of pedagogical subjects as unitary, independent individuals (Gabel, 2002), thus continuing to marginalise and stigmatise those students who cannot conform to such modernist norms (Erevelles, 2000). Bridging this gap by re-thinking education from a radical dis-ability perspective is the main aim of this work, and is further explored in the second half of this chapter.

Following radical pedagogies, I argue in this work for understanding of '*education in its broadest sense*' (Fielding & Moss, 2011), a process that takes place in many contexts and in different institutions such as families, communities, schools and workplaces (Wallace, 1961). It was for this reason that I asked in research question 2– '*What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the analytical accounts of activists in the disabled people's movement and in campaigns for inclusive education?*' (see box 2 for a summary of the argument).

As explored in chapters 4 and 6, the disabled people's movement is part and parcel of radical inclusive pedagogy. For many of the activists, being involved in the DPM has provided many opportunities to meet with other disabled people (or, for parents, the opportunity to meet with other parents of disabled students). This was often described as validating, affirming and inspiring experience that allowed participants to feel good about themselves and counter the effects of '*psycho-emotional disablism*' (Reeve, 2002) and the social messages of hate and pity they have too often experienced in schools. These sentiments sit well with an "affirmation model" of disability and impairment that sees in the DPM, and in particular in the disability art movement that has emerged from it, an important source for positive identity and a challenge to the hegemonic discourse of disability as an individual

tragedy (Cameron, 2008; Swain & French, 2000). Further, for many of the research participants, the sense of affirmation involved in activism was not just the result of meeting others with similar experiences, but had to do with the process of getting politicised around the social model of disability. This process of politicisation allowed disabled activists to explore their experience in relation to social structures (*'conscientization'*), and to apply these new understandings in the process of striving for change (*'praxis'*). If we adopt an understanding of education in its broadest sense, it is hard to deny that the DPM is a site of radical inclusive pedagogy that fosters conscientization, praxis and social change.

Moreover, the DPM is not only a site of radical inclusive pedagogy beyond the walls of the school, but offers much relevant knowledge to educators seeking to practice in radical inclusive ways within schools. In chapter 4 I explored the different levels of *'movement knowledge'* produced by the DPM, which include *'subaltern knowledge'*; *'knowledge of the system'*; and *'knowledge about tactics and practices of resistance'* (Cox & Flesher Fominaya, 2009). In chapter 6 I explored with activists how subaltern knowledge, such as the wealth of disability art, life stories and biographies, and knowledge of the system, such as the social and historical analysis produced within the DPM, could be incorporated into the curriculum to inform an understanding of disability as socially constructed and affirm and validate the life experiences of many disabled students. Further, as I have argued in chapters 4 and 6, a close examination of organisational structures and practices within the DPM can inform schools in creating enabling environments and supporting the learning and participation of students with a variety of abilities, needs and preferences. It is for these reasons that I argue that the DPM is part and parcel of our thinking about radical inclusive pedagogy.

RQ2: *What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the analytical accounts of activists in the disabled people's movement and in campaigns for inclusive education?*

The DPM is a site of radical inclusive pedagogy

- It creates spaces of belonging and affirmation that counter internalised oppression
- It allows opportunities for conscientization around processes of disablement, and applies those to praxis of social transformation
- Spaces are organised in accessible manners

Knowledge from the DPM can be applied in schools

- Positive representations of dis-ability
- Interrogating disabling social processes
- Knowledge on making learning and spaces accessible

Arguing for radical inclusive pedagogy that goes beyond the walls of the classroom does not mean ignoring the crucial role of schools. Following research question 3 – *What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from looking at the educational practices in a “special needs” unit in an innovative secondary school?* – I explored in chapter 7 how learning was made accessible to a diverse body of students by countering the fragmentation of learning into school subjects and age norms, organising it instead around topics and arranging lessons that support different ways of participating (including listening, talking, moving, creating artwork and playing games). I also discussed how belonging and mutual respect were fostered through understanding education as a relational process (hooks, 1994), and adopting a stance of getting-to-know towards students that allowed for recognition and negotiation of different needs. These features, I argue, are important aspects of inclusive education.

Yet, as discussed in chapter 7, these positive aspects of the unit still operated within the premise of the '*hidden curriculum*' that asserts adults' authority over children and conditions many aspects of social participation upon the acquisition of "certified knowledge" (Illich, 1971). While students were supported to engage with the curriculum, they were not encouraged to interrogate and challenge social structures and power relations. Thus, the SNU was still operating as a form of '*disciplinary power*' (Foucault, 1977) to construct productive citizens for the global economy (Ball, 2008), who accept their marginalised position within it (Gramsci, 1971). Further, the supportive and accessible aspects of the practice were only enabled by constructing the unit as a space categorically different from the main school, and as one located further down the educational hierarchy. As such it left the exclusionary norms and practices of the mainstream education unchallenged, and ensured that difference was reified as an individual problem (Vadeboncoeur, 2009). This argument is summarised in box 3.

To build on positive practice while challenging the disabling aspects of schools, we need, as I argue in the second half of this chapter, to rethink schools as communities of difference. When arguing for schools as the site of radical inclusive pedagogy, I do not endorse the current provision under which students' (and teachers') behaviour is constantly monitored, controlled and disciplined. I take schools to mean public spaces that are accessible to young people with a range of needs, interests and capacities, where support and guidance is offered to students who want to learn different subjects, and take on different projects alone or as part of a group, be supported in learning new skills, and benefit from the company of people of diverse ages. In the next section I will provide a detailed description of the core aspects and values of the radical inclusive pedagogy that may be practised in such schools.

RQ3: *What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from looking at the educational practices in a “special needs” unit in an innovative secondary school?*

There are some very promising possibilities, but these occur within neo-liberal education policies that seek to produce entrepreneurial selves for global capitalism

- Promoting affirmation and belonging, relational stance of getting-to-know
 - But these are conditioned on constructing the space as “other”
- Contextualising learning, allowing for different ways of knowing
 - But, no interrogation of the social reality represented in the curriculum and no politicisation leaves social marginalisation unchallenged
- Lack of explicit interrogation of power relations in and out of school, and the construction of the provision as an “other” space leaves the achievements vulnerable to recuperation. **We therefore need a different model of schools.**

A VISION OF RADICAL INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY: RETHINKING EDUCATION FROM A DIS-ABILITY PERSPECTIVE

In this section I will address research question 5 – *How can we construct a framework of radical inclusive pedagogy that is sensitive to the experiences and positions of students with varied abilities and to ideas from disability studies and the disabled people’s movement?*

As discussed in chapter 5, I came to the field equipped with a set of values and assumptions, my ‘researcher’s template’ (Goodley, 1999), which was based on ideas from feminism, anarchism and disability studies literature, as well as my experiences as a non-disabled, political activist and as a speech and language therapist working in educational settings. During the different levels of the research I have engaged in dialogue with participants, seeking to gain inspiration from their ideas, experiences and practices to elaborate my understanding of what radical inclusive pedagogy means. Synthesising the data from the different parts of the research (school ethnography and interviews with activists) I have

identified 4 main issues for radical inclusive pedagogy – the politics of difference, belonging and relationships, approaches to learning, and power relations. Put together, I argue for the rest of this chapter, developing a framework of radical inclusive pedagogy requires us to rethink our understandings of individuals, communities, power, and knowledge starting from a dis-ability perspective. It is important to clarify here that this does not mean representing accurately the experiences and world views of any particular disabled person (or group). A dis-ability perspective is about recognising the endless diversity of human embodiments and relations. As a non-disabled researcher adopting a dis-ability perspective, this meant being informed and inspired by the views of disabled people (adults and youth), to rethink education *in general*, rather than looking for practices that can serve a particular and clearly identified group.

RETHINKING THE “SUBJECT” FROM A DIS-ABILITY PERSPECTIVE: THE NEED
FOR RHIZOMATIC RELATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATION AND
DEVELOPMENT

Radical inclusive pedagogy needs to start with re-thinking the subject, which, as I have argued in chapter 2, is far from being a natural or given entity. Rather, the modern subject emerges through multiple power relations (Foucault, 1977). The model of the subject as hyper-rational, independent and reasonable individual is constructed as the norm against which all people are universally marked and judged through the “scientific” discourse of psychology (Rose, 1979), which also serves as the basis of much educational and “special” education thinking (Skrtic, 1995). This discourse works to construct disabled people as deviant and deficient, the object of curative interventions and efforts of normalisation (Davis, 1995; Goodley, 2011). In chapter 3 I looked at how discourses of developmental psychology inform schooling and construct development as a linear and universal progress that leads

children from a needy place associated with dependency, irrationality and vulnerability to the state of a rational, autonomous, self-regulating, and responsible citizen (Burman, 2008). The detrimental effects that this view of development has on disabled students, and the way it works to reinforce internalised oppression and the ‘*repetition of exclusion*’ (Allan, 2008, p. 65) were explored in chapters 3 and 6. Inspired by feminist ideas of interdependency and ethics of care (Kittay et al., 2005), and by adaptation of the Deleuzian notions of rhizomatic becoming to disability studies (Allan, 2008; Goodley, 2007a) I call for a model of the subject as constantly engaged in a process of ‘*becoming-in-the-world-with-others*’ (Price & Shildrick, 2002). The main points of the argument are summarised in box 4.

Box 4: Rethinking subjectivity

Subjectivity as rhizomatic process of becoming in the world with others

- Subjectivity is not a trait of the individual but develops through multiplicity of connections
- Becoming implies constant change
- A focus on connection as well as separation
- Development is not linear but proceeds in many different directions

A rhizomatic and relational view of the subject means understanding development as a lifelong process, but one that has greater prominence during childhood, which is a period of increased biological changes such as physical growth, changes in muscle control, digestion, perception, attention etc., what Overboe (2009, p. 250) calls ‘*life forces*’. This does not mean that these processes are universal; nor that they are not carried out in interaction with the environment. Development is inherent to the individual within the environment. Like a plant that has an inherent “drive” to grow and is dependent upon water, sun, and soil for this, so children rely on material and social environments in order to learn how to walk, talk, look

after themselves or achieve their goals and wishes. Development is not universal in the sense that not every child will learn to walk or to talk. Some might learn to sign or use a voice output device, some might learn to wheel themselves in a wheelchair and some might learn to indicate through eye movement where they want to be moved to. Different material and social environments might be required for different children to develop, and the process of development itself means changing relations between the individual and the social and material environment.

This means that development, the process of “becoming” a subject, is not a linear ascent that starts from childhood dependency and ends with adult independence. The word “becoming” comes to mean here a process of constant change that takes many directions and does not seek to achieve a predefined goal (Goodley, 2007a). Adopting such a horizontal understanding of education and development as a process of becoming requires abolishing age segregation and age related norms that govern the current school system. The harmful effects of enforcing strict age norms and segregation have on (disabled) students, and the benefits of rejecting those were discussed in chapters 6 and 7. Radical inclusive pedagogy calls for organising schools in ways that encourage students to interact, cooperate and learn with people of diverse ages, skills and abilities.

Understanding education as a rhizomatic process of becoming-in-the-world-with-others also means emphasising the vital role relationships play in processes of development and change. Throughout this work I have argued against discourses that seek to individualise disability, normalcy, education, and development. This meant shifting the gaze from the individual (disabled) student to collective, social and political phenomena, and taking seriously the role of the DPM in radical inclusive pedagogy. It also meant looking at interpersonal relationships, valuing interdependence, and viewing personhood and autonomy

as relational rather than individual. In chapters 2 and 6 I have argued alongside activists and scholars for the need to understand the human condition as a state of interdependence rather than independence (Davis, 2002; Kittay et al., 2005; Reindal, 1999; Shildrick & Price, 2006). This means realising that all of us, disabled or not, are constantly and simultaneously dependent and independent to different degrees in different aspects of life. We take part in many relationships in which we depend on others and others depend on us. Thus, we are never wholly dependent or wholly independent but emerged in relationships of interdependency. Radical inclusive pedagogy is about creating school communities that are sensitive to the care and interdependency needs of students and staff, where people can learn together how to care for themselves and for others, and how to foster relations of interdependency and solidarity.

This relational emphasis had led me to explore in chapter 8 the rhizomatic relations that were fostered in the research group. In that context, the process of learning was not seen as “mastering” skills and enhancing individual performance on some standardized scale. Rather, learning was a group process of co-authoring complex and multivocal stories that diverged and converged on many points. Further, this was a rhizomatic process of becoming-in-the-world-with-others, a process that had allowed me and the students many opportunities to interact with one another in various roles, and to support and challenge each other. This process was also explored in chapter 6, when Lily described the valuable relationship she had with a study support worker who taught her *‘how to better use her support’*. Education as rhizomatic relations of interdependency is about supporting people to act as members in the various collectives in which they participate in their own way. This means fostering opportunities to realize different positions, roles and interactions within the group, while also recognising the desire to withdraw or disengage from the group, to act independently or to

choose to be alone. This also means constantly looking for, and valuing of, diverse ways of being together and apart, and of negotiating relations of interdependency.

Yet, I concur with Ereveles (2005b, p. 59) that we need to be suspicious of critiques of subjectivity that stop at the level of discourse, and ‘*theorise the mobile, transgressive, posthumanist subject [that] is free to change and insert itself within textuality as if unaffected by social structures*’. Developing radical inclusive pedagogy requires careful examination of the dialectical relationship between subjects and social structures within specific historical contexts, and coalescing to bring about social transformation. It is for these reasons that I argue in the following sections for the rethinking of communities, power and knowledge.

RETHINKING COMMUNITY FROM A DIS-ABILITY PERSPECTIVE: VALUING
DIFFERENCE, AFFIRMING IDENTITY

Arguing for an understanding of subjectivity, education and development as relational processes requires us to pay close attention to the social spaces within which such relations are practised. As discussed in chapter 6, activists’ views of education included a stress on promoting schools as relational spaces that practice care and promote belonging and self-affirmation. Crucial to their view, however, was a focus on difference as positive and productive, rather than trying to rein it in, control or hide it in an attempt to produce uniformity. In this section I will discuss this apparent tension between calls for belonging and identity and the stress on valuing difference, arguing that radical inclusive pedagogy needs to rethink schools as communities of difference. A summary of the argument is presented in box 5.

Schools as communities of difference

Communities are spaces for becoming-in-the-world-with-others

- Allow for self-affirmation and belonging
- Support ethics of care by making it a public rather than private issue, and increase members capacity for relations of love, care and solidarity

However, the notion of the community

- Denies difference between members and assumes consensus
- Constructs the “Other” as a threat to the community

Thus the need to promote belonging to multiple communities and valuing conflict as well as consensus

Both the activists and the staff in the SNU saw education as a process that involves relations of care and cooperation, often using the metaphor of community to evoke ‘*a sense of solidarity and of significance, of individuals belonging to and in some way contributing to the whole so as to derive a sense of self-worth*’ (Hodgson & Reynolds, 2005, p. 14). The value of such communities of belonging, which promote a relational stance of *getting-to-know* that is always open to change and difference, was explored in chapter 7. This stance had allowed teachers and students in the SNU to listen to each other openly and respectfully, and negotiate different meanings and interpretations of situations. It had allowed students to feel safe, welcome and understood, a feeling that they have highly valued, particularly when considered against the atmosphere of violence and exclusion they had experienced in other educational settings.

Radical inclusive pedagogy, then, is about understanding schools as communities and organising them in ways that support relations of belonging and solidarity. Such communities not only provide the environment in which the rhizomatic development described earlier can take place, but are also crucial for wider social change. As Unger (1998, p. 9) argues, '*our capacity for love and solidarity grows through the strengthening of our ability to recognise and to accept the otherness of other people*'. Promoting such relations within schools, therefore, is a form of prefigurative practice that can lead to social transformation through resisting the disabling barriers created by the individualistic and atomised discourse of neo-liberalism and advanced capitalism, while creating alternatives to it.

Further, it has long been argued by feminists who promote ethics of care (see chapters 2, 6, 7) that making care a public rather than private matter, and shifting the balance between paid and unpaid care work, can promote a more equal distribution of care on both the receiving and the providing end (Federici, 2012; Kittay et al., 2005; Lynch & Baker, 2005). Lynch & Baker (2005) develop a framework for thinking about equality in education that includes among other things the need to explicitly consider issues around love, care and solidarity. Because care, love and solidarity are fundamental to human life, it is vital, they argue, that people are enabled to provide for, and benefit from, such relations. While they agree that it is impossible to institutionally guarantee that everyone's needs for love, care and solidarity are met, it is still necessary to arrange societies in ways that make this more or less likely. Schools, as public spaces in which children are cared for, care for others and are educated about relations of love, care and solidarity, can promote a society in which more people have more of their love, care and solidarity needs met.

A key point here is the insistence that questions of love, care and belonging are always connected to questions of power. First, there is the power to affiliate and disaffiliate

from a “community” or group. In chapter 6 I have discussed how “belonging” to a group of disabled people was interpreted as denigrating and segregating when the affiliation was imposed on the person (as in the case of being sent to a special school or being assigned “special” services in the school), and as empowering and validating when the affiliation was sought by the person and based on an affirmative rather than deficit model of disability (Cameron, 2008; Swain & French, 2000). Further, while inclusive education was seen by activists as desired and necessary, it can also work to separate disabled students and their families from one another, denying them the opportunity to share their experiences and understand them in relation to wider social structures. Thus, the question of belonging and community is not just about being included or admitted as a member of a certain community, but also about choice and affirmation, the power to disaffiliate oneself from a community or to choose to be a member of an alternative community, as Gabel (2002, p. 193) argues, *‘forced inclusion is just as coercive as forced segregation’*.

Second, Yuval-Davis (2007) points to the need to carefully and critically engage with the politics of belonging, which, while carrying significant importance to the social and emotional wellbeing of individuals, can also serve to construct the ‘Other’, often as a threat to the wellbeing of the community. As we have seen in chapter 7, the students’ strong alliance to the SNU was often expressed through constructing the main school students as inferior and dangerous, thus reinforcing an exclusionary model that defines and divides difference (Allan, 2008). The task for radical inclusive pedagogy, therefore, is to rethink schools as diverse communities that value difference without reifying deference (Fielding & Moss, 2011), and to support belonging and connection across difference.

The third, and perhaps most crucial, point when rethinking communities from a disability perspective is Young’s (1986) critique of the ideal of community, which, she argues,

works to deny difference between subjects. The vision of a close knit community is one that operates through consensus and cooperation, and expects members to be loyal to the community and share a set of values and norms of behaviour. To deviate from these in resisting assimilation is to run the risk of becoming marginalised in order that the integrity of the community is preserved (Hodgson & Reynolds, 2005). Further, the belief that any conflict could be mitigated through dialogue and deliberation assumes members are fully known and knowable to one another, and denies that difference between subjects always exists, and that *'the same difference that makes sharing between us possible also makes misunderstanding, rejection, withdrawal and conflict always possible conditions of social being'* (Young, 1986, p. 242).

Instead of a model of stable and unified identity, manifested in strong relations of belonging to one all-embracing community, radical inclusive pedagogy should promote, I suggest, multiple relations to multiple communities and groups, some smaller and some larger. Under such a model, schools, families, workplaces, political activism, and various social groups may provide people with opportunities to belong to many different communities, which are not mutually exclusive. This multiple belonging allows for exercising different aspects of our multiple and intersected identities through the different roles and relations we are engaged in. Schools are unique social institutions in that nearly everyone is affiliated to them for a substantial part of their lives, as student or parent (Fielding & Moss, 2011). As such, they play a vital role in allowing people to meet, interact, and develop relations of love, care and solidarity across difference, while supporting students in becoming active members in other communities. Belonging to multiple communities can also provide the support needed to bring issues into a more public arena where conflicts and disputes can be voiced. The concept of dialogue which emerges from this perspective is not limited to *'sharing'* or reconciliation, but allows for *'defiant speech'*, *'talking back'*,

confronting the ‘contradictory *intersection of voices constituted by gender, race, class, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation [and] ideology*’ (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 312). The role of conflict and defiance in radical inclusive pedagogy is further discussed in the following section.

RETHINKING POWER FROM A DIS-ABILITY PERSPECTIVE: DEVELOPING
RELATIONAL AUTONOMY AND VALUING RESISTANCE

From the very outset of this work I have discussed power as a major issue for radical inclusive pedagogy, drawing on both poststructuralist and materialist undersigns of the concept. In this section I aim to synthesis these different approaches to power, arguing that power is crucial to both domination and liberation, and that radical inclusive pedagogy should promote horizontal division of power, a view of autonomy as relational, and a valuing stance towards conflict (see box 6 for a summary of the argument).

Box 6: Rethinking power

Shifting power relations

- Power is omnipresent, and works to construct and constrain individuals
- Social transformation is about changing the direction in which power flows, resisting domination and increasing power among
- This means promoting ‘*relational autonomy*’ – sharing power to increase available choices (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000a)
- The subtle and complex ways in which power works require adapting a valuing stance towards conflict, resistance and defiance.

As discussed in chapter 2, power and knowledge are inextricably linked to one another, working to discipline subjects into becoming self-governing and productive individuals (Foucault, 1977, 1980). Thus, power is not only restrictive but is also productive, as it permeates through relations to produce individual subjects as bearers of rights and

duties, and make certain choices and certain relations with the self and with society easier and more desirable. Yet, the poststructuralist premise that there is no real essence to the self that is not always already socially constructed through relations of power, poses some real question for materialist politics that seek to transform oppressive social structures; if power is omnipresent, if nothing can exist outside the scope of power, what is the point in liberation? What is it that we are trying to liberate and from what, when we deny the existence of some “true” self struggling to emancipate itself from externally imposed restrictions?

While disciplinary power is omnipresent, its relational nature means that individuals are vehicles of power, not the passive points of its application (Foucault, 1980). Subjectivity is constructed through dynamic power relations, in which individuals do not only comply with hegemonic rules, but also resist and transgress them, alone or as part of mobilised collectives. This means that we cannot do away with power, as in the very act of emancipating ourselves from one social order, we are reconstructing ourselves as subjects of another. This does not, however, make the ideal of emancipation outdated; rather, it implies that emancipation is an on-going relational process, which is not about avoiding power but about ‘*us[ing] power to resist domination*’ (Gallagher, 2008, p. 147). It is here that Gordon’s (2008) distinction between *power over* (domination), *power to* (the ability to change things in the world), and *power among* (influence, cooperation and co-inspiration) comes in handy, suggesting that the task for radical inclusive pedagogy is not just to recognise subjectivity as constructed through relationships, but also to shift power within those relationships so as to minimise *power over* while maximising *power among*.

As argued earlier, criticising the notion of the unified, autonomous subject at the level of discourse, without taking into account the material and social structures that restrict people from freely changing and engaging with others, risks reifying the exclusion of disabled people (amongst other marginalised groups). This is particularly true, as the notion of

autonomy – the person’s authority of their live, is one of the key issues for the DPM (see chapter 4). Disabled people, as Erevelles (2005b, p. 59) argues, are likely to view with some suspicion ‘*the theoretical move to undermine the ontological status of the [autonomous] subject and proclaim it to be a fiction, at the very moment when they have made counterclaims for their subjectivity*’. Agency and autonomy are crucial to social transformation and cannot be ignored by proponents of radical inclusive pedagogy. The feminist notion of ‘*relational autonomy*’ (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000a) may prove useful to solving this conundrum. Relational approaches to autonomy recognise that a person’s ability to act upon their desires, goals and values is constructed through social relations, and can be impeded not just by overt restrictions on one’s freedom but also by social norms, institutions, practices, and relationships that limit the range of socially recognised desire and the available options to pursue them. Thus, for radical inclusive pedagogy, the recognition that both subjectivity and autonomy are constantly constructed through social relations, does not mean a wholesale rejection of the concept of autonomy, but rather entails engaging in such relations that can recognise and support people’s *struggles for* autonomy.

In chapter 8 we have followed students’ discussion and reconstruction of social norms relating to beauty, difference, and gender. In these discussions students have explicitly discussed social norms and expectations, and how their desires, understandings and wishes are framed within those (e.g. the desire to have teacher who is ‘*brilliant and beautiful*’, a ‘*freak*’, or ‘*both a man and a woman*’). In these instances the students relied on the group relations to gain recognition of their choices and understandings as valid, to explore how these choices are limited, and to create a space that defies such restriction and opens up more possibilities. These, I have argued, were examples of relational autonomy in practice. Similarly, as discussed in chapter 6, many of the activists identified the coercive and authoritarian practices common in schools as barriers to radical inclusive pedagogy, as they

work to restrict students' autonomy and choice. Both Alex and Jennifer have discussed how rather than expecting their children to obey to their rules they have discussed with them the reasons behind a certain request and negotiated different ways for fulfilling such requests. Such approach allowed them to treat children's views and desires with respect and recognition while providing them with information about the reasons behind certain norms, rules and practices, thus enabling them to either comply with them in different ways, or challenge them more effectively. In so doing they have increased the children's relational autonomy, minimised power-over and increased power-among.

As discussed earlier, negotiating the needs, values and desires of individuals within the community requires a basic sense of belonging, solidarity and harmony, but it also entails constant conflicts and struggles (Mouffe, 1998b). Oppression can never fully disappear and often takes on new forms within new roles and relationships (Chomsky, 1986). Not only that any community, as open and inclusive as it may be, always practices some oppression; but that school communities function within an oppressive and hierarchical society, making resistance to the social order a key issue. The commitment of radical inclusive pedagogy to increasing power-among and resisting domination and oppression requires an understanding of conflict as (also) productive. Many examples of this productive nature of conflict were discussed in chapters 7 and 8. The students, I argued, understood relations and belonging as comprised of both harmony and conflict, describing their ideal friend as wearing both a wedding ring and a knuckle duster (see chapter 7). In chapter 8 I discussed how resisting the urge to pacify Jimmy's resistance to my presence, which was expressed in a somewhat "cheeky" and mocking way, allowed for an opportunity to rethink adult-child relations in the school and worked to spark the ideas of using play. Anger, disobedience, and disruptive behaviour are invaluable in their ability to challenge trodden routes and taken for granted assumptions. We need to resist the urge to instantly pacify them or transform them into

intellectual deliberation, but rather adopt a valuing stance towards expressions of anger, resistance and desire in their “raw” form, which might push us out of our comfort zone; thus, sometimes, opening possibilities for new understandings and interpretations.

RETHINKING KNOWLEDGE FROM A DIS-ABILITY PERSPECTIVE: SUPPORTING
ACCESS AND CONSCIENTIZATION

In this final section I will discuss the need to rethink knowledge and learning. As I have argued throughout this work, knowledge is not a representation of some neutral and objective reality, but rather is ‘*a social construction deeply rooted in a nexus of power relations*’ (McLaren, 2009, p.63), which works to create productive and governable subjects (Foucault, 1977) and hide social inequality. Further, I have argued, educational policies that emphasise adherence to a hyper standardised and formulated National Curriculum fail to recognise the diversity of knowledges and learning styles of students, and thus construct school failure that is viewed as an individual pathology (Lipman, 2009; Reid & Weatherly Valle, 2004). I therefore argue that radical inclusive pedagogy needs to re-think knowledge as contextualised and relational. This contextualisation has a double role in removing disabling barriers by making learning more accessible and by viewing education as a process geared towards social change. The main points of this argument are summarised in box 7.

Contextualising knowledge

- Knowledge is not objective or independent from human apprehension
- We should value multiplicity of knowledges and ways of knowing that are embedded in experience and relationships
- Contextualised knowledge is necessary for social transformation
 - This leads to the necessity to find ways of learning and knowing that do not depend on narrow cognitive abilities of literacy and abstraction

One of the main critiques of traditional schooling explored in chapter 3 is a resistance to what Freire (1972) calls ‘*the banking model of education*’, a view of knowledge as existing independently of human apprehension, and of education as a process of efficiently receiving, filing, and storing information. This view of education is seen by both critical pedagogues and proponents of progressive and democratic education as alienating, overly coercive and diminishing students’ agency and autonomy. The world is not a static reality but is always in process and transformation. This means that education is not about “people” as abstract beings, or about “the world” without people, but about people in their relation with the world (Freire, 1972). Radical inclusive pedagogy, as I argued earlier, is about promoting students’ relational autonomy by increasing the range of possible relations with the world, as well as about coalescing to effect change in the world. It should therefore promote knowledge and learning that are contextualised in students’ varied experience, and that take into account the social structures within which such experiences are embedded.

Radical inclusive pedagogy is not about using “specialised” knowledge to better include disabled students within oppressive social structures, but is about engaging in a pedagogical dialogue with students that seeks to build inclusion and challenge social processes of marginalisation. In chapters 4 and 6 (and earlier in this chapter) I have argued

for the need to incorporate into schools the social and historical knowledge produced by the DPM, as well as the various forms of disability art that use diverse media to raise questions and challenge ableist, racist and sexist assumptions. This is essential for educators seeking to promote an understanding of disability not as a constituency of special education but as the product of a hostile environment and organisational pathology (Ware, 2009).

Contextualising learning for radical inclusive pedagogy is not just about what is taught, but also about how teaching and learning are organised and recognised. In chapter 6 I have discussed how a too narrow focus on language and rational thinking fails disabled students who might engage with the world in other ways. I have explored Alex's story about how her son had learnt about friction from playing in the soft play area, and argued for the need to contextualise learning in children's experiences and interests. In this sense, education is a relational process in which teacher and students communicate with each other and learn from each other. The knowledge of students is just as legitimate as the knowledge of teachers; and the process of learning changes both and creates new knowledge. Further, I have argued with Lynch & Baker (2005) that the bias towards literacy and numeracy leaves other vital human capacities, such as building and handy work, art and movement and capabilities of love, care and solidarity, unrecognised and unappreciated by schools. This wider and contextualised view of education fits well with the progressivist argument that educators should follow the interests of the child (Darling & Nordenbo, 2002).

However, this argument needs to be exercised with caution. As argued by activists in chapter 6, under the guise of fitting learning around the child's needs, disabled students in "special" programmes are made into *'basket weavers and secretaries'* (interview with Marianne), and are only exposed to a simplified version of materials that denies them access to complex or controversial social issues (Aspis, 1998). Similarly, we saw in chapter 7 how

the organisation of learning around topics rather than curriculum subjects, and the incorporation of games, arts and some large scale projects have supported students in the SNU to access the national curriculum. This approach to learning and teaching, I have argued, was highly impressive in its ability to allow many students a sense of pride and the skills and knowledge to leave school with some form of qualification. Yet, the lack of critical engagement with social processes of oppression, exclusion, and marginalisation had worked to individualise success and failure and thus reify social inequalities. The task for radical inclusive pedagogy, then, is not just to construct learning around concrete experiences, but also to enable a process of conscientization (Freire, 1972) that does not only depend on language and reason. The potential of using creative methods and playful approaches in order to contextualise in the “here and now” critical discussions of social norms was explored in detail in chapter 8.

Radical inclusive pedagogy, then, is about contextualising knowledge by drawing on students’ experiences, understandings and interests to create a dialogue, a relational process, in which teachers and students communicate with each other and learn from each other, exploring their relationships with others in the world. It means supporting and valuing varying ways of communication – through language (spoken, written, signed...), movement, pictures and action, and understanding that each of these ways carries unique meanings (see chapter 8). It means providing students with accessible materials that can support critical reflection, and welcoming materials and ideas provided by the students. It means understanding learning as connected to life experience and applied to it (Freire, 1972a), and as reality as always in-the-making, and therefore susceptible for change and improvement.

PREFIGURING RADICAL INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY – IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The aim of this work was to explore possibilities for radical inclusive education. Taking a *stance of inspiration* (chapter 5) to research meant that these explorations were drawing on existing practice in educational and activist settings to go beyond it and offer new ways of doing and thinking about education. Yet, this discussion will not be complete without considering how these new understandings and visions can be applied back to practice and inform future research. The concept of *prefigurative practice* – embodying in the “here and now” the very social relations we are arguing for – is of crucial importance for actively seeking inclusion within specific practices (Allan, 1999), while fighting against the wider social discourses and practices that reify exclusion. As argued in chapters 5 and 8, the “best school in the world” workshops were an attempt to do just that, seeking to transgress the social relations of the school to produce knowledge about radical inclusive pedagogy. In this section I will draw on the discussion of research question 4 – *What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the process of conducting playful research workshops with a group of students in a “special needs” unit?* – to offer implications for research and practice. The main points of this argument are summarised in box 8.

RQ4: *What can we learn about radical inclusive pedagogy from the process of conducting playful research workshops with a group of students in a “special needs” unit?*

- Prefigurative action as a dual track process – resisting oppressive relations while building alternatives to them.
- A complex and constant interrogation of power relations is necessary for prefiguring radical inclusive pedagogy.
- It is possible to engage with disabled students in critical reflections by contextualising debates in the “here and now”, allowing for many venues of engagement, and understanding ‘voice’ as a rhizomatic process.
- **These understandings have implications for educators, researchers and policy**

As I argued in chapter 3, the values and practices of education are embedded within wider social, political and economic structure. Working towards more just and inclusive education within the global context of advanced capitalism and the national context of the Coalition government’s spending cuts and educational reforms (Department for Education, 2010, 2011) requires us to *think global- act local* (see chapters 4 and 5), taking a dual approach of building localised and self organised alternatives, while continually resisting oppressive structures and practicing global solidarity.

Such local actions are diverse, and work on different scales. Many activists remembered favourably specific teachers who worked openly and respectfully with students, and connected learning to real life experiences. Others reported on the value of educational opportunities outside the school in self organised groups of disabled people and families (chapter 6). In chapter 7 we have seen how restructuring and contextualising learning, promoting mutual support, and taking a relational stance of *getting-to-know* towards students, have worked to make learning accessible and enjoyable to students in a “special needs” unit. Documenting, analysing, and sharing such local initiatives can inspire educational

practitioners, families, and teacher trainers to reflect on their practice and circumstances and initiate action within their communities.

Yet, while local, prefigurative and relational actions are necessary they are not enough. Even the most intimate, face to face interaction are enacted within and influenced by wider social, political and economic structures, which, when left unchallenged, can render local initiatives vulnerable to recuperation and limited in their scope (see chapter 7).

Connecting educational practices and political activism can help to form the kind of networks that would enable skills sharing, dialogue (and argument) around ideas, values and goals, and a sense of solidarity, which are all crucial for connecting the local with the global.

Researchers have a role in bringing those different fields together and disseminating ideas that provide a basis for such dialogues and connections.

Working to implement change requires nuanced understanding of power. The process of prefiguring radical inclusive pedagogy through conducting the “best school in the world” workshops, as we have seen in chapter 8, was not about completely relinquishing power positions and privileges, but about sharing these privileges with students to increase power-among and promote relational autonomy. Further, sharing certain privileges within a specific context did not make all forms of domination miraculously disappear, and on occasions students used the space of the workshop to assert their domination over others (e.g. migrants). This means that practitioners and researchers need to be constantly mindful of the tacit ways in which power relations work within specific social circumstances. Understanding radical inclusive pedagogy as a relational and rhizomatic process of becoming-in-the-world-with-others means that there are no manuals or sets of practices that could be charted out in advance as embodying those relations. The meanings and goals of radical inclusive pedagogy need to be continuously negotiated and renegotiated between different players, teachers,

students and families, at different times and stages of life. Reflexivity is needed on the part of researchers and practitioners, constantly looking for, and experimenting with, different ways of working with and relating to each other.

The role of legislation in the struggle for inclusive radical pedagogy is complex (see chapter 4). As Oliver & Barnes (2006 n.p.) put it '*to get too close to the Government is to risk incorporation and end up carrying out their proposals rather than ours. To move too far away is to risk marginalisation and eventual demise*'. Working towards radical inclusive pedagogy requires using a variety of tactics and opportunities, within and outside the state. Fighting oppressive legislation is crucial for securing funding and changing services. The "best school in the world" workshops, I argue, have many implications for fighting for legislative and policy change. As Slater (2012b) argues, although government rhetoric wants to consult with young people, encouraging them to actively engage with services and politics, these consultations are searching for particular, adult-mediated answers that value rationality and compromise as signs of maturity. Similarly, Aspis (1997) critiques the tokenistic nature of consultations with people with the label of learning disability, arguing that these consultations are often based on a narrow agenda set by service providers, thus limiting disabled people's participation to trivial details only. The workshops described in chapter 8 have allowed disabled youth to critically reflect on social reality and suggest alternatives to it, by broadening the scope of investigation beyond the limits of any existing service, relying on multiple ways of expression (including arts and crafts, drama and body work as well as language), and promoting rhizomatic group relations. Thus, while radical inclusive pedagogy requires locally organised alternatives, its methods and principles are highly useful in the fight for policy and legislation change.

KEY MESSAGES

In summary, this work explored the need for radically rethinking ideas around education, paying particular attention to the experiences of disabled youth and adults. While the normalising and exclusionary aspects of contemporary education have been studied by many (e.g. Apple, 2004; Ellsworth, 1989; Freire, 1972a; Giroux, 1981; hooks, 1994), the needs and experiences of disabled students, as well as the socially engendered ways through which they are constructed as deficient and deviant, are rarely explored. Fighting for the social inclusion of disabled students requires more than supporting them to participate in the competitive and individualised education system as “normally” as possible; a dis-ability perspective on education is needed.

Dis-ability perspective is about recognising that we are all differently embodied and positioned within the world. We are never either fully “whole” or “broken”, disabled or able, but ever merged in rhizomatic relations through which we exercise different degrees of interdependence, connection and separation (Shildrick & Price, 1996). Radical inclusive pedagogy that starts from a dis-ability perspective is not about creating educational provision for disabled students, but about diverse range of services, relations and support that can benefit different people at different times of their lives. It is about the freedom to move between services and change roles and relations. It is about being supported to impact on, shape and change educational provision and relations. It is about being supported to recognise social injustices and coalesce in order to transform them.

Radical inclusive pedagogy is about re-thinking the subject not as a unitary self-sufficient individual but as merged in rhizomatic becoming-in-the-world-with-others (Price & Shildrick, 2002). It is about supporting people to have their dependency needs met while not

making them dependent in ways they need not be (Kittay et al., 2005). Thus, it is about understanding autonomy not as a trait of the individual person, but as a relational process that requires working together to support people in exercising their autonomy and making more choices and options socially recognised and available (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000b).

Radical inclusive pedagogy is about taking a politicised stance towards knowledge, power and education. It is about realising that we are all positioned in relations of power and about supporting students to coalesce and challenge injustice and inequality, and valuing the productive role of conflict, resistance and disobedience in the on-going fight for change. Finally, it is about recognising that the process of liberation can never be done with, and that some form of oppression may always exist despite our best intentions (Chomsky, 1986). This, however, should not be seen as a pessimistic stance indicating the futility of struggle. Rather, it implies we need to work prefiguratively, aiming at creating horizontal and supportive social relations, while being ever reflective of our practices and willing to renegotiate and reconsider them according to the changing circumstances.

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APPENDICES

1. Information and consent forms
 - a. Activists information and consent form
 - b. Head teacher information and consent form for school ethnography
 - c. Teachers' information and consent form for interview
 - d. Parent information and consent form for creative workshops
 - e. Student information and consent form for creative workshops
2. Interview guides
 - a. Activists interview guide
 - b. Parent activist interview guide
 - c. Teachers' interview guide
 - d. Middle management interview guide
3. Creative workshops
 - a. Table of rules

ACTIVISTS' INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Research Project

Enabling Pedagogy: Educational Experiences of Students with 'Special Educational Needs' and How They May Affect Our Vision of Critical Pedagogy.

Researcher

Anat Greenstein, Dep. of Psychology & Social Change, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Research Supervisor

Prof. Dan Goodley, Dep. of Psychology & Social Change, Manchester Metropolitan University.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

I am a PhD student in the Research Institute for Health and Social Change in the Manchester Metropolitan University, carrying out a study on the educational provision and experiences of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The aims of the study are:

- To describe ideas of 'good education' from the perspectives of students with SEN, their educational providers and their families.
- To identify barriers and possibilities for educational and social inclusion in democratic schools for disabled students/ students with SEN.
- To identify educational practices that allow students with SEN to challenge their social and educational marginalization, and participate equally.

2. Why have I been chosen?

I am interested in your experiences of inclusion and exclusion. As an activist in the disabled people's movement I hope to learn from your experience of working in inclusive and democratic spaces.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

4. What do I have to do?

If you choose to take part in this study, we will arrange for a time and place of your choice to conduct an interview (alternatively we can conduct the interview over the phone, via Skype or on e-mail). If you want you can ask for other people to be present during the interview. The interview will last between one and two hours. You will be asked about your experiences in education and in activism. You can choose not to answer any of the questions, and are encouraged to offer any other information that you find relevant. The interview will be recorded and later transcribed.

Sometimes, when people disclose personal information they find this an upsetting experience. Please remember that you have every right to withdraw from this study if you find it upsetting.

If at anytime during this research you feel that you have grounds to complain about the researcher, or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, contact the director of study:

Prof. Dan Goodley,

Manchester Metropolitan University

d.goodley@mmu.ac.uk

01612472526

5. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

It is up to you. I will ask you at the end of the interview whether you want to be quoted under your real name or use a pseudonym.

6. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be used in material we are writing about the educational provision and experiences of students with SEN. The material will be presented at academic and professional conferences and academic journals. The findings will also be the basis of a PhD dissertation in the Manchester Metropolitan University

7. Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by the Faculty of Health Social Care ethics committee at the Manchester Metropolitan University.

8. Contact for Further Information

Anat Greenstein

Manchester Metropolitan University

Tel: (+44) 07703445447

E-mail: anatgr78@gmail.com

Thank you for reading this information sheet and, if it is possible, participating in the study.

Prof. Dan Goodley

Ms. Anat Greenstein

Consent Form

Anat Greenstein has explained the nature of the research project and what it would mean for me to participate. I have received a copy of the study information sheets, which I have had explained to me. Having had _____ days to consider my decision I am happy to consent to take part in the study and I understand I am free to withdraw at any time. I understand I will not receive any payments for participation.

Name:

Date:

Contact Phone number:

Signature:

HEAD TEACHER INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Research Project

Enabling Pedagogy: Educational Experiences of Students with 'Special Educational Needs' and How They May Affect Our Vision of Critical Pedagogy.

Researcher

Anat Greenstein, Dep. of Psychology & Social Change, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Researcher Supervisor

Prof. Dan Goodley, Dep. of Psychology & Social Change, Manchester Metropolitan University.

School Manager Information Sheet

1. What is the purpose of the study?

I am a PhD student in the Research Institute for Health and Social Change in the Manchester Metropolitan University, carrying out a study on the educational provision and experiences of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The aims of the study are:

- To describe ideas of 'good education' from the perspectives of students with SEN, their educational providers and their families.
- To identify barriers and possibilities for educational and social inclusion for students with a diagnosis of SEN.
- To identify educational practices that allow students with SEN to challenge their social and educational marginalization, and participate equally.

2. What will participation involve?

Should your school choose to participate, the researcher (Anat Greenstein) will conduct observation in the school for 4 weeks. Observations will include sitting in classes where students with SEN are taught, observing provision of enhanced resources for students with SEN, and observing during breaks,

field trips, or any activity that involves students with SEN during this time. During the observations the researcher will take notes using pen and paper and audio recording. I will also be interested in interviewing school staff, members of governing bodies, parents and students with SEN. People willing to take part in interviews will be approached separately, and interviews will not take place during school time.

3. Consent and withdrawal

Participation in this research is completely voluntary, and you don't have to take part. You are welcome to discuss with the researchers the conditions for your participation and what you think will or will not be comfortable for your school. At anytime you may change these conditions, or withdraw from the research completely. If at any time during this research you feel that you have grounds to complain about the researchers involved with this research project, or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, contact the director of study:

Prof. Dan Goodley,

Manchester Metropolitan University

d.goodley@mmu.ac.uk

01612472526

4. Confidentiality:

All information that is collected during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Names of people, and the name and location of the school will be changed, and the real names will not be recorded. Findings that will appear in any public report or presentation will not include specific details that might lead to the identification of people or places.

We are required by law to report to the police in cases of child abuse or severe health risks to children.

Any notes or audiotapes collected during the research will be securely stored in offices at Manchester Metropolitan University and they will be destroyed 1 year after the completion of the study.

5. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be used in material we are writing about the educational provision and experiences of students with SEN. The material will be presented at academic and professional conferences and academic journals. Anonymity and confidentiality will still be in place. The findings will also be the basis of a PhD dissertation in the Manchester Metropolitan University.

The researchers will be happy to conduct a workshop at the school for discussing the findings of the research and your feedback to them.

6. Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by the Faculty of Health Social Care ethics committee at the Manchester Metropolitan University.

7. Contact for Further Information

Anat Greenstein

Manchester Metropolitan University

Tel: (+44) 07703445447

E-mail: anatgr78@gmail.com

Thank you for reading this information sheet and, if it is possible, participating in the study.

Prof. Dan Goodley

Ms. Anat Greenstein

Consent Form

Anat Greenstein has explained the nature of the research project and what it would mean for the school to participate. I have received a copy of the study information sheets, which I have had explained to me. Having had _____ days to consider my decision I am happy to consent for my school to take part in the study and I understand I am free to withdraw at any time. I understand I will not receive any payments for participation.

Name:

Date:

Name of School:

Contact Phone number:

Signature:

APPENDIX 1C:

TEACHER INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORMS

Dear teacher/staff

Research in [REDACTED]

I am a PhD student at Manchester Metropolitan University, currently carrying out research at [REDACTED]. This research will form the basis of a report for the school about the benefits of the [REDACTED], with the aim being to identify what currently works and what needs improvement.

The data from this research will also be used as part of a bigger research that aims to:-

- Describe the ideas of 'good education' from the perspectives of students, their schools and their families;
- Identify barriers and possibilities for educational and social inclusion for students;
- Identify educational practices which encourage students to participate equally in school and in society.

What does the research involve?

If you choose to take part in this study, we will arrange a time and place of your choice to conduct an interview. The interview will last between one and two hours. You will be asked about issues such as your professional experiences with students with SEN, what in your opinion and experience is good educational provision, what are the barriers and possibilities for social and educational inclusion for people with SEN. You can choose not to answer any of the questions, and are encouraged to offer any other information that you find relevant. The interview will be recorded and later transcribed.

Please remember that you have every right to withdraw from this study at anytime if you find it upsetting.

If at anytime during this research you feel that you have grounds to complain about the researchers involved with this research project, or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, contact the director of study:

Prof. Dan Goodley,

Manchester Metropolitan University

d.goodley@mmu.ac.uk

01612472526

Confidentiality

All information collected during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Your details will not be recorded at any time and information about your interview will not be discussed with others unless it is required by law (in cases of child abuse or severe health risk to students).

What will happen with the results of the research?

The results of the research will be written up as a report for the school. The findings will also form the basis of a PhD dissertation for the Manchester Metropolitan University. The material will be presented at academic and professional conferences and in academic journals. Anonymity and confidentiality will still be in place and no identifying details will be given about either the school or individuals interviewed.

If you agree to participate in the research I would be grateful if you could complete and sign the attached consent form and return it to me.

Should you have any questions or require further information about the research please do not hesitate to contact either of the persons named below.

Researcher – Anat Greenstein Tel: 07503 445447; email: anatgr78@gmail.com

Research Supervisor – Prof. Dan Goodley Tel: 0161 247 2526, email: d.goodley@mmu.ac.uk

Teacher / Staff Consent Form

Anat Greenstein has explained the nature of the research project and what it would mean for me to participate. I have received a copy of the study information sheets, which I have had explained to me. Having had _____ days to consider my decision I am happy to consent to take part in the study and I understand I am free to withdraw at any time. I understand I will not receive any payments for participation.

Name:

Date:

Contact Phone number:

Signature:

APPENDIX 1D:

PARENT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

19 January, 2011

Dear Parent / Carer

Research in [REDACTED]

I am a PhD student at Manchester Metropolitan University, currently carrying out research at [REDACTED]. This research will form the basis of a report for the school about the benefits of the [REDACTED], with the aim being to identify what currently works and what needs improvement.

The data from this research will also be used as part of a bigger research that aims to:

- Describe the ideas of 'good education' from the perspectives of students, their schools and their families;
- Identify barriers and possibilities for educational and social inclusion for students;
- Identify educational practices which encourage students to participate equally in school and in society.

What does the research involve?

As part of the research I will be visiting the school a few times during the year. I will observe school activities such as lessons, breaks, outings etc. I will also be working with the students in small groups. The groups will meet 5 times during February to discuss what is 'a good school', what students value about their education and what would they like to change.

Confidentiality

All information collected during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Your child's details will not be recorded at any time and information

about your child will not be discussed with others unless it is required by law (in cases of child abuse or severe health risk to students).

What will happen with the results of the research?

The results of the research will be written up as a report for the school. The findings will also form the basis of a PhD dissertation for the Manchester Metropolitan University. The material will be presented at academic and professional conferences and in academic journals. Anonymity and confidentiality will still be in place and no identifying details will be given about either the school or individual students.

If you agree to your child participating in the research I would be grateful if you could complete and sign the attached consent form and return it to Rose Bridge High School for my attention.

Should you have any questions or require further information about the research please do not hesitate to contact either of the persons named below.

Researcher – Anat Greenstein Tel: 07503 445447; email: anatgr78@gmail.com

Research Supervisor – Prof. Dan Goodley Tel: 0161 247 2526, email: d.goodley@mmu.ac.uk

Parent / Carer Consent Form

Please return to Anat Greenstein, c/o Rose Bridge High School, Holt St, Ince, Wigan

I confirm that I have received a copy of the information sheets regarding the research which I have read and understood.

I also understand the terms of confidentiality regarding students and hereby give permission for my child _____ to participate in the research.

Signed: _____ Name: _____

Date: _____

Contact No: _____

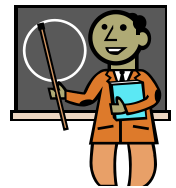
APPENDIX 1D:

STUDENT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Hi,

My name is Anat Greenstein and I am a student at the university (Manchester Metropolitan University).

I am doing a research about schools and I am asking you to be my teacher.



I am interested to know

- What do you like about being in school?
- What don't you like about being in school?
- Who do you spend time with? Teachers? Friends?
- If you could have the school of your dreams, what would it be like?
- Anything else that is important to you in your school.



What will we do?

We will meet 5 times to design the best school in the world. We will use games, art or drama to talk about what good schools are like. If you want we could present the results in the *Small Learning Community*.

What will happen with what you tell me?

I am going to write a report about your school, but everything you tell me is confidential. The word confidential means secret. It means that I can't tell anyone what you told me, not even your parents or your teachers. The only thing I have to tell other people is if you tell me about a crime. If I will write about things you told me I will not use your name. I will also change other details so that no one would know it was you who said it. However, you don't have to be confidential. You can tell anyone you want about the research and about what we do.



You can always ask questions about what we do.

You can always stop participating.

Student consent form

Do you understand what this project is about? **Yes/No**

Have you asked all the questions you want? **Yes/No**

Were your questions answered in a way you understand? **Yes/No**

Do you understand it's OK to stop taking part at any time? **Yes/No**

Are you happy to take part? **Yes/No**

Are you happy to have photos, videos and recordings taken of you,
and for Anat to use these in her reports? **Yes/No**

Are you happy for Anat to use any photos of artwork you have made
in her reports? **Yes/No**

If any answers are 'no' or you don't want to take part, don't sign your name! If you do want to take part, you can write your name below.

Your name _____ Date _____

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ACTIVISTS

Activism:

- How did you become involved in the disabled people movement?
- Are you involved in other social movements/campaigns? Why are you involved in these movements?
- If your activism succeeds, what would the world look like?
- Do you think learning and activism are connected? Can you tell me about meaningful experiences of learning through activism?
- I am interested in inclusive democratic spaces.
 - a. Can you tell me about experiences of inclusion or exclusion in activism?
 - b. If you have positive experiences of democratic and inclusive spaces can you describe how they worked?
 - c. Did you have experiences of exclusion in activism (in the disability movement or in other movements)? Can you tell me about those? What were the problems? What could be done differently?

Schools:

- Can you tell what kind of schools you went to?
 - a. Who made the decision about these schools?
 - b. why were these decisions made?
- What are your most memorable experiences of school?
- If you went to school again- what would you change? What would you keep?
- What are schools for? Is it important to have schools and why?
- From your experience (in school, activism, work etc.)- how can schools **improve learning**?
- From your experience (in school, activism, work etc.)- how can schools **be more inclusive**?
- From your experience (in school, activism, work etc.)- how can schools **be more democratic**?
- From your experience (in school, activism, work etc.)- how can schools **challenge disablism**?

Please add anything else that you think is important

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENT ACTIVISTS

Activism:

- How did you become involved in the disabled people movement?
- Are you involved in other social movements/campaigns? Why are you involved in these movements?
- If your activism succeeds, what would the world look like?
- Do you think learning and activism are connected? Can you tell me about meaningful experiences of learning through activism?
- I am interested in inclusive democratic spaces.
 - a. Can you tell me about experiences of inclusion or exclusion in activism?
 - b. If you have positive experiences of democratic and inclusive spaces can you describe how they worked?
 - c. Did you have experiences of exclusion in activism (in the disability movement or in other movements)? Can you tell me about those? What were the problems? What could be done differently?

Schools:

- Can you tell what kind of schools your child went to?
 - a. Who made the decision about these schools?
 - b. why were these decisions made?
- What are your most memorable experiences of school system (as a parent/ child/ teacher)?
- What would your ideal school be like?
- What are schools for? Is it important to have schools and why?
- From your experience (in school, activism, work etc.)- how can schools **improve learning**?
- From your experience (in school, activism, work etc.)- how can schools **be more inclusive**?
- From your experience (in school, activism, work etc.)- how can schools **be more democratic**?
- From your experience (in school, activism, work etc.)- how can schools **challenge disablism**?

Please add anything else that you think is important

APPENDIX 2C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS IN THE SNU

- How/why did you start working in education? What was your vision then? Has it changed over time?
- How do you see your role in the SNU? Who are the students you work with? How is your role determined and negotiated?
- Tell me about special achievements in your work, what are you proud of?
- What are the barriers for achieving your goals? How do you deal with them?
- If you could have the school of your dreams what would it be like?

Do you have anything to add?

Do you have any recommendations for people I should speak to/ activities I should observe?

APPENDIX 2D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MIDDLE MANAGEMENT IN THE SNU

- What is your role in the school?
 - What is the SNU and how did it come to be?
 - Who are the students you work with?
 - What is the SNU set to achieve?
-
- Why did you start working in education?
 - What are your dreams? What would you like to achieve? Can you speak of your special achievements?
 - How does your vision fits with that of the school? How are discrepancies negotiated?
 - If you could have the school of your dreams what would it be like?

APPENDIX 3A

FULL LIST OF RULES USED IN SESSION 3 SORTING TASK

Current rules	Opposite rules	Other rules
No energy drinks in school	You can play all day and not come to lessons	Students have to play with anyone who wants to play with them
No hitting	No reading and writing during lessons	It is allowed to hit if you have a good reason
The students have to obey the teacher	The teacher has to obey students	All teachers have to play music in classes
You have to wear uniform of suit and tie	You can wear whatever you want	You have to come to school naked
You have to be in class when the bell rings	Anyone can use any equipment they want	All students and teachers must clean the school every week
No cursing	Smoking is allowed anywhere in the school	Pets are allowed in the school
No smoking in school	Smoking is allowed in designated areas	Only vegetarian food is allowed in the school
The teacher decides who gets to speak	Everyone can speak at all times	No crying in school
Teachers must be called sir or miss	Students must be called sir or miss	
	Teachers and students are called by first name	No yellow food or drink in the school
	Every student can choose which subjects to study and which not to study	Only blonde students are allowed in the school