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Beginner teacher preparedness for inclusion

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Educational Psychology

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Abstract

The exclusion of students who experience disability is a social justice issue that persists in New Zealand despite efforts to establish a fully inclusive education system. Although there has been some research into the teaching of inclusive practice in initial teacher education (ITE) in New Zealand, little research examining beginner teachers' feelings of preparedness for inclusion has been undertaken. This mixed-methods study investigated the role of ITE in preparing beginner, secondary school teachers for including diverse groups of learners by capturing their experiences of ITE and early career. Phase one involved an online questionnaire to secondary school teachers in the first three years of their career. Phase two involved conducting four follow-up interviews exploring salient findings from the questionnaire. The findings of this study suggest that while ITE recognises the diversity of the classroom, it falls short when it comes to the pragmatic implications for teaching and learning. The vast majority of participants felt their ITE did little or nothing to help them develop their knowledge of legislation and policy as it relates to inclusion. Two-thirds of participants felt that their ITE did little or nothing to help them develop their knowledge of supports available for students who experience disability while the majority had little to no experience teaching such students on practicum. Teachers' sense of preparedness to include learners varied significantly according to their personal connection with a person with a disability. Several key themes which align with literature in the field of teacher education for inclusion emerged, namely: knowledge about, and understanding of inclusive pedagogy; lack of focus on legislation, policy and human rights; lack of focus on collaborative practice; and beginner teachers not identifying as lifelong learners. Research-driven practices that are beneficial in preparing teachers to make socially-just decisions are discussed in light of the themes. These include: (1) critical reflection about experiences gained during practicum and service-learning opportunities; (2) explicit teaching of human rights; (3) explicit teaching about effective collaboration with professionals, teacher aides and whānau.

Acknowledgements

> *It may be easier to grasp how mistaken such thinking is by asking whether it would be acceptable for education systems to continue to officially sanction racism in policies and practices. If we know that the response to certain students (whose bodies, minds, senses work differently to the socially ascribed 'norm') is wounding and unfair, we cannot 'unknow' this. We have a responsibility to acknowledge and address what is essentially institutionalized discrimination* (Rutherford, 2016, p. 132).

Dr Jude MacArthur, your patient guidance has enabled me to know what I cannot 'unknow'. Thanks to you, I go forth an advocate for rights-based education.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Defining Inclusive Education

In an inclusive education system all children are entitled to be educated at their local school where they can fully participate and achieve. It is a system in which all students are educated in classrooms alongside their peers and are welcomed into a school community that values diversity. Inclusive education challenges barriers to learning and participation (Booth, 2005) and is inherently different to 'special education' as it does not focus on remediation of specific human differences, as imposed by the ideology of 'special' (MacArthur & Rutherford, 2016; Slee, 2011).

The inclusive education movement has grown out of international concerns for human rights and social justice (Kearney, 2011). Not only does it require that young people receive free education that is responsive to their individual needs and relevant to their circumstances (UNESCO, 2005, 2009), it also seeks to eliminate prejudice and discrimination of learners who experience exclusionary pressures including socio-economic status, culture, religion and sexuality (Ballard, 2003; Kearney, 2011; MacArthur, 2013).

International obligations to inclusive education were formalised in 1994 with the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education.* This international policy document was drawn up by UNESCO in partnership with 92 governments. It recognised the responsibilities of education systems around the world to improve access to education among all its citizens. The statement declared that:

> Regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system. (UNESCO, 1994, p. 8)

Following this, definitions of inclusion began to reflect that it is a process by which schools, communities and governments might eliminate any barriers that prevent the full participation and learning of all students (Hick, Kershner, & Farrell, 2009). Although inclusive education encompasses enhancing social justice, participation and achievement of children that face a number of exclusionary pressures, this study was specifically concerned with teacher preparedness for including students who experience disability as they have faced a history of marginalisation in New Zealand (Kearney, 2011) and internationally (see Slee, 2011). Investigation of teacher preparedness for including students who have historically been excluded or marginalised for other reasons was considered beyond the scope of this research.

The New Zealand Context

A note on terminology. In New Zealand, students who experience disability are identified by several terms. According to the 2013 New Zealand Disability Survey, 11% of children identified as being disabled, and 52% of these children were identified as having a learning difficulty. In all, 6% of all children in New Zealand were identified as having a learning difficulty (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). The Education Review Office (ERO) referred to learners who experience significant physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, behavioural or intellectual impairment as *students with high needs*. These students were thought to make up approximately 3% of the student population (Education Review Office, 2010). ERO subsequently changed their terminology from *students with high needs* to *students with special education needs* (Education Review Office, 2015) as they felt the change better reflected the Government focus on inclusion of all students.

The Education Council uses the term *students with special education needs* (EDUCANZ, 2016). Until recently the Ministry of Education (MOE) also used this term,

along with *priority learners* (MOE, 2014a). As defined by the ERO, *priority learners* are "groups of students who have been identified as historically not experiencing success in the New Zealand schooling system. These include many Māori and Pasifika learners, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, and students with special education needs" (Education Review Office, 2012, p. 4).

In July 2016, Cabinet agreed to consider the implications of an Education Bill in 2018 that will change the use of the term '*special needs'* to *'learning support'.* Reasons cited for the potential change were that *'special education'* is "somewhat stigmatising and old fashioned" (Cabinet Social Policy Committee, 2016, p. 10). On the 19th of August the change took effect with the Ministry "leaving behind terms like "special education" and "special needs" which can accentuate difference and act as a barrier" (MOE, 2016b). The terms currently used on Ministry websites are *students with learning support needs* and *students who need additional learning support* (MOE, 2017).

As mentioned, this study focuses solely on *students who experience disability*. This term was deliberately chosen because the language that is used to describe people can shape how others interact with, and treat them (Haegele & Hodge, 2016). For instance, the term *special needs* implies that there are two types of children- regular and special. *Special education needs* identifies within-child factors (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009) as the source of a student's difficulty. It is an "assumption-ridden label" and deficit ideology (Rutherford, 2016) that is not conducive to examination of the plethora of barriers that prevent students' full participation. Rather, the ramification of such language is that solutions to exclusion are directed at the individual. As Slee (2001) aptly explained, "in reducing the person to textbook accounts of defectiveness we deny possibilities for learning and active citizenship lying within their complexity" (p. 117).

The social model of disability on the other hand, suggests that solutions should be directed at the societal level (Bingham, Clarke, Michielsens, & de Meer, 2013). According to the model, disability is "the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments[1] and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream social activities" (UPIAS, 1976, quoted in Oliver, Barnes, & Oliver, 2012, p.21). In this way, the social model fits neatly within the inclusionary paradigm and is precisely what this study attempted to address. By inquiring into how teachers are prepared for including students who experience disability during their ITE, social and political change is being targeted; not change to individuals and their so called internal deficits.

Legislation, policy, and guidance. Legislation for inclusive education in New Zealand is grounded in the 1989 Education Act which states that "people who have special education needs have the same rights to enrol and receive education at state schools as people who do not" (New Zealand Government, 2015, section 1.8.1). Schools are also obligated to provide equitable and quality education for all learners under the New Zealand Disability Strategy (Ministry of Social Development, 2016), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (UNESCO, 1989) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (United Nations, 2006).

Under the CRC, all children have the right to be treated equally regardless of disability. Further, all children have the right to free, primary education that takes into account the child's human dignity (UNESCO, 2016). The CRPD and NZ Disability Strategy provide the framework that ensures services, like education, are inclusive and non-discriminatory of people who experience disability. These documents cover all ages and areas

[1] Physical impairments has since been broadened to include sensory and cognitive impairments (Oliver, Barnes, & Oliver, 2012).

of life and are often referred to by courts (Office for Disability Issues, 2016). Of note is the latest revision of the Disability Strategy which set out that "inclusive education [must be] a core competency for all teachers and educators" if the aspirational outcomes of the strategy be met (Ministry of Social Development, 2016).

As a mechanism for ensuring that legislation is reflected in practice, the MOE set a target for 100% of schools to be demonstrating inclusive practices by 2014 (MOE, 2014b). This target was encompassed by the 'Success for All' policy guidelines which explain that "schools need to create environments and support (in and out of the classroom) that meet the educational needs of all the children and young people in their school community" (MOE, 2014b, p. 10).

Implementation of inclusive education policy has proved challenging. It is offered that although policies have been drawn up to promote inclusion, there are macropolitical and micropolitical barriers[2] that prevent effective transition from policy to practice (Morton et al., 2013). For example, it was suggested that realisation of inclusive policy has been challenged by neoliberal mechanisms of funding that are based on "output measures and performance targets" (Selvaraj, 2015, p. 93). Additionally, the existence of a separately funded Special Education sector precludes the major paradigm shift from 'special education' to 'inclusive education' (Ballard, 2007; Selvaraj, 2016).

The MOE is decisive in its statement that the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) applies to all students "irrespective of their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, belief, ability or disability, social or cultural background, or geographical location" (MOE, 2007, p. 9). The eight principles of the NZC, of which *inclusion* is one, "embody the beliefs about what is important and desirable in school curriculum" (MOE, 2016a). Recently the Education Council of

[2] Macropolitical barriers are described as politics occurring at the state level between political parties and stakeholders. Micropolitical barriers are described as politics occurring within school between staff.

Aotearoa New Zealand published the new Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession (EDUCANZ, 2017). The document, *Our Code, Our Standards,* features more deliberate language and expectations that are reflective of inclusive attitudes than earlier versions. For example, two of the five values that underpin Our Code, Our Standards, *Pono* and *Manaakitanga*, make apparent that treating others with respect and dignity, and acting in ways that are fair and just, are principles that should guide the behaviours and practice of all teachers. Furthermore, the new code makes explicit that teachers will show commitment to their learners by "promoting inclusive practices to support the needs and abilities of all learners" (EDUCANZ, 2017, p. 10). The six new standards for practising teachers clearly manifest teachers' obligations to inclusive practice. The fourth standard, *Learning-focused culture*, calls for teachers to "develop a culture that is focused on learning, and is characterised by respect, inclusion, empathy, collaboration and safety" (EDUCANZ, 2017, p. 20). Ways in which this can be achieved include demonstrating high expectations for "learners with disabilities or learning support needs" and developing environments "where the diversity and uniqueness of all learners are accepted and valued" (p. 20).

It seems guidelines for ITE programme approval, also published by EDUCANZ, are lagging behind in terms of inclusive language and attitudes. The guidelines (see appendix A) explain that ITE programmes must ensure graduate teachers have a specific set of skills, attitudes and knowledge in order to satisfy "special (inclusive) education" requirements (EDUCANZ, 2016, p. 30). Interestingly, the document states that "it would be *desirable* [emphasis added] that teacher educators delivering this component of the ITE programme have qualifications, theoretical expertise and practical experience in special (inclusive) education". The use of the word *desirable* implies that those who are teaching teachers, are not required to be experienced in inclusive education. This vague recommendation allows for

various interpretations and therefore variable delivery of inclusive education in ITE programmes. Furthermore, the interchangeable use of the terms ‘special’ and ‘inclusive’ point to systemic confusion between the two constructs.

According to these expectations, graduates are required to have some understanding of the “impact that a disability, behaviour disorder or difficulties in learning might have on a student’s access to and participation in learning”. This language is inherently deficit-based and it discounts the contribution of the social model of disability. For example, one practical skill expected of graduate teachers is to have “addressed the normal course of children’s language development and the implications of delay or disorder for their learning”. The suggestion is that there is a normal course of development and therefore, an abnormal course of development. The emphasis is not on the value of diversity or teacher skill but the student’s deficit that can only be overcome through individualised approaches to instruction. In summary, the expectations fail to recognise the imperative for quality and equitable education that is outlined in New Zealand legislation and policy documents. An important question that must now be answered is, are these attitudes and language prolific in ITE curriculum in New Zealand?

Research Aim

Thus far, no studies have explored beginner secondary school teachers’ perspectives about whether they feel capable of meeting legal, professional and ethical obligations laid out by legislation, human rights and policy documents discussed in this chapter. And, given the short-time frame of graduate diplomas for secondary teacher training, the paucity of research in the area leads to a number of questions. First, to what extent do secondary school teachers feel they are prepared for teaching students who experience disability? To what extent is ITE in New Zealand meeting its obligations to prepare secondary school teachers for inclusion?

Are efforts made to address deficit-based attitudes and language during ITE? Given the professional obligations placed upon secondary school teachers to be inclusive practitioners, these are pressing questions. The present study aimed to address these questions by exploring the extent to which beginner teachers feel prepared to teach and include students who experience disability. In order to address this central aim, three specific research questions were developed:

1. To what extent do beginner secondary school teachers feel they have the knowledge, attitudes and practical skills needed to teach students who experience disability inclusively?
2. How well do graduate teachers feel their ITE programmes have supported them to develop the knowledge, attitudes and practical skills needed to teach students who experience disability inclusively?
3. What personal factors contribute to a graduate teacher's sense of preparedness to teach students who experience disability inclusively?

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Progress toward Inclusion

During the last decade there has been a clear shift toward inclusive education in New Zealand. In a review of education for children with 'special education needs', Mitchell (2010) stated that New Zealand is a world leader in inclusive education because only 0.4% of children are enrolled in segregated, special education. This was touted as impressive when compared to other OECD countries whose rates ranged from 0.5% to 6% between 1999 and 2003. As stated, inclusive education is much more than the physical presence of students. An inclusive education is rights-based, actualising social justice by eliminating barriers to participation and achievement. It seems Mitchell's claim is not an indicator of New Zealand's superior approach to inclusion, but instead serves as evidence highlighting the need for a shift in national understanding of inclusive education.

Subsequent studies provided further evidence that refuted Mitchell's assertion. In 2010 the New Zealand Government published the Review of Special Education which was based on more than 2000 responses to twelve questions featured in a public discussion document (MOE, 2010). The review made recommendations for Cabinet based on information gathered from a range of sources including students, parents and caregivers, non-government organisations, and education and health groups. Recommendations included: providing teachers with responsive professional development, providing research-based compulsory pre-service training for teachers, improving transitions, changes to funding and resource allocation, and alternate measures of accountability.

The 2010 ERO report on how students with 'high needs' are included in New Zealand schools reported that only around half of the 229 primary and secondary schools reviewed were demonstrating mostly inclusive practice. Around 30% of schools had some inclusive

practices in place, while 20% were not including students with high needs in academic, extra-curricular and social activities (Education Review Office, 2010). Inclusive practice was measured according to a comprehensive set of sixty indicators that fit into three dimensions: presence; participation and engagement; and achievement. Table 2.1 provides an overview of what these dimensions entailed.

Table 2.1. *Dimensions used to develop indicators of inclusion in the 2010 ERO review*

Dimension	**Includes**
Presence	• Enrolment and Induction • Identifying student needs and strengths
Participation and Engagement	• Links with families • The coordination of services and support • School-wide culture • Relationships with peers • Classroom teaching • Extra-curricular involvement • Learning supports • Professional development and support • Cultural responsiveness
Achievement	• The achievements of students with high needs • The benefits of mainstream students

Note. Taken from "Including Students with High Needs" (Education Review Office, 2010, p. 8)

Five years on from their initial report, ERO published a follow-up titled *Inclusive practices for students with special needs in schools*. The report identified a whole school culture that values diversity as an important first step toward inclusion. Further, barriers to participation were recognised as challenges that schools must overcome indicating that the concept of inclusion better reflected the social model of disability. The report concluded that improving teacher capability in order to improve inclusive practice is paramount. Teachers' ability to understand students, implement strategies for inclusion, differentiate curriculum, and monitor progress were correspondingly acknowledged as areas of improvement (Education Review Office, 2015).

A study investigating the exclusion of disabled[3] students from and within schools found that reasons for exclusion fell into eight categories (Kearney, 2011):

- Lack of teacher knowledge
- Lack of responsibility and prejudiced attitudes of staff
- Incorrect beliefs and practices with regard to teacher aides
- Denied access to curriculum
- Denied enrolment
- Bullying
- Incorrect beliefs and practices with regard to funding
- Poor parent and school staff relationships

Carrington et al. (2013) suggested that a good way to enhance inclusive teaching and learning in New Zealand is by examining these factors.

ITE for Inclusion

Almost 15 years ago, Ballard (2003) stated that graduates entering the teaching profession should have an understanding of how they can create classrooms that "address the issues of respect, fairness and equity" (p. 59). There is no doubt that teachers play a significant role in enhancing inclusive education (Carrington et al., 2013; UNESCO, 2005) and some commentators argue that teacher development is the linchpin for developing effective inclusive practices in schools (Ainscow, 2003). Indeed, Forlin (2010) declared that teachers' professional learning is among the most important factors for improving inclusive education practices. A document prepared for the incoming Minister of Education affirmed that "teaching must be responsive to the needs of all students. We need to ensure that the

[3] Here, Kearney used the term 'disabled' to describe the disadvantage experienced by students due to physical, social, intellectual or sensory difficulties.

ability to teach students with special education needs is a core part of teaching within every classroom" (MOE, 2014b, p. 10). Similarly, UNESCO guidelines call for teacher education programmes to equip teachers with pedagogical knowledge necessary for making diversity work in their classrooms (UNESCO, 2009). These proclamations clearly indicate that ITE in New Zealand is obligated to adopt a curriculum that prepares secondary school teachers for including all children.

Whether ITE providers have made necessary changes in their approach to preparing teachers for inclusion is an inquiry that has gained momentum internationally (Forlin, 2010; Lawson, Norwich, & Nash, 2013; Mergler, Carrington, Kimber, & Bland, 2016). As Spratt and Florian (2015) point out, "the role, value and relevance of university based teacher education is being questioned and teachers are under pressure to achieve high standards of academic performance for an increasingly diverse student population" (p. 89).

International research into the approaches used by ITE providers to deliver an inclusive curriculum has not been encouraging. Nash and Norwich (2010) described that ITE programmes in the UK varied widely in their content and coverage of *special education needs* and disabilities. The main barriers were reportedly lack of time, money and expertise of staff at universities and school practicum placements. These findings were echoed in two studies from the USA and Cyprus (Angelides, Stylianou, & Gibbs, 2006; Harvey, Yssel, Bauserman, & Merbler, 2010) which revealed that resources, time and faculty expertise inhibited effective inclusive teaching at ITE providers. In both studies, student teachers most often reported that incongruence between the ITE inclusion curriculum, and the inclusive culture/policies of their practica schools was a major barrier to developing their own inclusive practice.

Local research has not been able to establish whether ITE have a clear vision for engendering inclusive ideology and practice among its graduates. A report by Kane (2005) found that half of the ITE providers surveyed had no clear inclusive policy. One-year graduate diplomas for secondary teaching most commonly claimed that inclusion was 'infused' throughout the curriculum rather than being a separate paper or module of work. This presented a challenge as it became difficult for the researchers to identify which programmes truly had an integrated approach to teaching inclusion and which programmes merely claimed to do so. More focused research, and more explicit policy to guide inclusion were deemed necessary.

The following year another report built on Kane's by investigating where inclusion was found in ITE, and identifying the barriers to an inclusive teacher education (Morton & Gordon, 2006). This review included the perspectives of beginning teachers, lecturers, programme leaders and teachers of inclusive courses. Two salient findings are particularly relevant here. Firstly, secondary programmes had fewer courses on inclusion than primary. The time constraint of one-year diplomas was identified as a potential reason for this.

The other important finding was the significant difference among universities in the way inclusion was integrated and the content that was taught. Alarmingly, some programmes did not offer any inclusion courses at all. Morton and Gordon (2006) suggested that as a consequence graduates may believe teaching their subject is more important to their professional self-concept than the inclusion of students who experience disabilities. This notion can be understood through Skidmore's (2002) pedagogical discourse of deviance in which teaching expertise is viewed as possession of specialist subject knowledge. Conversely, under a discourse of inclusion, teaching expertise is viewed as the ability to engender participation and achievement of all students.

It has been put forward that in order to improve teacher education for inclusion, ITE needs to integrate a distinct focus on inclusive education (Kearney, 2011). Arthur-Kelly, Sutherland, Lyons, Macfarlane, and Foreman (2013) suggested there are three specific practices that might help to achieve this. Firstly, listen to, and seek the views of, teachers in their early careers. After all, the initial period of teaching after graduation is not simply an extension of the beliefs and practices covered in ITE (Dharan, 2013); it is a continuum of professional learning and development (Anthony & Kane, 2008). Secondly, promote collaboration between ITE staff to collectively determine how to best integrate inclusive content. Finally, promote self-reflection of pre-service teachers about their values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and concerns about teaching and including disabled students" (Arthur-Kelly et al., 2013, p. 227).

As part of the seminal Inclusive Practice Project, Florian, Young, and Rouse (2010) undertook a research-driven, curricular reform of the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) offered at the University of Aberdeen. The PGDE was revised to address social and educational inclusion within the core programme. From their research Florian et al. (2010) concluded that there are three important concepts that should underpin curriculum frameworks in order to successfully guide the development of inclusive practitioners. First, individual difference should be understood "as an ordinary aspect of human development" (p. 719). Second, teachers must be convinced that they are qualified, capable, and responsible for teaching all students. Finally, new ways of collaborating with others should be developed.

Beginner Teacher Attitudes and Confidence

Attitudes and beliefs have been identified as key forces of exclusion in schools (Arthur-Kelly et al., 2013; Kearney, 2011). It makes intuitive sense that a teacher's belief that pupils with disabilities should not be included in their classrooms is a major barrier to

inclusive education (Carrington et al., 2013; Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008). Teachers can lack the confidence and agency to effectively help students who experience disability, this can make them feel apprehensive about including them, which ultimately becomes an obstacle to inclusion (Arthur-Kelly et al., 2013). The question that remains, is how can these attitudes be transformed during ITE?

There exists considerable research about factors that influence attitudes, beliefs and confidence to inclusively teach students who experience disability (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Forlin, Loreman, Sharma, & Earle, 2009; Kearney, 2011; Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin, 2013; Malinen et al., 2013; Park, Dimitrov, Das, & Gichuru, 2014; Sharma, 2012; Sharma et al., 2008; Winter, 2006). Pre-service teachers feel more positive about inclusion, are less concerned about implementing inclusive practice, and have more favourable attitudes about disability when they undertake a programme of study that involved instruction about inclusive education practices. This is significant when considering that positive pre-service teachers' beliefs have been found to be among the strongest predictors of successful inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Forlin, 2010). An Australian study found that 59% of students who completed a minor in inclusion felt positive about the diversity of their future classrooms. Conversely, of those who did not complete the minor only 37% felt positive. Interestingly, first-years appeared more positive than fourth-years about the diversity they would inevitably encounter (Mergler et al., 2016). The authors explained this decrease in positive feelings was probably because first-years may have overestimated their ability. Meanwhile, the fourth-years may have had more realistic expectations of their ability due to the practica they had completed during their degree.

Evidence suggests that prior experience and knowledge about students who experience disability is related to more positive attitudes (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). A study evaluating the impact of training pre-service teachers in inclusive education found that

when teachers systematically worked with children who experience disability, they gained an enhanced knowledge of disabilities and the policies and legislation that support inclusion (Sharma et al., 2008). In their review of factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) concluded that contact with children who experience disability was identified by a number of studies as important in shaping teacher attitudes. These findings were echoed in New Zealand by Morton and Gordon (2006) who found that ITE staff and students with relationships with people with disabilities were greater advocates for inclusion.

Sosu, Mtika, and Colucci-Gray (2010) studied the extent to which student teacher attitudes toward inclusion changed during a Bachelor of Education. In the first two years, education modules developed students' knowledge of learning theories. Students undertook 21 days placement based on principles of Bronfenbrenner's (2000) ecological system theory. The final two years aimed to develop inclusive pedagogical skills, knowledge of human rights, ethics and legislation as well as specialist knowledge about specific conditions such as autism. During the final two years, student teachers planned and delivered lessons that demonstrated "commitment to inclusion, social justice, child care and protection" (p. 393). Quantitative data showed that the programme led to significant changes in attitudes towards inclusion and expectations of learning. Poignantly, positive attitudes in first-year were found to be significantly weakened by a lack of experiences of inclusion. Qualitative data confirmed that changes in attitude were supported by improved understanding of inclusion as characterised by student teachers creating environments of "belongingness, fairness, sensitivity and provision of support to enable all students to access the curriculum" (p. 401).

One limitation of the four-year Bachelor programme was identified. Student teachers expressed a need for more help with enacting inclusive pedagogy in the face of challenges presented by *additional support needs*. In other words, a change in teacher attitude was

deemed necessary, but not enough, to encourage inclusive pedagogy. To overcome this the authors suggested that student teachers should be exposed to examples of inclusive pedagogy in practice as a means of scaffolding knowledge and skill development.

New Zealand teacher preparedness for inclusion. Just over a decade ago a major research project that investigated relationships between recruitment, teachers' experiences of ITE, and early career induction was undertaken (Anthony & Kane, 2008). The participants of the project were 100 graduate teachers across all ITE programmes in New Zealand. Graduates completed a questionnaire and were subsequently interviewed mid-way, and at the end of the first year of teaching, as well as mid-way through the second year. Most graduates reported feeling well prepared to commence their career; however, four areas of concern were identified. One of these was responding to the complexities of a diverse group of learners. Specifically, the graduates identified that inclusive pedagogical practices were a significant concern. Mid-way through the second year, the teachers expressed a greater understanding of the importance of supportive environments and relationships, as well as increased awareness of the diverse range of learning needs. Implementation of more effective strategies for diverse learners remained an area of development. Teachers also reported that in their first year of work, they sought assistance with strategies for specific student needs, collaboration with parents, and behaviour management.

Doctoral research investigating inclusive practice in New Zealand secondary schools sought to ascertain perspectives of pre-service teachers at one university in New Zealand (Selvaraj, 2016). The study found there was little to suggest a change in beliefs about inclusion as a result of their ITE. Furthermore, pre-service teachers believed they would not have the competence and skills necessary for inclusive practice, even though they believed that strategies for helping students with "additional support needs" (p. 110) could be applied

to all students. Of concern was the pre-service teachers' belief that it was not their job to provide alternative resources for students.

Qualitative data revealed pre-service teachers' greatest concerns were around their own lack of medicalised knowledge about students with 'additional support needs' and lack of experience in teaching such students. It followed that the majority of pre-service teachers had increased positive beliefs following practicum. They reported that practica allowed for making connections between theory and practice which demonstrated for them how and why inclusion can work. Overall it was found that the pre-service teachers were supportive of inclusive policy but were uncertain about how they would make the curriculum accessible, and support the participation of all students. The study concluded that there is some way to go before "the shift from supporting inclusion, to really understanding it, and to implementing inclusive education programmes" (p. 131) takes place.

Conclusion

Clearly ITE plays a critical role in developing teachers' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and confidence to teach students who experience disability. To date, few New Zealand studies have sought the opinions of teachers about their initial training and capability to include and teach students who experience disability. Given the historical absence of inclusion in secondary teacher training, and the short one-year timeframe, the opinions of secondary school teachers become particularly desirable and were therefore sought in the present study.

Chapter Three: Method

Theoretical Perspective: Pragmatism

According to the theory of *pragmatism,* people act according to beliefs and knowledge which are founded and maintained through "coordinated transaction with their environment" (Biesta, 2010, p. 107). That is, experiential learning develops into beliefs and knowledge which in turn evolve into dispositions and behavioural habits that vary according to context (Pring, 2015). Change in action therefore requires two things: the conscious recognition of one's own beliefs and their role in shaping their behaviour; and the opportunity to amass new ideas and experiences that enable existential transformation in one's perception of situations and to act in them.

Pragmatism is like social constructionism in that the interplay between people's beliefs, assumptions and experiences influence behaviour (Andrews, 2012); however, social constructionism is limited in that it bounds researchers to qualitative data collection. A fundamental idea underpinning the pragmatic framework is that research methods are derived from the research questions (Biesta, 2010; Punch, 2014). Unlike the *either* qualitative *or* quantitative approaches associated with paradigms commonly used in educational and psychological research (positivism, interpretive, and constructivist) (Mertens, 1998; Punch, 2014), pragmatism overcomes the paradigm dualism that has stifled social and behavioural research (Biesta, 2010).

Pragmatism holds a philosophical position which recognises that qualitative and quantitative data are more useful in conjunction. Rather than argue the competing ontological, epistemological and methodological dimensions of one true reality (positivism) versus multiple socially-constructed realities (interpretive and constructivist) (Mertens, 1998; Punch, 2014), a researcher who adopts the pragmatist's position is free to accept or reject any

of the ideas and assumptions that are usually clustered under one paradigm. Consequently, the pragmatic framework permits a researcher to employ a multitude of empirical research tools to best answer their research question.

Mixed Methods Methodology

In line with the theory of pragmatism, this research adhered to a mixed methods, sequential, explanatory design making the most of the strengths of qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The rationale behind choosing this methodological design was to first obtain a general understanding of beginner teachers' sense of preparedness for inclusive practice through a purely quantitative questionnaire. Following this, it was anticipated that qualitative data, collected through semi-structured interviews, might help to explain the quantitative results by exploring in more depth the factors that contributed to participants' preparedness for inclusive practice (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

In this study, the advantage of quantitative data was that it allowed conclusions to be drawn based on systematic descriptions of participants' experiences of their ITE. In turn, this allowed the researcher to make objective comparisons between participants (Muijs, 2011). An additional benefit was that quantitative data enabled the use of a larger and therefore more representative sample (Punch, 2014). Meanwhile, there were several advantages to using qualitative methods. They allowed me to delve into the complexity of beginner teachers' feelings about inclusion, as well as the personal and experiential factors that contributed to them. A further advantage of qualitative data was its capacity to yield "thick descriptions" strengthened through local groundedness (Punch, 2014). This enhanced the potential for obtaining data that " is nested in a real context…[and] has a strong impact on the reader" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). Finally, qualitative methods are more flexible which meant

the interview questions were modified as the research progressed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Accordingly, I could present a contextually based and statistically representative view of my topic.

Data Gathering Tools

Quantitative data was collected and analysed in the first phase. This involved an online questionnaire designed to assess beginner teachers' sense of preparedness and confidence to be inclusive practitioners as well as the extent of beginner teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practical skills necessary for inclusive practice. At the same time, it was expected that the questionnaire and interview would give an indication of the experiences teachers had (or did not have) during ITE with the aim of informing teacher education programmes. To interpret and elaborate on the initial quantitative data, qualitative data was collected and analysed in the second phase. This involved undertaking four follow-up interviews with beginner teachers who completed the questionnaire and subsequently volunteered to be interviewed.

Beginner Teacher Preparedness for Inclusion Questionnaire (BTPIQ). The BTPIQ (appendix B) was organised into three parts: A, B and, C. Part A comprised thirteen questions relating to demographic characteristics of the sample. Part B comprised three sections of Likert scale questions with a range of 1-10. The questions were based on the expectations for graduating teachers taken from the 2015 Approval, Review and Monitoring Processes for Initial Teacher Education Programmes document (EDUCANZ, 2016, p. 30). The first section included nine questions that related to the participants' experiences of their ITE and its role in preparing them for teaching and learning for a diverse student group. The second section featured five questions that assessed the extent of the participants' knowledge of inclusive education legislation and policy in New Zealand. The third section comprised six

questions that asked participants to consider their sense of preparedness and level of confidence to teach and include students with a disability. Finally, Part C sought to gather information about the participants' perspectives as they related to inclusion and how these changed over time. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with seventeen statements at two time points: Then (when they first graduated[4]), and Now (at the time of completing the questionnaire). Some of the statements in Part C were adapted with approval from The Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education Revised Scale (SACIE-R) (Forlin, Earle, Loreman, & Sharma, 2011). The average completion time of the questionnaire was 20 minutes and 53 seconds.

Beginner teacher interview. The beginner teacher interview schedule (appendix C) was also organised according to topic areas. The semi-structured nature of the interview afforded flexibility to explore trends or unexpected results as they arose during the first phase of data analysis. The interview guide was thus adapted to include questions that explored the most salient findings of the questionnaire in phase one. The first topic of discussion was around participants' knowledge and understanding of inclusion. The following section related to their ITE with specific reference to inclusion and how that aspect of the program was delivered. The final topic related to the participants' current teaching practice and what they felt would be helpful in enabling them to be more inclusive practitioners.

Data Analysis

Phase one: BTPIQ. Data gathered from the online questionnaire was exported to SPSS where basic descriptive statistical analyses were undertaken and a demographic profile compiled. Responses to Likert scale questions were determined to be normally distributed by comparing the mean and 5% trimmed mean for each variable (Pallant, 2016). Thus, means

[4] Participants' perspectives about inclusive education at graduation were given retrospectively and therefore reliant on memory

and standard deviations were used to report findings. For each Likert scale question in the questionnaire, only terminal response anchors[5] were given. Table 3.1 outlines the intermediary response anchors that were assigned in the analysis phase to achieve uniformity in the reporting of results:

Table 3.1. *Intermediary Likert scale response anchors applied during analysis*

	Likert scale points				
Anchors given in BTIPQ	1-2	3-4	5	6-7	8-10
Disagree/Agree	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	neutral	somewhat agree	strongly agree
Didn't help at all/ Helped a lot	no help	little help	neutral	adequate help	a lot of help
Didn't support/ Supported very well	no support	little support	neutral	Adequate support	a lot of support
No experience/ A lot of experience	no experience	little experience	neutral	adequate experience	a lot experience
No knowledge/ Very knowledgeable	no knowledge	little knowledge	neutral	adequate knowledge	very knowledgeable
No confidence/ Very confident	no confidence	little confidence	neutral	adequate confidence	very confident
I can't/ Very confident that I can	I can't	I can a little	neutral	somewhat confident I can	very confident I can

SPSS software was then used to explore statistically significant relationships between variables. A factor named 'Preparedness' was computed by averaging participants' responses to questions that related to their sense of preparedness to teach and include students who experience disability. These questions are listed in Table 3.2 below. The resultant Preparedness factor was assessed for normality of the distribution of scores and was found to be reasonably 'normal'. This means it was statistically valid to use parametric tests, means, and standard deviations to report findings (Pallant, 2016).

[5] Terminal response anchors are words that are attached to either end of a Likert scale, e.g. Disagree/Agree etc.

Table 3.2. *Questionnaire statements used to calculate aggregate 'Preparedness' factor*

Item number	Statement
28	My level of confidence in including students who experience disability in my classroom is
29	My level of confidence in teaching students who experience disability in my classroom is
30	I can use teaching approaches that support the presence, participation and learning of ALL students, including students who experience disability (e.g. Universal design for learning; inclusive pedagogies, differentiation)
31	I can identify strategies for collaborating effectively with teacher aides and professionals (i.e. RTLBs, educational psychologists, specialist teachers, occupational therapists)
32	I can identify strategies for collaborating effectively with parents /whānau/ caregivers
33	I can use language that demonstrates the value of students

Participants' Preparedness factors were compared in a series of one-way ANOVAs and *t*-tests to determine if there were any significant relationships between them, and several demographic variables including: age, highest educational qualification, school location, type of school, school size, school decile, total number of students who experience disability taught, and nature of personal connection with a person with a disability. Partial eta-squared (η_p^2) effect sizes were calculated for the ANOVA tests in SPSS. *Cohen's d* was used to report effect sizes of *t*-tests. The size of the effects were determined using guidelines outlined by Muijs (2011). Data from Part C of the questionnaire was analysed using paired-samples *t*-tests for significant differences between responses at two time-points; Then (when they first graduated) and Now (at the time of completing the questionnaire).

Phase two: Beginner teacher interview. Qualitative data were analysed in the second phase following structural coding guidelines set out in the Applied Thematic Analysis (ATA) toolkit (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). Structural codes were developed to organise the qualitative data which meant they emulated the language used by the interviewer; the outcome of which is greater transparency of the motivations of the researcher in the resultant data (Guest et al., 2012). This data reduction technique enabled me to find meaning in a great amount of data and ensured the focus of the analysis remained on

answering the research questions (Guest et al., 2012). The codebook that arose from this process can be found in appendix D. According to the study design, the separate analyses of quantitative and qualitative data were integrated in the discussion section (Ivankova et al., 2006).

Participants

Characteristics. This research project involved a national sample of beginner, secondary school teachers. Participants were required to have graduated from either: Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Secondary); Bachelor of Physical Education; or Master of Teaching and Learning (Secondary) in 2014, 2015, 2016. Participants were also required to have been teaching for up to three years to ensure they had enough experience to discuss early career concerns while still holding the experience of their ITE in recent memory.

Recruitment. Participants were recruited via school principals using the Directory of Schools obtained on the Education Counts website. The school directory was filtered for the following types of schools: Composite (Year 1-10), Composite (Year 1-15), Restricted Composite (Year 7-10), Secondary (Year 7-10), Secondary (Year 7-15), Secondary (Year 9-15), Secondary (Year 11-15), and Special. This yielded a list of 569 possible schools. An email containing a summary of the research and a link to the online questionnaire was sent to principals of the 569 schools (appendix E). A permission letter requesting the principal's consent to access teachers at their schools was attached to the email (appendix F). Once principals had given consent for their teachers to participate, they were invited to send the questionnaire link to all relevant teachers at their schools. Forty beginner secondary school teachers responded.

Upon completing the questionnaire participants were invited to participate in follow-up interviews by emailing the researcher directly. This ensured questionnaire anonymity and

confidentiality. Only four participants responded expressing interest in participating in a follow-up interview so random selection of interview participants was not necessary. An independent transcriber was employed to transcribe interviews after signing a confidentiality agreement (appendix G).

Ethical Considerations

A full application for this study was reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (SOB 16/33). Five key ethical principles were adhered to: *respect for persons, minimisation of risk or harm, informed and voluntary consent, respect for privacy and confidentiality,* and *social and cultural sensitivity*.

Respect for persons was ensured by informing all participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time and/or decline to answer any question. *Risk of embarrassment was minimised* in the interview stage by providing a supportive context in which I shared my personal story and motivations for pursuing the research. There was also a risk that teachers may feel that their teaching practice was under scrutiny by senior staff members at their schools and/or that their responses may be used as a form of appraisal. Participants were therefore asked to complete questionnaires on their own, and in their own time, to maintain greater confidentiality.

Informed and voluntary consent and *respect for privacy and confidentiality* were elucidated in a detailed information sheet (appendix B) which participants read before consenting to complete the online questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire participants were asked to email the researcher if they were happy to be contacted for follow-up interviews. Before interviews commenced, participants were informed that they would have an opportunity to read and amend interview transcripts before the data was analysed. To ensure participant privacy and confidentiality all data was anonymised and the transcriber

used pseudonyms. All four interview participants returned their transcripts with no changes. Due to the small number of universities offering ITE for secondary and the relatively small size of New Zealand, there was a risk that some institutions could be identified. Therefore, no names of institutions, cities, or regions were included in this thesis nor any publications that will follow it.

Social and cultural sensitivity was reflected in the sharing of my personal story with interview participants. By doing so I hoped the Māori cultural concepts of whānau and ata were respected. My intention was to nurture and care for the intrinsic connection between the researcher, the researched and the research. In addition, participants were informed that the findings and conclusions would be made available to them upon request thereby imparting a sense of collective ownership of the data.

Chapter Four: Phase One Quantitative Results

The ensuing chapter presents the first-phase findings from the Beginner Teacher Preparedness for Inclusion Questionnaire. Demographic characteristics are described at the outset and summarised in Table 4.1 below.

Demographics

There were 40 (13 men and 27 women) valid respondents to the questionnaire with 100% completing their ITE in New Zealand between 2014 and 2016. Of the 40 participants, 50% were aged 25 years or below, 42.5% were aged 26-35 years, 2.5% were aged 36-45, and 5% were aged 46 years or above. Thirty-nine participants specified their highest qualification, 79.5% of which held a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent, 12.8% held a Master's degree, and 7.7% held some other unspecified degree.

Thirty percent taught Year 7-13, 65% taught Year 9-13, 5% taught at an Integrated Special Character School, and 5% taught at an Area School. Thirty-nine participants stated the locality of their school, the majority of which worked at urban/metropolitan/inner-city schools (61.5%). Suburban and rural schools followed with 20.5% and 17.9% respectively. The highest proportion of participants worked in decile 3 schools (25%), followed by decile 10 (22.5%), decile 5 and 6 (10%), decile 2 and 7 (7.5%), decile 1, 8 and 9 (5%), and decile 4 (2.5%).

The majority of participants worked in schools of 900-1200 students (35%), followed by schools of 601-900 students (22.5%) and 301-600 students (17.5%). Schools of more than 1200 students and schools of 300 students or less followed, each with 12.5% of the sample of participants. The majority of participants (76.9%) had an average class size of 21-30 students, while the remainder of participants (23.1%) had an average class size of between 10-20 students.

Thirty percent had taught 2-3 students who experience a disability, followed by 27.5% who had taught more than 5 students who experience a disability, 20% who had taught 4-5 students who experience a disability, 15% who had taught no students who experience a disability, and 7.5% who had taught one student with a disability.

Three-quarters of participants specified that they had a personal connection with a person with a disability, while 25% specified they had no personal connection with a person with a disability. Of those who specified the nature of their relationships with people with a disability, 27.5% knew someone as an acquaintance, 20% had a casual relationship, 37.5% had a close relationship, and 12.5% had an intimate relationship.

Table 4.1. *Demographic characteristics of participants of the Beginner Teacher Preparedness for Inclusion Questionnaire (BTPIQ)*

Characteristic	%	(*n*=40)
Age		
25 years or below	50	20
26-35	42.5	17
36-45	2.5	1
46 years or above	5	2
Gender		
Male	32.5	13
Female	67.5	27
Highest educational qualification		
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	77.5	31
Master's degree	12.5	5
Other	7.5	3
Country where trained		
New Zealand	100	40
Year when trained		
2014	45	18
2015	47.5	19
2016	5	2
School type		
Secondary (Y7-13)	30	12
Secondary (Y9-13)	65	26
Special Education	0	0
Integrated (Special Character)	5	2
Area (Y1-13)	5	2
School decile		
1	5	2
2	7.5	3
3	25	10

4	2.5	1
5	10	4
6	10	4
7	7.5	3
8	5	2
9	5	2
10	22.5	9
Private	0	0
School location		
Urban/Metropolitan/Inner City	60	24
Rural	17.5	7
Suburban	20	8
School size		
1-300	12.5	5
301-600	17.5	7
601-900	22.5	9
901-1200	35	14
More than 1200	12.5	5
Average class size		
Less than 10	0	0
10-20	22.5	9
21-30	75	30
31-40	0	0
More than 40	0	0
Total no. of students who experience disability currently taught	15	6
None	7.5	3
1	30	12
2-3	20	8
4-5	27.5	11
More than 5		
Relationship with person with disability		
Yes	75	30
No	25	10
Nature of relationship		
Acquaintance	27.5	11
Casual	20	2
Close	37.5	15
Intimate	12.5	5

The subsequent section summarises responses to questions in Parts B and C of the BTPIQ. Analysed data is organised according to its relevance to the study's three research questions.

Research Question One

To what extent do beginner secondary school teachers feel they have the knowledge, attitudes and practical skills needed to teach students who experience disability inclusively?

Teacher confidence and practical skills. The five questionnaire statements in Table 4.2 were used to gain an understanding of the extent of beginner teacher confidence and capability to teach students who experience disability inclusively.

Table 4.2. *Questionnaire statements measuring beginner teacher confidence for inclusion*

Item number	Statement	*n*	*M*	*SD*
28	My level of confidence in including students who experience disability in my classroom is	36	6.3	2.22
29	My level of confidence in teaching students who experience disability in my classroom is	36	5.9	2.07
45	It is possible to plan lessons that will involve all learners	34	7.8	2.41
47	The inclusion of a student with a disability in my classroom will lead to a higher degree of anxiety and stress in me	33	4.6	3.12
49	It will be difficult to give equal attention to all students in an inclusive classroom	34	6.6	3.09

Over a third (36%) felt they were very confident to *include* students who experience disability in their classroom whereas, almost a quarter (22%) of participants reported having little to no confidence (*M*=6.3, *SD*=2.23). In regards to *teaching* students who experience a disability, a quarter of participants (25%) felt very confident, whereas nearly a third (31%) felt they had little to no confidence (*M*=5.94, *SD*=2.07). Just under half the participants (46%) somewhat-strongly agreed with the statement *'the inclusion of a student with a disability in my classroom will lead to a higher degree of anxiety and stress in me'* (*M*=4.6, *SD*=3.12). Similarly, 65% somewhat-strongly agreed with the statement *'It will be difficult to give equal attention to all students in an inclusive classroom'* (*M*=6.6, *SD*=3.09).

The five questionnaire statements in Table 4.3 were used to measure the extent of beginner teachers' practical skills in the area of inclusion.

Table 4.3. *Questionnaire statements measuring beginner teacher confidence in their practical skills*

Item number	Statement	*n*	*M*	*SD*
30	I can use teaching approaches that support the presence, participation and learning of ALL students, including students who experience disability (e.g. Universal design for learning; inclusive pedagogies, differentiation)	36	6.3	2.24
31	I can identify strategies for collaborating effectively with teacher aides and professionals (i.e. RTLBs, educational psychologists, specialist teachers, occupational therapists)	34	6.3	2.16
32	I can identify strategies for collaborating effectively with parents /whānau/ caregivers	36	6.7	1.98
33	I can use language that demonstrates the value of students	36	7.9	1.51
50	I can design lessons that allow students to choose activities that best suit their style of learning	34	7.1	2.70

Nearly forty percent (39%) of participants felt confident that they could use teaching approaches that support the presence, participation and learning of all students in their classrooms. On the other hand, just under a quarter (22%) felt that they had little to no confidence to use such teaching approaches (*M*=6.3, *SD*=2.24). The majority of participants (74% and 71% respectively) somewhat-strongly agreed with the statements *'it is possible to plan lessons that will involve all learners'* (*M*=7.8, *SD*=2.41) and *'I can design lessons that allow students to choose activities that best suit their style of learning'* (*M*=7.1, *SD*=2.70).

Identifying strategies for effective collaboration with professionals and teacher aides was a skill that nearly a third (32%) of participants felt they were very confident with; however nearly a quarter (24%) reported having little to no confidence to identify strategies for effective collaboration (*M*=6.3, *SD*=2.16). Similarly, over forty percent (42%) of

participants reported feeling confident to identify strategies for collaborating effectively with parents/whānau/caregivers whereas only 14% reported having little to no confidence with this (*M*=6.7, *SD*=1.98).

The majority (61%) of participants felt very confident that they could use language that demonstrates the value of students and none reported having little to no confidence to use such language (*M*=7.9, *SD*=1.51). In an apparent contradiction however, at the time of graduating, 15% of participants somewhat-strongly agreed that *'students don't mind being known as having special needs'* (*M*=3.0, *SD*=2.34). Also at the time of graduating, almost a quarter of participants (23%) somewhat-strongly agreed that *'student ability is fixed*' (*M*=3.29, *SD*=2.81).

Knowledge of legislation, human rights and policy. The most striking quantitative findings relate to participants' knowledge of New Zealand policy and legislation. Overall, the teachers felt they had little to no knowledge of policy and legislation related to human rights and inclusive education. Specifically, the data indicates that 62% had little to no knowledge of the 1989 Education Act (*M*=3.73, *SD*=2.47); 60% had little to no knowledge of the Success for All' policy (*M*=3.65, *SD*=2.44); 78% had little to no knowledge of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (*M*=2.84, *SD*=2.23); 70% had little to no knowledge of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (*M*=3.30,*D*=2.40); and 73% had little to no knowledge of their obligations under the New Zealand Disability Strategy (*M*=3.05, *SD*=2.33). These results are summarised in the figure 4.1 below.

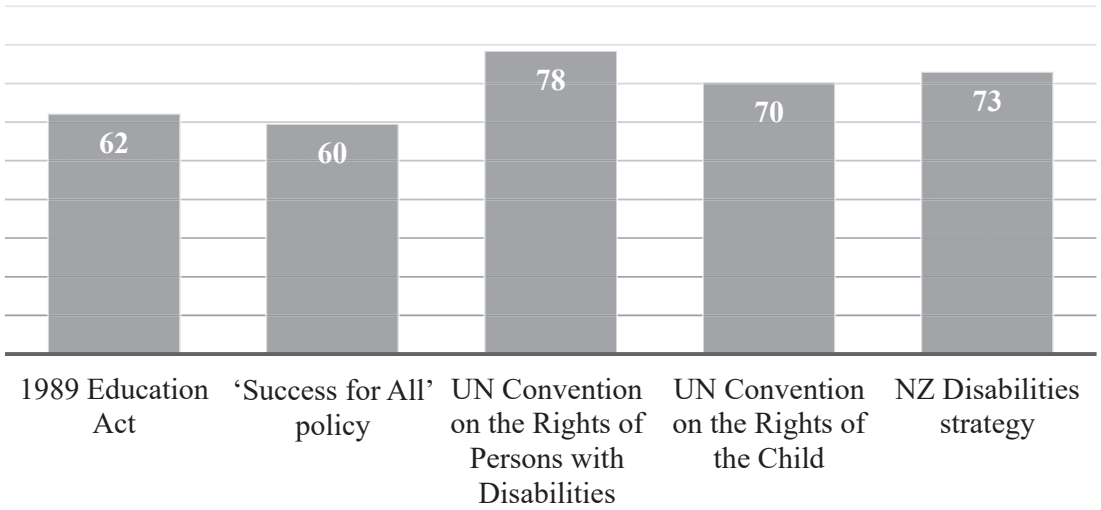

Figure 4.1. *Percentage of Participants with Little to No Knowledge of Inclusive Legislation, Human Rights and Policy*

Research Question Two

How well do graduate teachers feel their ITE programmes have supported them to develop the knowledge, attitudes and practical skills needed to teach students who experience disability inclusively?

Knowledge of legislation, human rights and policy. The extent of participant knowledge of legislation, human rights and policy detailed above related to the first research question. Further items on the BTIPQ explored how well participants felt their ITE supported them to gain this knowledge; this relates to the second research question and is thus described separately in this section.

Eighty-four percent of participants felt their ITE did little or nothing at all to help them develop knowledge of local legislation as it pertains to students who experience disabilities (*M*=2.78, *SD*=1.6). Notably, upon completing their ITE, 42% of participants somewhat-strongly agreed with the statement '*classroom teachers don't really need to know*

about laws and policies relating to the inclusion of students who experience disability' (*M*=4.6, *SD*=3.39).

Knowledge of assessment, and teaching and learning. On the whole participants felt their ITE programmes gave them *adequate* support to:

- Plan lessons that enable students to demonstrate their strengths (*M*=6.5, *SD*=1.8)
- Develop teaching strategies that are appropriate for a diverse group of learners (*M*=6.2, *SD*=1.9)
- Develop knowledge of language and communication in students (*M*=6.2, *SD*=2.0)
- Use assessment, monitoring procedures and data for making teaching decisions for a diverse group of students (*M*=6.2, *SD*=2.0)
- Understand the key features of an inclusive school (*M*=6.3, *SD*=2.2)

Knowledge of supports available for students who experience disability. Sixty-five percent of participants felt that their ITE did little or nothing at all to help them develop their knowledge of supports available for students who experience disability (including personnel support, and funding and resources) (*M*=3.70, *SD*=2.26).

Experience on practicum. The vast majority **(**73%) of participants had little to no experience teaching students who experience disability on practicum (*M*=3.49, *SD*=2.43). Conversely, only one person (2.7%) felt they had a lot of experience teaching students who experience disability on practicum.

Change in beginner teachers' perspectives about inclusion. A series of paired-samples *t*-tests were conducted to determine if there were any significant differences between participants' perspectives about inclusive education at two time points; when they first graduated, and at the time of completing the questionnaire. There were no significant

differences between responses to any pair of statements at the two time points which indicates teachers did not change their views about inclusive education.

Research Question Three

What personal factors/attributes contribute to a graduate teacher's sense of preparedness to teach and include students who experience disability?

Relationship between sense of preparedness and personal factors. To investigate the relationship between personal factors and teachers' sense of preparedness to teach and include students who experience disability, an aggregate factor named 'Preparedness'[6] was calculated. The Preparedness factor was then compared in a series of one-way ANOVAs and *t*-tests to determine if there were any significant relationships between it, and several demographic variables.

Preparedness varied significantly according to the nature of a teacher's personal connection with a person with a disability ($F(3,23)=3.080$, $p<.05$). This indicates that beginner teachers who had a strong personal connection with a person with a disability felt more prepared to teach students who experience disability. The eta squared statistic was large ($\eta_p^2=.287$) demonstrating that the type of personal connection a teacher had with a person with a disability had a large impact on their feelings of preparedness.

Preparedness also varied significantly according to school location ($F(2,32)=4.995$, $p<.05$) with teachers in urban schools ($M=6.04$, $SD=1.41$) feeling significantly less prepared than those in suburban schools ($M=8.04$, $SD=1.85$) at $p<.05$. The associated effect size ($\eta_p^2=.090$) indicated that school location had a small effect on teachers' feelings of preparedness for inclusion.

[6] See Method chapter for a detailed explanation of how the Preparedness factor was derived

Two independent-samples *t*-tests were subsequently conducted to test whether there was any significant difference in preparedness according to gender and average class size Significant differences were found by average class size only (t(33)=-2.098, p.05). Teachers with larger class sizes (21-30 students) felt more prepared to teach and include students who experience disability (*M*=6.8, *SD*=1.59) than teachers with smaller class sizes (1-20 students) (*M*=5.47, *SD*=1.52). The associated effect size was large (*d*=0.845) indicating that class size had a considerable effect on teachers' feeling of preparedness to include.

Chapter Five: Phase Two Qualitative Results

This chapter presents the themes from the Applied Thematic Analysis of qualitative interview data. They are organised according to the study's research questions. Four beginner teachers (two male and two female) who completed the questionnaire were interviewed in the second phase of the study. Amy[7] and Sam were physical education teachers, Poppy was an art teacher, and Ben was a social studies teacher. Participants' experience in the classroom ranged from two terms to two years.

Table 5.1. *Follow-up interview participants*

Participant	Subject taught	Teaching experience
Amy	PE	Nine school terms
Sam	PE	Five school terms
Ben	Social Studies	Two school terms
Poppy	Art	Two school terms

Research Question One

To what extent do beginner secondary school teachers feel they have the knowledge, attitudes and practical skills needed to teach students who experience disability inclusively?

Difficulty overcoming barriers to inclusive practice. Overall, the interview participants did not feel they had the knowledge, attitudes and practical skills needed to teach students who experience disability. It seems they could identify barriers that led to student exclusion, but ultimately felt unable to overcome them. Most of the barriers identified related to the participants' own lack of knowledge and skill base; other barriers to inclusion were outwardly focussed. Examples of these barriers are illustrated forthwith.

All participants reported difficulty designing activities and lessons that enabled the inclusion of all learners. Amy shared that "it wasn't until I kind of started teaching at [name

[7] All names used are pseudonyms

of school] where I am now, yeah that I really started to be like, oh my gosh I don't know how to do this". Likewise, Sam reported he was not confident in his ability to include students who experience disability in physical education lessons: "I personally don't think that I'm having much success with those types of learners in my practical classes". Two of the participants made comments that implied they felt their lessons were 'hit and miss'. For instance, Ben noted that "at the moment I feel like I am just winging it as it goes", while Poppy explained that she was "having to do trial and error with a lot of my students".

Poppy reported frustration at not being able to support student participation in her lessons: "I think I struggle sometimes to produce the right material for the students to help them keep up". She described situations where she felt that she was "giving these students a ridiculous task then saying ok do it, and they just sit there". Poppy was clear that it was her responsibility to use her developing knowledge of assessment, teaching, and learning to design lessons that take into account student strengths and encourage success. Nonetheless, she still struggled to achieve this:

> I'm figuring out how to find out what they're good at, and what you know strategies are going to work for them, yeah and I'd rather not do that as much as possible, because I don't want them to feel like they're failing because it's not them, it's me failing them, I don't want to do that and I don't want them to feel like they're failing. Because I'm the teacher and it's not their fault that they have a disability. I know about their disability, I know what it is on the KAMAR system, and it's up to me to find a way to teach them, that's my responsibility is to teach them, get them to learn things and improve and practice and things like that.

As an extension of this idea, Amy observed that teachers' lack of confidence in their ability led to them give up on their responsibility to make the curriculum accessible for all. She explained that "I think lots of teachers just don't feel confident with it and they don't know what to do so then they go, oh well I'm just not gonna worry about it". In other words, teachers are aware of their responsibility to encourage presence, participation and achievement, but tend to abandon this responsibility when they are challenged.

Ben explained that his lack of knowledge and/or skills to resolve issues of bullying of students who experience disability resulted in an escalation of problems that he felt powerless to deal with. He stated that "if I knew how to deal with it [student exclusion due to bullying], it could have been stopped earlier rather than where it is now".

By contrast, Sam felt his students' compromised participation was a result of external forces:

> Because I feel like I am not prepared enough for including those students in the actual practical lessons because of their problems, they don't get as much out of the lesson. I'm aware of it. I'm 100% aware of it but, yeah, it's really tough. Yeah, to be honest, as a physical education teacher, when I'm doing a practical session if they're physically not able to do the activity, they don't come to the class.

Sam's remark indicated that he attributed exclusion to the preparation he received during ITE, *and* the student's physical disability. He went on to explain that another reason for his inability to inclusively teach students was that he was not told of students' specific disabilities:

> You know I've got a student in my home room and I don't even know what her . . . Yeah, I don't even know why it's taboo but I don't know what her disability is. And, how am I meant to know how to deal with her when I don't know what her issue is. I wasn't inducted. I was never told, you know?

Research Question Two

How well do graduate teachers feel their ITE programmes have supported them to develop the knowledge, attitudes and practical skills needed to teach students who experience disability inclusively?

The themes comprising this section outline how well graduates felt their ITE supported them to include students with disabilities. It makes up a significant portion of the results as it summarises gaps in knowledge and skill that emerged over the course of the participants' early careers. These retrospectively identified learning gaps fell neatly into three domains which constituted four themes: *How inclusion content was disseminated during ITE;*

collaborative practice; legislation, human rights, and policy; designing high quality learning experiences; and *valuable practicum experiences were fortuitous events*.

How inclusion was taught during ITE. When questioned about what content relating to inclusive education was covered during their ITE, three of the four participants reported that any learning about inclusion was mostly inadvertent. There seemed to be a distinct lack of focus on inclusive education and social justice principles.

> Sam: I mean, yeah, so during Teachers' College they made us aware of students that will need more attention. So, they made us aware that you should be careful that, yeah you might need to give obviously more attention to the students that need a little bit more help but don't let that detract from your teaching of the other students, I guess because of a sense of inclusion of everyone in the class.
>
> Amy: At Uni, I think I did one paper that kind of touched on how to cater for students who experience disability and that was more looking at physical disabilities cos it was in one of my PE classes… But, it wasn't so much around learning needs like dyslexia or autism or things like that.
>
> Ben: No, it was kind of within every paper and it just seemed like every Uni class I would have there was always mention of how can we include others and how can we make it a more inclusive learning environment and all that stuff, so there was just like no paper just on its own.

Poppy described some deliberate teaching about specific disabilities which emphasised for her the diversity that can exist in classrooms.

> Yes, we were taught to manage a class that has high, mid and low ability that was something that we definitely focussed on. I think we did two lectures on disabilities and that was it. From Uni I mean those two lectures were quite good for highlighting how many different learning disabilities there are, and how minor to major they can be.

Encouragingly, Poppy also spoke at length about how ITE impressed on her the importance of 'getting to know your students' as a means of understanding not only their ability, but also their identity:

> . . . it's all about getting to know your students, it's all about getting to know them as well, and a lot of it was like treat them the age that they are as well, so don't baby anything because they're learning disability [sic], they're not a younger age, you know they are the age the rest of the class is, and not to talk down to them, to talk to them

> same way you would treat or talk to anybody else within the classroom. I think some of that's a given but I think that was a really good point that they [ITE] made.

Similarly, Sam noted that there was discussion during his ITE about teachers' responsibility to be aware of the diverse range of abilities present in their classrooms. He recalled being told to "know learners in the classroom and the ones that will need help and the ones that will get on with the work and you know fly under the radar and all that type of thing. Try not to get complacent with that and make sure that you know you're acknowledging the students that are in your class".

Collaborative practice. The four participants identified that working collaboratively with other professionals posed a significant challenge in their early careers. Clarification of the role of teacher aides appeared to be the most pressing issue. Of lesser urgency was the need for clarification of the role of Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour[8] (RTLB). Finally, the importance of communication and partnership with family was identified as a significant, albeit less imperative, issue at the outset of the teachers' careers.

Specifically, the participants felt that their ITE did not teach them about the role of teacher aides and how to work effectively with them. Neither did they believe their ITE succeeded in conveying the benefit of collaborative relationships with them. Amy reflected:

> When you're doing teacher training not much emphasis is put on the fact that you will have to collaborate and work alongside teacher aides. I reckon when you're training, it's just like oh teacher aide will be there, they'll do that. Kind of like they don't really talk about them much and like how beneficial they can be, you know?

Likewise Sam explained that teacher aides never "came up" in his training:

> They [ITE] never put great emphasis on the fact that you might be teaching with teacher aides for priority learners . . . they never talked to me about teacher aides. They never specified that that would be a thing and this is how you could incorporate them into your class and into your lesson planning.

[8] Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour are itinerant, specialist teachers who are enlisted through a referral process. They work together with teachers to support the inclusion of students.

Ben expressed bemusement at the fact that nothing relating to teacher aides was covered during his ITE:

> That was a surprising thing because now I am wondering . . . You have got someone extra in the class that you could use and I think it would have been good if we had had at least a day, or a workshop on just how to work with different teacher aides and just make use of them, instead of them just sitting there and being a reader/writer for that kid.

Poppy was not directly taught about teacher aides during her ITE but she described in detail a practicum experience which was instrumental in the evolution of her position on the role of teacher aides. This is discussed further in a later section, but in brief, Poppy observed that a teacher aide and a student formed an isolated unit within the classroom which led to further exclusion of that pupil. Sam also spoke about how teacher aides "tend to operate separately":

> They're there and they're listening to what you're saying and everyone knows they're there but they tend to do the work and operate separately to the rest of the class . . . I let the teacher aide disseminate the information that I've given to the class to her learner or his learner the best way that they know.

He explained that the presence of a teacher aide removed his responsibility for a particular child:

> It kind of feels that we're not being held accountable or responsible for those students in our class. Where it's just like, yes, they're part of the class but they're not our student . . . I do want to involve them in the lesson as if there was no teacher aide there but I just don't have that relationship with the student because they have either a dependency on that teacher aide because they know that teacher aide and they're with that teacher aide all the time. I don't feel like I'm having success because I don't think there's really anything to have success with because I don't feel like I've been given the responsibility to have success with them.

With further probing Sam said "if they didn't have a teacher aide I would teach them differently obviously, in the sense that I should treat every student differently because they are all different learners, all different people but they would be more part of the class". Similarly, Amy shared her observations of how teachers can become complacent about their

obligation to teach each and every child in their classroom: “they [teachers] just assume, oh well the teacher aide’s there, they’re going to support them”.

Amy, Poppy and Ben divulged they did not learn about the role of an RTLB during ITE whereas Sam “did learn briefly about RTLBs”. Amy pointed out that her experience with an RTLB after graduating made her realise she would have appreciated more emphasis on the importance of collaborating with them:

> I had an RTLB come in and she was just assessing one of the boys that was in my class and it was really interesting talking to her cos she’d sort of worked alongside him all through primary school. So, much of the insight that she had I was like, oh my God it would be so useful if we knew this. So, I feel sometimes there’s a disconnect between some of the information that gets, you know passed on and how that’s done . . . And, how if you work with them the right way, like it makes your life a lot easier and the students as well.

Ben echoed this sentiment by offering that learning more about the role of an RTLB “would have helped me heaps. Just because now the kid is back in my classes and it just felt like I didn’t do anything to see how he got back into the class.”

Forming authentic partnerships with families was another aspect of collaborative practice that three of the four participants felt was not given due consideration during ITE. When questioned about whether the importance of engaging with families was covered, Amy answered:

> Not really. You know they were always saying that it’s important that the whānau is involved in the school, you know the school life and the learning of each student and things like that but not really much emphasis that I can recall was put on, you know how important it is for the family to be on board if you want the student to be successful, you know 90% of the time. Yeah, no I don’t remember them talking much about that. No.

Ben admitted he was not encouraged to communicate with parents about individual students:

> No, we didn’t really learn anything about how to deal with parents or how to speak to them or what to say or what not to say. It was more of a . . . at Uni it was more that if you come across a certain situation, it was refer to the person that is next highest. Like a HOD or a Dean or whatever and then that was it.

Poppy recalled the emphasis was around taking precautions to protect oneself from parents, rather than on the value of building collaborative partnerships:

> Not so much I mean they talked about issues with parents, like if you're having an issue with a parent, you know and you know that they can be aggressive, or hostile in any way either . . . it was more about our safety. Yeah rather than you know it's really good to have all the family involved, yeah it was more about safety.

Only Sam could recall deliberate instruction about the value of recognising students' ecological contexts in efforts to understand them better:

> At Teachers' College, we did learn about that and how it is important that you learn more about the student than obviously just face value. Like, you know try and learn more about their story and their family background and everything . . . So, that you have a better understanding of who they are. We definitely learnt that at Teachers' College and we're constantly learning that on the go.

Knowledge of legislation, human rights and policy. The participants reported that content relating to Section 8 of the Education Act, the Success for All policy, the New Zealand Disability Strategy and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was not explicitly covered. None of the four participants had heard of Success for All. Amy stated: **"**No, I don't remember ever talking about, I guess like a policy or anything like that that goes with it". Ben recognised the significance of being unaware of the legislative and/or human rights: "No, I saw that. I don't know if I am allowed to say that. I saw that in the survey, that success for all, and I had no idea what that meant." When probed about her knowledge of Section 8 of the Education Act, Poppy answered:

> Yeah I have heard of that one and I know that it's about, their rights to be included and the rights of students who have learning needs, and disabilities and things like that but that's about as far as my knowledge on that goes.

The four interviewees did not seem concerned about this gap in their knowledge as they felt the content is generally perceived as an obligation by most teachers. As Amy explained:

> Well, yeah, I think definitely making more awareness about it might be, you know helpful. Like, I've kind of always been of the mind-set that that's just what you do as

> a teacher. Yeah, and I like naturally like to think that I, you know do what I can to try and make sure all the students in my classroom are included and catered for.

Similarly, Sam added:

> Well, it would be like an obligation, right? You're obligated to do your job and so I kind of think that it's a given personally. And, I think that's probably what they expect is that they know it's a given. Sam also conceded that because he does not know the specific policies, "it would be difficult for me to comment. But, I guess what that would mean is that I would incorporate those into my lesson planning and into my unit plans to make sure that I'm meeting the practicing teacher criteria.

Poppy expressed she would have appreciated some foundational knowledge as it "would have made things more settled, just knowing what the kid's rights are or what our rights are". Likewise, Ben shared that he would have "preferred to have a little bit of a basis to go off of and then go and do it".

Designing high quality learning experiences. Both Amy and Poppy spoke about the difficulties they faced providing learning experiences that were worthwhile for the diverse range of students that exist in their classrooms. Amy described this as difficulty to "create scaffolds" or "create learning". She explained that "I actually don't know what to do. Like, I'm like I don't know how to scaffold the learning down that low. He can't read and he can't write, you know? So, it's like what do I do?"

Poppy articulated her struggle to provide high quality learning experiences and resources that are both appropriate for an individual student's ability, and which affirm the student's identity and confidence, without being condescending. She stated that she thought "it would have been good to focus on that a little bit more at uni" and that she finds it hard to "to produce the right material for the students to help them keep up." But the real difficulty for her was "going lower . . . without dumbing it down". Poppy expressed concern that she didn't want "them to feel like it's a dumbed down version", instead she wants "them to feel that they're still doing work that's at the same level, as the rest just with a little handy starter, and that balance is quite hard sometimes". Likewise, Amy explained that she often seeks help

to “create learning that’s at the right level for them and sometimes . . . that can be really challenging.”

Poppy stated she would have appreciated being taught strategies that map neatly on to labels of disability: “I do think some strategies should have been taught at Uni I think, you know if you have students like this, this is what you should do or because I can't do all that stuff myself.” Similarly, Amy accepted that there can be “a big range, you know on the spectrum things” but she would have valued learning about:

> . . . the common kind of students that you come across with the same kind of needs. You know like at our school we’ve got lots of students with autism. Lots with dyslexia. Lots with, you know Asperger’s and there’s kind of like just your general kind of things that you come across that students have and so I often find myself going, ah what is this actually about? What can they do? What can they not do?

Valuable practicum experiences were fortuitous events. The opportunity to gain first-hand experience in teaching and including students who experience disability on practicum constitutes another major theme in this study. Anecdotes about practicum experiences indicated that: opportunity to work with a student with a disability; opportunity for reflection about one’s inclusive practice; and assessment of, and feedback about, inclusive practice were largely fortuitous events. The interview participants pointed out that there were no deliberate attempts by their universities or practicum schools to provide opportunities to teach a diverse group of learners.

Ben and Sam reported they did not get such an opportunity. Sam explained:

> . . . there was never any spread towards special education or incorporating, yeah special learners, I guess with disabilities at all. Yeah, so, yeah, I would say no I didn’t have any experience with those types of learner’s disabilities, cognitive or physical during my practicum at all.

Ben, elaborated that this was a missed opportunity to gain valuable experience:

> **. . .** where I did my practicums they didn’t really have a Special Needs Unit or so many kids with different abilities. But at [name of school], there seems to be a kid with a different ability in every class that I have, so that was pretty full on from the

> start. But I wasn't really ready, but I guess now I am okay, but I know I still could be better . . . I had to find out the hard way, but I would love it if there was a chance to just have a couple of classes in my practicum with those different ability kids.

Amy and Poppy had valuable experiences on practicum which they both assigned to luck. Poppy stated she "was just lucky enough on practicum to get that". Similarly, Amy admitted she "was pretty lucky to be able to do that in my placement". Amy explained that the experience to teach students who experience disability was particularly worthwhile because of the absence of assessment pressure:

> . . . it was kind of an environment where there was like no high stakes. There was no assessment. There was no nothing that had to kind of fall out of it cos they were just doing it, you know just for enjoyment or even experience. So, it meant that you could just try different things. You know what I mean? And, there was no pressure of having to, oh I've got to get them through this assessment or I've got to do this. So, yeah, you could just see what worked basically and try different things.

Amy also identified that the opportunity to learn from more experienced teachers was beneficial for her. She stated that the students "had other teachers there as well who also, you know normally teach them that you can talk to about you know what kind of stuff do you normally do."

Of value on Poppy's practicum experience was the realisation that she should be prepared to make adaptations to resources in order to make the curriculum accessible to every student in the class. She explained:

> I think it was really important because, it's set me up for this year to every single unit that I design, or whenever I'm doing anything I try and make sure that there's a slightly easier option, so I don't have to go away that second and make something up, I can just say that's ok if you don't know how to start here you go here's a starter, this is how you do it and I think that was a really good learning curve, and if I hadn't have gotten that I'd be doing that right now. I'm glad that I had that experience.

Poppy detailed a specific practicum experience in which she observed practice that resulted in student exclusion from lessons. As a result of the experience she was inspired to reflect; she stated that "I guess it taught me what I don't want to do."

> I wouldn't say that him in the classroom was inclusive, because she [the classroom teacher] would teach the rest of the class, and then the teacher aide would be down with us in the corner with him, so there [sic] was also completely separate from the class, she'd sort of teach and then go down there and make sure they're working on the right stuff and that's it, I wouldn't really describe that as being inclusive in my opinion, he was in the classroom and that was about it. I think, I don't think he should have been that segregated from the rest of the class, I feel he should of at least been sitting at a table with other students around, they're also working on it and also socialising with other students a bit. I feel like he was too segregated, he needed one on one help with his teacher aide all the time and that was a must and I understood that, and he does generally pass a lot of papers that he enters into, standards he's entered into, but I felt in my opinion he was too segregated, and it was almost just like you let them do their thing in the corner, and we'll do you know the rest of it our way, you know so I wasn't too fond of that.

Two of the participants stated that there was no summative or formative assessment of their inclusive practice while on practicum. Sam explained, “To be quite frank I don’t think there was one. Yeah, I don’t think there was. Teachers’ College wise, absolutely nothing”. Similarly Poppy declared, “No, nothing no. No, no we just talked about it”.

Although Amy and Ben completed their ITE at different universities, they had similar experiences of formative assessment about their inclusive practice on practicum. The assessments were reflective tasks that required the student teachers to draw similarities between a case study and a student they had taught on practicum. Amy explained:

> So, each person in the class got given a different reading which was kind of like a case study of a student with a disability and then we had to talk about someone that we came across on our placement that had a disability and then, you know relate it to the reading or whatever and say what we did to try and support them.

Amy described this as “kind of on a superficial level, I guess because there was no one in there that had disabilities as such so it wasn’t real”. Ben said:

> . . . they gave us a list of different scenarios. I think they gave us six and then we were put into groups but then we had to try to match a scenario during a time on our last practicum. So if the scenario matched something that we did in practicum, then we had to see how we dealt with it, how we planned around it, if it was a success or if it was a failure and if so, why and all that stuff. And that was it. That was the only thing that we touched on and that was it.

Research Question Three

What personal factors contribute to a graduate teacher's sense of preparedness to teach students who experience disability inclusively?

The influence of personal experience with disability. The final section of this chapter describes the qualitative data that related to the third research question. The influence of personal experience on attitudes towards students who experience disability was well illustrated by the participants. As expected, personal experience varied among the four participants but it was apparent that these experiences influenced their attitudes towards, and understanding of disability and/or inclusion.

Poppy described how her experience of secondary school helped her to understand and empathise with the difficulties students face:

> I was talked down to a lot, and it had nothing to do with me understanding the information, it's just when it came to writing it down I had a tough time putting it down correctly, whereas if you were just to talk to me I could talk fine, and read fine but I couldn't put the words onto paper very well, they thought that I was, you know they didn't actually diagnose me with anything so they really thought I was just low ability and I didn't understand, whereas that wasn't the case, so from a little bit of personal experience I would say when it comes to things like dyslexia, it's not that they don't understand it's just that they can't get the information across.

It is possible that Poppy's experience in high school shaped her attitude toward, and sense of responsibility for, students who experience disability present in the classroom.

Amy explained that her experience of having a diverse group of learners in her classes at secondary school gave her unexpected insight into how to work with students who experience disability:

> When I was at school we had a lot of students that were just immersed in our mainstream school that like had Down's syndrome, autism, you know they were just in our normal classes . . . right from when I was in Year 7 all the way to the end of high school . . . Yeah, and so it's quite useful, I guess to have had that insight so now I can think about how, you know I should be with him kind of thing. I think back to when I was at school how you don't realise that that kind of experience, you know is giving you an insight into how to work with those, you know different people.

Ben shared three personal experiences that he felt helped him become a more inclusive practitioner, shaped the language he used to describe learners, and enabled him to understand the value of inclusion. His first experience was teaching excluded and marginalised secondary school students in an alternative education programme offered by a local tertiary institution:

> Teaching at the [name of university] as well, tutoring at the [name of university] – that was a big eye opener. That was just kids who were just disengaged and because they got suspended or expelled from school, we would be dealing with them, so that was a big eye opener. That has really helped in terms of my current practice.

Ben also experienced a change in his way of thinking and talking about disability through a personal connection with a person with a disability:

> I think it was a coaching term [different abilities], just because I am not really a big fan of calling a kid disabled or anything. I feel like it just makes them disadvantaged from the start . . . I can't remember why Coach used it but he just said that everyone has different abilities so I think it was his son who had different . . . he was disabled as well, but he never liked the term disabled. And I think I just picked it up from there and just the last year I have been using that term instead of disabled or special needs or… yeah.

Finally, Ben described how, during his undergraduate degree, his own experience of being a learner within a diverse group of his peers influenced how he sets up the learning environment:

> It [mixed ability grouping] was something that I picked up at Uni doing my sports degree . . . with everyone being there for the same purpose that you are, on a table of six, you are with someone who is pretty bright and has a different understanding. And then you've got another person with another understanding so having that ability to learn off others was a good thing.

Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusions

Chapter six integrates quantitative and qualitative data to provide a cohesive picture of beginner teacher preparedness for the inclusion of students who experience disability. Each of the four themes discussed in this chapter describe a major challenge, or gap in learning, that shaped teachers' feelings of preparedness, or lack thereof, for inclusive practice. While, chapter four and five presented results according to the study's three research questions, the present one deviates from this structure. This is because beginner teacher preparedness was influenced by personal factors *and* experiences of ITE. Likewise, personal factors had an influence on teachers' experiences of, and perspectives on the role of, ITE in preparing them for inclusion. This complex interplay therefore necessitated that personal factors, feelings of preparedness, and perspectives about preparation during ITE were discussed in unison.

The four overarching themes presented in this chapter are *knowledge about, and understanding of inclusive pedagogy; lack of focus on legislation, human rights and policy; lack of focus on collaborative practice*; and *beginner teachers not identifying as lifelong learners*. Following discussion of these themes, the chapter concludes with a statement summarising the study's implications for ITE, limitations, and directions for future research.

Knowledge about, and Understanding of Inclusive Pedagogy

The findings of this study provide a picture of ITE that recognised the diversity of the classroom, but fell short when it came to the pragmatic implications for teaching and learning. Overall, beginner teachers were committed to inclusion but were less confident to demonstrate this in their teaching. Quantitative data revealed that 65% of participants were positive and somewhat confident about their ability to be inclusive practitioners and apply inclusive teaching approaches. More than a third felt they were very confident to *include*

students who experience disability in their classroom, but only a quarter of participants felt very confident to *teach* student who experience disability. The disparity between these two findings supports the idea that the beginner teachers were dedicated to inclusion but were challenged to enact it in their teaching approaches.

Beginner teachers felt their ITE programmes gave them adequate support: to plan lessons that allow students to demonstrate strengths; develop teaching strategies appropriate for a diverse group; and use assessment to make teaching decisions. The majority of the questionnaire participants agreed that it was possible to plan lessons that involved all learners, but a significant portion felt unable to do so. While participants felt adequately supported by their ITE, just under a third were not confident to teach students who experience disability and nearly half agreed that they would be more anxious and stressed if a student who experiences disability was in their classroom.

Qualitative data revealed a more detailed picture of beginner teachers' struggle to enact inclusion and the preparation they received for it. All interview participants reported that learning about inclusion during ITE was mostly inadvertent, with some lectures on specific disabilities. There was no mention of either elective courses, or the principles of social justice. For example, Ben explained that inclusive content was "within every paper" and "there was always mention of how can we include others and how can we make it a more inclusive learning environment"; however, this did not help him address bullying and plan lessons that enable all students to access the curriculum. As Ben mentioned, he was "winging it".

Likewise, Poppy shared that lectures about specific disabilities, and emphasis throughout her training on the value of getting to know each individual student, highlighted for her the diversity of the student population but she still thought "it would have been good

to focus on that a little bit more at uni" because she found it hard to "to produce the right material for the students to help them keep up." Poppy expressed that while she was well aware of her responsibility to include all students, she was deeply frustrated because resources and activities she created were inappropriate and resulted in student exclusion. She stated that "some strategies should have been taught at Uni I think, you know if you have students like this, this is what you should do or because I can't do all that stuff myself". Likewise Amy offered that she would have valued learning about ". . . the common kind of students that you come across with the same kind of needs."

In essence, these findings showed that beginner teachers wanted a greater focus on specific strategies for specific needs. This comes nearly a decade after Anthony and Kane (2008) published their review of ITE in New Zealand which found that beginner teachers are still experiencing significant difficulty with responding to the complexities of a diverse student population. McKay (2016) and (Sosu et al., 2010) also outlined parallel findings. We therefore know what beginner teachers want, but is it what they need?

What is inclusive pedagogy? Spratt and Florian (2015) cautioned "that an inclusive pedagogical approach cannot be summarised as a simplistic list of 'how to tips'" (pp. 95-96); rather, it is thoughtful and just decision making that is guided by the principles of equity and social justice. In fact, over a decade ago Davis, Florian, and Ainscow (2004) contended that the strategies and approaches for learners identified as having 'special education needs' were not different enough from those identified for all children to constitute a 'special education pedagogy'. More recently Lawson et al. (2013, p. 136) found that no distinctive specialist pedagogy was learned by incorporating planned "special education needs and disability" tasks during practicum. Rather, pre-service teachers learned that adaptations and extension of generic pedagogical knowledge was applicable and beneficial for all learners. Nonetheless,

the participants in this study placed considerable emphasis on acquiring specific 'specialist' skills.

This need for a specialist 'toolkit' is not difficult to understand when one takes into account the new code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession which states that teachers should "use an increasing repertoire of teaching strategies, approaches, learning activities, technologies and assessment for learning strategies and modify these in response to the needs of individuals and groups of learners" (EDUCANZ, 2017, p. 20). Likewise, under Education Council guidelines, teacher educators are expected to equip graduates with "applied skills in using curriculum based assessment to identify starting points and reasonable adjustments required to enable students with special education needs to meet curriculum outcomes" (EDUCANZ, 2016, p. 30). The message disseminated to teachers is that specific individual needs require specific individual approaches.

Florian offered that these traditional mechanisms for meeting 'specific learning needs' are a social justice issue because they are dependent on the logic of exclusion: "when human differences are isolated and treated as something additional or extra the idea of difference is reinforced as a problem" (Florian, 2017, p. 10). Given the huge diversity that exists in schools today, Florian (2017) contended that teacher educators must make student teachers explicitly aware that individual difference is an ordinary aspect of human development as this is the starting point for inclusive pedagogy. The real challenge for ITE, as it is acknowledged by Spratt and Florian (2015), is to understand how teachers can be educated in responding to diversity in the classroom without exacerbating the exclusion that occurs when individuals are identified and treated as different. Working towards an inclusive pedagogy therefore requires teacher educators to transform student teacher thinking by enabling them to adopt two axioms- first, all children are capable of learning and second, the presence of some students will not hinder the learning of others (Spratt & Florian, 2015). The findings of this

study therefore raised two questions: Are the professional teacher expectations in New Zealand reflective of inclusion and social justice principles? What role can/does ITE play in normalising the ubiquitous nature of individual difference?

Lack of Focus on Legislation, Human Rights and Policy

The newly published standards for the teaching profession state that teachers should "design learning that is informed by national policies and priorities" (EDUCANZ, 2017, p. 20). It seems there is some way to go before this professional teaching standard is realised. The results of this study showed that the most glaring gap in beginner teacher knowledge was in the area of legislation, human rights, and policy. It was clear that beginner teachers do not have knowledge of the legislative and human rights that underpin their responsibility to include students who experience disability.

Well over sixty percent of participants had little to no knowledge of the Education Act. Just under sixty percent had little to no knowledge of the 'Success for All' policy. In fact, none of the interview participants had ever heard of 'Success for All', with one participant emphasising that he "had no idea what that [Success for All] meant". The results also elucidated that ITE is at least in part responsible for this lack of teacher knowledge. One requirement for ITE programme approval is that "student teachers in ITE must be taught the details of current New Zealand education initiatives" (EDUCANZ, 2016, p. 22). More specifically, the requirements also state that, upon graduating, teachers should have:

> Demonstrated knowledge of disability legislation and educational policies in relation to disability. Policies will include risk assessment as they relate to educational settings for students with 27 disabilities, the requirements of the New Zealand's obligations under the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the New Zealand Disabilities Strategy. (EDUCANZ, 2016, p. 30).

Despite these requirements, the vast majority (84%) of participants felt that their ITE did little or nothing at all to help them develop their knowledge of local legislation and policy as

it pertains to children with disabilities. Over 70% had little to no knowledge of the New Zealand Disabilities Strategy and just under 80% had little to no knowledge of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These finding beg the question of why teacher educators are not being held accountable for this shortcoming.

Accountability. It became clear that the four interviewees did not seem concerned about this gap in their knowledge as they felt the content is generally perceived as an obligation by most teachers. Interview comments such as Amy's ("I've kind of always been of the mind-set that that's just what you do as a teacher") and Sam's ("you're obligated to do your job and so I kind of think that it's a given personally") convey that explicit knowledge of legal and professional obligations is not necessary for inclusive practice. This was also evidenced by more than forty percent of the participants who agreed that they did not need to know about laws and policies relating to inclusion. This is a significant figure and suggests that perhaps the absence of such content in ITE may inadvertently encourage student teachers to believe that the information is not important. These findings become troubling when one considers that Sam admitted his students simply do not come to his lessons "if they're physically not able to do the activity". There seemed to be a lack of accountability for the participation and presence of these students. Kearney (2011) contended that pre-service teacher education is an essential vehicle for the dissemination of legislative and human rights knowledge. According to her reasoning, if Sam had received explicit instruction in this area during his ITE, he may have been armed with the attitudes necessary for effective inclusive practice.

For over twenty-five years, accountability has been a major goal of the international human rights movement that has continued to baffle (Neier, 2012). While, New Zealand has demonstrated its "philosophical commitment to the rights of disabled people" (p. 106), the time has come for the government to hold itself accountable by recognising, enforcing and

maintaining disabled students' rights (Kearney, 2011). Rouse (2008) advocated that legislative and policy context is an integral component in developing effective inclusive practice. Recently, there has also been a call in education, and other disciplines, to move towards a rights-based focus and away from the idea of student 'needs' (Florian, 2017; MacArthur & Rutherford, 2016; Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009; Smith, 2016). This study's findings support this movement. If a rights-based framework was used in ITE, perhaps the focus on deficit-based student 'need' would shift and graduates would begin their careers with a greater sense of accountability for the exclusion that occurs in their school community.

This study showed that there is little evidence of any impact of inclusive education legislation or policy in ITE content and consequently, students' rights are being compromised. When New Zealand ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, a commitment was made to develop policy that promotes the social-human rights perspective that emphasises inclusion (Critelli, Lewis, & Méndez-López, 2017). Teacher educators are fortunate to be in a position in which they operationalise this commitment and "break the cycle of discriminatory thinking and teaching practice" (Rutherford, 2016, p. 133) that has historically resulted in exclusion of marginalised students. According to these beginner teachers' perspectives, this unique opportunity is not being realised by teacher educators across New Zealand. Greater scrutiny of ITE curriculum is required to prevent the poor enforcement of legislation and human rights that has previously been a barrier to inclusion in New Zealand (Kearney, 2011). The New Zealand government needs to take more action to ensure that teacher educators are fulfilling their obligations to inclusion and supporting student teachers to gain the knowledge and experience necessary to make socially just pedagogical decisions.

Lack of Focus on Collaborative Practice

Both quantitative and qualitative results revealed that a lack of knowledge about school-based and family-based collaborative practice posed significant challenges for beginner teachers and, at times, this led to student exclusion. Nearly a quarter of participants reported having little to no confidence to identify strategies for effective collaboration with professionals and teacher aides. Interview data gave a more detailed insight into this finding by revealing that the beginner teachers were significantly concerned about their lack of knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of teacher aides and RTLB. This is consistent with earlier New Zealand research which cites lack of knowledge about roles and responsibilities as one of the most frequently cited issues relating to teacher aides (Rutherford, 2012).

The expectation that teachers must collaborate with all manner of people to ensure student inclusion is irrefutable. The newly published code of professional responsibility and standards for teaching explicitly state that a core value of the profession is "engaging in positive and collaborative relationships with our learners, their families and whānau, our colleagues and the wider community" (EDUCANZ, 2017). A requirement for ITE programme approval is that graduates have "identified strategies for collaborating with other professionals, para-professionals, and parents/caregivers to identify learning outcomes for students with special education needs and the reasonable adjustments and learning accommodations required to achieve these" (EDUCANZ, 2016, pp. 22-23). Aside from the 'special needs' discourse inherent in this statement, the issue is that according to the findings of this study, the requirement is not being met by some ITE.

Sixty-five percent of participants felt their ITE did little or nothing at all to help them develop their knowledge of supports (including personnel) available for students who experience disability. All four interview participants reported that their ITE was at least in part responsible for their lack of confidence, and knowledge about the roles of teacher aides

and RTLB and how to work with them. Further analysis revealed that three of the four participants felt that their ITE never referred to teacher aides or RTLB, let alone how to work effectively with them. Similarly, none of the interviewees felt that the benefit of collaborative relationships with teacher aides and RTLB were impressed upon them. Both Amy and Sam commented on the distinct lack of mention that they would be working alongside teacher aides and Ben declared that in his classes, teacher aides simply act as reader-writers, and "it would have been good if we had had at least a day, or a workshop on just how to work with different teacher aides and just make use of them".

This study also showed that lack of knowledge about the roles of teacher aides and RTLB, and how to develop effective collaborative partnerships with them, led to a lack of teacher accountability, and therefore, student exclusion. Sam admitted that he did not feel like he had "been given the responsibility to have success" with learners who work with teacher aides. He reported that he did not feel responsible for these students and as a result he "let the teacher aide disseminate the information that I've given to the class to her learner or his learner the best way that they know". He elaborated further by stating that if teacher aides were not present in his classes, he would teach differently and the students "would be more part of the class".

These findings are in tune with local and international literature. Kearney (2011) pertinently noted that poor self-confidence in a teacher's ability to meet the needs of diverse learners resulted in lack of accountability for these learners and the subsequent relinquishing of responsibility to teacher aides and other para-professionals. Furthermore, Rutherford (2013) and Giangreco (2013) identified the following as some of the detrimental effects of "excessive proximity" of teacher aides: separation from classmates; interference with teacher engagement and peer interactions; and limited access to competent instruction.

Interprofessional learning: learning *with*, *from* and *about* each other. As mentioned, lack of classroom teacher knowledge is a powerful barrier to inclusion. The findings of this study suggested that participants wanted, and would have benefited from, more knowledge about the role of teacher aides and RTLB, and about how to forge productive relationships with them. Mentis, Kearney, and Bevan-Brown (2012) put forward that a way to dismantle this barrier is to foster collaborative practice in multidisciplinary teams through a framework of interprofessional learning. Good interprofessional learning occurs when two or more people learn *with, from* and *about* each other in order to gain a better understanding of one another's scope of practice. As Mentis et al. (2016) explained, "interprofessional learning facilitates interprofessional practice, which is key to providing collaborative communities for integrated inclusive education practices" (p. 67). Not surprisingly, knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the team members is a key competency for successful interprofessional practice (IPEC, 2016). Moreover, interprofessional learning is also valuable because team members feel more confident and competent when they share their expertise, and in turn become more accountable in relation legislative and human rights (Mentis et al., 2012). This benefit is significant given the findings about lack of teacher knowledge about legislation, human rights and policy described earlier.

Currently in New Zealand, a Specialist Teaching (ST) programme offered to experienced teachers is investigating a framework for developing collaboration and interprofessional identities within and across disciplines. The framework, entitled Māwhai, attempts to develop individual and collective professional identities through collaboration within and between interprofessional communities of practice. Results from three cohorts showed that learning together led to increased confidence and competence to work together more effectively. Interprofessional learning was rated as the second most important aspect of

the ST programme as it supported them to build networks across disciplines, form online communities, and listen to the perspectives of others (Mentis et al., 2016).

Interprofessional learning could therefore be an effective way of improving: teacher accountability; teacher knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of professionals and teacher aides who work with students who experience disability; and teacher confidence and capability to work more collaboratively.

Family-based collaborative practice. The need for parents and whānau, teachers and specialist support staff "to work together to ensure children and young people are achieving and experiencing meaningful success" (MOE, 2014b, p. 10) is clearly outlined in educational policy. Professional standards for the teaching profession also outline that teachers must be "engaging families and whānau in their children's learning" (EDUCANZ, 2017, p. 12). Nonetheless, nearly one-fifth of participants reported having little to no confidence to identify strategies for collaborating effectively with parents/whānau/caregivers.

In fact, it could be argued that some teacher educators positioned parents as adversaries. Poppy's observation that the only mention of working alongside families during her ITE was in the context of maintaining her personal safety in the face of "aggressive, or hostile" parents indicated that there is a lack of emphasis on being approachable, respectful and empathetic; attributes of teachers who support collaborative partnership practices which ultimately result in success for all students (Saggers, Macartney, & Guerin, 2012). Anthony and Kane (2008) reported that teachers in their first year of work sought assistance with collaborating with parents. Nearly a decade on from this conclusion, this study provides evidence that more is required to address this gap in beginner teacher knowledge and experience. As Florian (2017) stated, teacher education should help its students recognise:

> alternative ways of working with 'specialists' and others (including families and members of the broader community) accepting that it is not what specialists and

> others know but how their knowledge is brought to bear on the lived experience of the learner that matters. (p. 18)

Beginner Teachers Not Identifying as Lifelong Learners

Anthony and Kane (2008) declared that transforming the perception of a finite ITE to one of a "continuum of learning and development" (p. 67) is key to enhancing ITE programmes and graduating more confident and capable practitioners. In other words, teachers must come to view themselves as lifelong learners who will continue to develop their knowledge and skills after graduating. As discussed, all interview participants faced difficulties when trying to plan lessons that enabled the participation and achievement of the diverse range of learners in their classrooms. The trouble was, the participants viewed these difficulties as a source of failure which, at times, encouraged them to give up on inclusion. There was a distinct lack of recognition that such difficulties could be learning opportunities which are valuable for lifelong learning and development.

Two of the four interviewees expressed dismay at the fact that their lessons were often 'hit and miss' when it came to designing high quality learning experiences. Ben noted that he was "winging it" a lot of the time, while Poppy explained she was "having to do trial and error" with her students and "giving them a ridiculous task and they just sit there". She believed this was evidence of "me failing them". The impression was that these two teachers were disappointed with themselves for not having the knowledge and practical skills required to overcome the challenges they faced, despite being very new to the profession. They viewed the trialling of teaching strategies and resources as failure rather than evidence of their developing, responsive teaching practice. Although Amy did not express disappointment in her own practice, she similarly observed that other teachers had a tendency to give up and absolve themselves of the responsibility to be responsive in their lesson planning: "lots of

teachers just don't feel confident with it and they don't know what do so then they go, oh well I'm just not gonna worry about it".

It became clear that the participants recognised that the source of the challenges they experienced was in their "insufficiently responsive presentation of the curriculum" (Skidmore, 2002, p. 120). While it is encouraging that they spoke about their practice using a pedagogical discourse of inclusion, it is equally as discouraging because the teachers did not view these experiences as a significant learning opportunities. Rouse (2008) contended that a teachers' belief that they have the capacity to teach all children is crucial in becoming an effective inclusive practitioner. To that end, it could be argued that an important challenge now facing teacher educators is ensuring that teachers, like Poppy and Ben, are helped to identify as lifelong learners whose critical-thinking and problem-solving are skills that will be honed over a lifetime of teaching experience.

Research suggests a possible way of meeting this challenge is to make student teachers explicitly aware of the difficulties they will inevitably encounter in their early teaching careers. Agarwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler, and Sonu (2010) argued that ITE are privileged in that they can provide the platform for discussions that enable teachers to understand that teaching for social justice is a journey. They claimed that exposure to the truly tumultuous road of early career teaching will help graduates "overcome, acknowledge, and cope with the myriad of constraints they may face as they work to enact a social justice curricula" (p. 245). Agarwal et al. (2010) suggested two specific strategies for exposing student teachers to the realities of early teaching careers: panel discussions with recent graduates, and case studies about the realities of applying inclusive pedagogy. Others have suggested that it is important to provide teachers with opportunities to reflect on the relationship between their practice and their beliefs, attitudes and values (Arthur-Kelly et al., 2013; MacArthur, Kelly, Higgins, Phillips, & McDonald, 2005).

Practicum as a means of promoting lifelong learning. Whatman and MacDonald (2017) put forward that student teachers should undertake practica that expose them to students from diverse backgrounds as literature confirms it is important in preparing them for the realities of the classrooms and schools they will teach in. It has also been offered that the opportunity to observe inclusive practice being modelled, and opportunity for reflection about pedagogical decisions on practicum, are integral in preparing teachers to be lifelong learners who are more able to both meet and celebrate the challenges of diverse classrooms (Agarwal et al., 2010; Sosu et al., 2010). While it is a requirement for ITE programme approval to provide these settings for student teachers in New Zealand (EDUCANZ, 2016), there is no requirement for providing practicum experiences that expose student teachers to the diverse range of students present in classrooms. It seems, then, that it will not always be possible for student teachers in New Zealand to reflect on pedagogical decisions in their practicum, as suggested above.

Indeed, this study showed that on the rare occasion that when student teachers did have the opportunity to teach an authentically diverse group of learners on practicum, their inclusive practice benefited immensely. Qualitative analysis showed that the two interview participants who were "lucky enough" to teach a group of students with a diverse range of abilities regarded the experiences as valuable as it helped them learn how to adapt resources and "try different things". Correspondingly, one of the two participants who did not gain any experience on practicum reported it was "full on" when he started teaching as he faced challenges in all his classes. Given that over seventy percent of questionnaire participants had little to no experience teaching students who experience disability on practicum, it can be argued that changes to practicum requirements are required.

Mandating practicum experiences which provide the opportunity to teach a more diverse student population may be a way forward in building teacher capability, preparing

them for a journey of lifelong learning and helping reframe challenges faced in the classroom as opportunities for professional reflection and problem solving. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this statement is made with the knowledge that joint work across universities and schools has historically been the source of concern (Lawson et al., 2013). As mentioned, inconsistencies in inclusive culture/policies between universities and practicum schools are a major challenge for student teachers (Angelides et al., 2006; Harvey et al., 2010). In fact, McKay (2016) found that pre-service teachers rarely witnessed effective inclusive practice on practicum (McKay, 2016). The need for a conceptual framework that links theoretical and practical learning is recognised as necessary in order to avoid the difficulty of finding sufficient school based placements that support the development of inclusive practice. The consequence of not doing so is that damaging school-based practices become more influential than the learning that takes place at ITE (EADSNE, 2011), particularly in short one-year programmes where student teachers may not gain enough background knowledge to critically reflect on practice.

Irreconcilable difference between lifelong learning and deficit mindsets. Florian et al. (2010) contended that effective frameworks for inclusive teacher education foster in graduates the belief that they are qualified, capable, and responsible for all students. Perhaps then, an even greater challenge facing teacher educators, is how to engender the mindset of lifelong learning in student teachers who have an underlying belief that including all students in their classes is not only beyond the realm of their capability, but also beyond the realm of their responsibility.

From the qualitative findings, it became evident that Sam felt he was not given the responsibility to help students of all abilities, or disabilities, to access the curriculum in his lessons. His comments revealed that he felt the school culture, teacher aide practices, lack of preparation during ITE, and individual student “problems” all had a role to play in student

exclusion. For example, he explained that he could not include one particular student because he was not told of the student's specific diagnosis: "how am I meant to know how to deal with her when I don't know what her issue is. I wasn't inducted. I was never told, you know?" He also stated that he felt "not prepared enough [from his ITE] for including those students in the actual practical lessons because of their problems" and as a consequence "when I'm doing a practical session if they're physically not able to do the activity, they don't come to the class".

Sam's line of thought follows Skidmore's (2002) pedagogical discourse of deviance. Evidently, Sam believed his students' physical disabilities were more significant than his agency to plan lessons that allow students to access the curriculum. Following Skidmore's reasoning, since lack of participation was attributed to the students' disability, support for students should focus on trying to remediate this. As a result teachers feel less able or accountable to design learning experiences that enhance the participation and achievement of all students.

Two important questions are raised here: first, can Sam's deficit mindset be attributed to ITE? Second, how much responsibility can/should ITE take for fostering a more inclusive understanding of difference? Due to the significant impact that teachers have on student achievement (Hattie, 2009), and the pressure teachers are under to raise achievement of diverse student populations, the debate about the role of ITE for inclusion is a significant one (Spratt & Florian, 2015). Florian et al. (2010) advocated for ITE to play a role in helping teachers to adopt a mindset that rejects deficit ideology. They, and others, pointed to the role of ITE as one of facilitating the reframing of learning and behavioural challenges as professional dilemmas that require examination and problem solving (Florian, 2009; Hart, 2004).

In addition to conventional practica, service-learning programmes have been identified as a promising approach to disrupting student teachers' assumptions about diversity and promoting more positive attitudes about their ethical and professional duty to include all (Bursaw, Kimber, Mercer, & Carrington, 2015). Through service-learning programmes in ITE, student teachers are given opportunities to gain personal experience with diversity and difference and systematically reflect on these in an effort to develop a deeper understanding of marginalisation and injustice. As such, service-learning programs have been integrated into ITE for three major reasons: they provide additional learning that is not afforded by traditional practica; they promote a deeper understanding of the strengths and challenges of a diverse group of students, thereby enhancing inclusive practice among participants; and they promote understanding that all students can learn (Bursaw et al., 2015; Chambers, 2013). It is therefore put forward that some form of service-learning in teacher education may be a worthwhile way to provide personal experience with disability and address harmful, deep-seated beliefs and attitudes.

That personal experience with disability influences attitudes is not a new phenomenon in literature. Almost two decades ago Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) found that teachers held more positive attitudes about inclusion when they had experience in including students with significant disabilities in their classrooms. Burke and Sutherland (2004) also noted that prior experience and knowledge about students who experience disability is related to more positive attitudes. Anthony and Kane (2008) likewise found that teachers' perceptions of their experience during ITE and the initial two years of teaching were mediated by their prior experiences.

In this study, the type of personal connection a teacher had with a person who experienced disability was the only personal factor found to have a significant impact on teacher preparedness for inclusion. Poppy described how her personal experience of being

excluded on the basis of a reading disability at high school enabled her to reflect on the relationship between her experience, attitudes and practice. These findings therefore call in to question what ITE in New Zealand can do for student teachers who are not fortunate enough to have had personal experience with disability. According to the literature, it seems that authentic practicum experiences and service-learning opportunities are potential options.

Conclusions

This study sought to ascertain the extent to which beginner teachers feel prepared to teach and include students who experience disability. Four general areas of concern were identified as a result: beginner teachers not identifying as lifelong learners; knowledge about, and understanding of inclusive pedagogy; lack of focus on legislation, human rights and policy; and lack of focus on collaborative practice.

The findings of this study provided a picture of ITE that recognises the diversity of the classroom, but provides little around what that means in terms of teaching and learning. The overall impression gathered from the questionnaire and interviews was that beginner teachers expressed a commitment to inclusion but did not identify as lifelong learners who will develop the capacity to teach all children as they gain experience in diverse classrooms. Instead it appeared that beginner teachers viewed their ability to include as finite and skills-based.

There was a distinct absence of social justice and rights-based education in the discourse. Undeniably, the study exposed a gap in beginner teacher knowledge of legislation, human rights obligations, and policies relating to the inclusion of students who experience disability. Nonetheless, perhaps the most concerning finding was beginner teachers' beliefs that learning about such content was unimportant. It seems teachers in their early career place

more emphasis on learning about the practical skills of inclusion rather than the attitudes necessary for it.

Another other major concern identified in this study was the lack of focus on collaborative practice in ITE and the ways this led to student exclusion. Lack of emphasis about the benefits of building authentic partnerships with teacher aides and parents were particularly disconcerting. It was clear that beginner teachers required more learning about the roles and responsibilities of the people that can assist them to enhance the lives of students who experience disability.

A couple of suggestions for enhancing beginner teacher preparedness were set out in the discussion. Improving practicum experiences and providing service learning opportunities were put forward as possible ways of encouraging lifelong learning among graduates *and* addressing beliefs about ability and disability. Learning about, and opportunity for, interprofessional practice were suggested as a means of enhancing student teacher knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of professionals and teacher aides who work with students who experience disability. Some findings however, raised serious questions about ITE in New Zealand that require further inquiry:

- Does ITE in New Zealand operate within a rights-based framework that recognises individual difference is an ordinary part of human development?
- Can ITE provide adequate practicum experiences which expose student teachers to the inherent successes and challenges a diverse classroom presents?
- Is there enough opportunity in ITE for systematic and critical reflection that encourages student teachers to examine the relationship between their practice and beliefs about inclusion?
- Can explicit instruction about human rights obligations galvanise attitudinal change among student teachers?

- Can explicit instruction about the roles and responsibilities of professionals and teacher aides encourage the development of authentic partnerships?

Greater political and institutional will is necessary before these inquiries can be fully explored. Even so, it is unarguable that teacher educators have a responsibility to listen to their students and foster in them a sense of capability and the belief that every child has the right to equitable education. By doing so they will encourage beginner teachers to seek out barriers to inclusion and problem-solve ways to overcome them.

Limitations

Other than the relatively small sample size there were two noteworthy limitations in this study. Foremost, in the questionnaire a definition of the term *students with disabilities* was not provided. As such, responses are anticipated to have been dependent on participant understanding of the term, and the group(s) it relates to. During the process of writing this thesis my understanding of the social model of disability developed, therefore this term was changed to *students who experience disability*. The second major limitation was a lack of systematic analysis of documents regarding actual inclusive education coursework in ITE. Thus the data gathered in this study relating to the inclusive content taught during ITE is subjective as it was based purely on graduate teachers' memories.

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2. Special (Inclusive) Education

A number of the current Graduating Teacher Standards [1c;2a-d;3a,c;4a,b,c,f;5a,b;6b-d;7c] are relevant to this aspect of ITE.
It would be desirable that teacher educators delivering this component of the ITE programme have qualifications, theoretical expertise and practical experience in special (inclusive) education.

ITE programmes need to ensure that Graduating Teachers have:

Knowledge and Attitude

☐ understood the likely impact that a disability, behaviour disorder or difficulties in learning might have on a student's access to and participation in learning

☐ demonstrated knowledge of disability legislation and educational policies in relation to disability. Policies will include risk assessment as they relate to educational settings for students with disabilities, the requirements of the New Zealand's obligations under the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the New Zealand Disabilities Strategy.

☐ analysed the range of learners and special education provisions across New Zealand, features of an inclusive school, school planning teams, the responsibilities of teachers and the community and available services

Practice

☐ applied skills in using curriculum based assessment to identify starting points and reasonable adjustments required to enable students with special education needs to meet curriculum outcomes

☐ demonstrated how to meet the specific learning needs of students through inclusive education practices, including problem solving processes and application of the concept of reasonable adjustment

☐ addressed the normal course of children's language development and the implications of delay or disorder for their learning

☐ planned, implemented and evaluated programs for the specific learning needs of students

☐ identified strategies for collaborating with other professionals, para-professionals, and parents/care-givers to identify learning outcomes for students with special education needs and the reasonable adjustments and learning accommodations required to achieve these

☐ developed strategies to implement outcomes of the New Zealand Curriculum, and additional literacy and numeracy support

☐ used assessment and monitoring procedures and data for making instructional decisions

☐ demonstrated confidence in interacting with students and a commitment to meeting their educational needs.

Source: *New South Wales Institute of Teachers Initial Teacher Education Document 4: Mandatory Areas of Study – January 2008*

Appendix B: Beginner Teacher Preparedness for Inclusion Questionnaire

Information Sheet

My name is Sophia Attwood and I am conducting a research project as part of a Master of Educational Psychology.

You are invited to participate in a questionnaire that is looking at how prepared beginner secondary school teachers feel they are for inclusion. You will specifically be asked questions relating to the inclusion and teaching of students with disabilities. The survey asks you to reflect on your experience in teaching so far and on what your teacher education training offered in terms of preparing you for including and teaching students with disabilities in regular classrooms.

- **The questionnaire will take up to 20 minutes to complete and should be completed outside of work hours.**
- **Only anonymized data will be used within the Master's thesis to which this study relates.**
- **Data may be used for further publication.**
- **If you would like a summary of the research results please contact the researcher at sophiaattwood@outlook.com.**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation.

- **Participation is completely voluntary.**
- **All your responses will be confidential and no names of institutions or individuals will identified in any reports that follow.**
- **It is advised that you complete the questionnaire on your own in order to maintain greater confidentiality.**
- **You may withdraw from the study at any point by contacting the researcher.**
- **You have the right to decline to answer any particular question.**
- **Your questionnaire responses will not be used as a means of appraisal of your performance**
- **Your questionnaire responses will not be seen by any member of staff at your, or any other, school or institution.**

If you have any questions please contact either the researcher: Sophia Attwood at sophiaattwood@outlook.com; or the supervisors: Dr Jude MacArthur at J.A.MacArthur@massey.ac.nz, Dr Alison Kearney at A.C.Kearney@massey.ac.nz.

NB: Neither of the supervisors are currently involved in any initial teacher education programme.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 16/33. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Rochelle Stewart-Withers, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83657, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Completion and return of the questionnaire is deemed to imply you consent to participate in the research and agree with the terms of confidentiality, data collection and data reporting as outlined in this information sheet.

Part A

1. Did you complete your initial teacher education in New Zealand?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

2. When did you complete your initial teacher education?

- ◯ Prior to 2014
- ◯ 2014
- ◯ 2015
- ◯ 2016

3. I am teaching in: (please tick all that is applicable)

- ☐ Secondary (Y7-13)
- ☐ Secondary (Y9-13)
- ☐ Special Education
- ☐ Integrated (Special Character) School
- ☐ Area School (Y1-13)

4. I am:

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

5. What is your age?

- ◯ 25 years or below
- ◯ 26-35 years
- ◯ 36-45 years
- ◯ 46 years or above

6. My highest educational qualification is:

- ◯ Bachelor's Degree or its equivalent
- ◯ Master's Degree
- ◯ Other, please specify

7. Where is your current school located?

- ◯ Urban/Metropolitan/Inner city
- ◯ Rural
- ◯ Suburban

8. Which of the following best describes the size of your school?

- ◯ 1-300
- ◯ 301-600
- ◯ 601-900
- ◯ 901-1200
- ◯ More than 1200

9. Which of the following best describes your average class size?

- ◯ Less than 10
- ◯ 10-20
- ◯ 21-30
- ◯ 31-40
- ◯ More than 40

10. What is your school's decile rating?

[ ]

11. What is the total number of students with a disability across all your classes?

- ◯ None
- ◯ 1
- ◯ 2-3
- ◯ 4-5
- ◯ More than 5

12. Do you personally know any person with a disability? (not including your students)

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

13. If yes, state the nature of your relationship? (please tick all that is applicable)

- ☐ Acquaintance (e.g. neighbour)
- ☐ Casual (e.g. colleague)
- ☐ Close (e.g. room-mate, relative)
- ☐ Intimate (e.g. spouse, child, sibling)

6. My highest educational qualification is:

- ◯ Bachelor's Degree or its equivalent
- ◯ Master's Degree
- ◯ Other, please specify

7. Where is your current school located?

- ◯ Urban/Metropolitan/Inner city
- ◯ Rural
- ◯ Suburban

8. Which of the following best describes the size of your school?

- ◯ 1-300
- ◯ 301-600
- ◯ 601-900
- ◯ 901-1200
- ◯ More than 1200

9. Which of the following best describes your average class size?

- ◯ Less than 10
- ◯ 10-20
- ◯ 21-30
- ◯ 31-40
- ◯ More than 40

10. What is your school's decile rating?

[ ]

11. What is the total number of students with a disability across all your classes?

- ◯ None
- ◯ 1
- ◯ 2-3
- ◯ 4-5
- ◯ More than 5

12. Do you personally know any person with a disability? (not including your students)

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

13. If yes, state the nature of your relationship? (please tick all that is applicable)

- ☐ Acquaintance (e.g. neighbour)
- ☐ Casual (e.g. colleague)
- ☐ Close (e.g. room-mate, relative)
- ☐ Intimate (e.g. spouse, child, sibling)

Part B

When answering the following questions think about your initial teacher training in 2014/15/16.

Answer as honestly as possible. Your responses are confidential.

For the following questions, I would like you to consider what you learned about approaches to teaching and learning for a diverse student group in your initial teacher education.

14. My initial teacher education helped me to plan lessons that enable students to demonstrate their strengths:

Disagree 1									Agree 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

15. To what extent did your initial teacher education help you develop teaching strategies that are appropriate for ALL learners in your class (i.e. a diverse group of learners)?

It didn't help at all 1									It helped a lot 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

16. My initial teacher education helped me develop knowledge of language and communication in students?

Disagree 1									Agree 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

17. My initial teacher education helped me use assessment, monitoring procedures and data for making teaching decisions for a diverse group of students:

Disagree 1									Agree 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

18. To what extent did your initial teacher education support you to understand the key features of an inclusive school?

Did not support 1									Supported very well 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

19. My initial teacher education taught me that I should use additional or different strategies to teach students with disabilities:

Disagree 1									Agree 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

20. How much experience teaching students with disabilities did you have on practicum?

No experience 1									A lot of experience 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

21. To what extent did your initial teacher education help you to develop knowledge of local legislation as it pertains to children with disabilities?

Did not help at all 1									Helped a lot 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

22. My initial teacher education helped me develop knowledge of supports available for students with disabilities (including personnel support, funding and resources, teacher aide support):

Disagree 1									Agree 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

In this section please consider your knowledge about inclusive education legislation and policy in New Zealand.

23. My knowledge of the 1989 Education Act and its relevance to inclusion is:

I have no knowledge 1									I am very knowledgeable 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

24. My knowledge of the 'Success for All' policy is:

I have no knowledge 1									I am very knowledgeable 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

25. My knowledge of teacher's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is:

I have no knowledge 1									I am very knowledgeable 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

26. My knowledge of teacher's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is:

I have no knowledge 1									I am very knowledgeable 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

27. My knowledge of teacher's obligations under the New Zealand Disabilities Strategy is:

I have no knowledge 1									I am very knowledgeable 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

In this section please consider your sense of preparedness and level of confidence to teach and include students with a disability in your class at the moment.

28. My level of confidence in including students with disabilities in your classroom:

I have no confidence 1									I am very confident 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

29. My level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities in my classroom is:

I have no confidence 1									I am very confident 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

30. I can use teaching approaches that support the presence, participation and learning of ALL students, including students with disabilities (e.g. Universal design for learning; inclusive pedagogies, differentiation):

I feel I can't 1									I am very confident that I can 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

31. I can identify strategies for collaborating effectively with teacher aides and professionals (i.e. RTLBs, educational psychologists, specialist teachers, occupational therapists)

I feel I can't 1									I am very confident that I can 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

32. I can identify strategies for collaborating effectively with parents/whanau/caregivers:

I feel that I can't 1									I am very confident that I can 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

33. I can use language that demonstrates the value of students:

I feel I can't 1									I am very confident that I can 10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Part C

The following questions seek to gather some information about the variety of perspectives among teachers as they relate to teaching a diverse group of learners. I am interested in how these perspectives may change over time.

Note that each question requires two answers:

1. **Then (what you thought, felt or believed when you first graduated)**
2. **Now (what you think, feel or believe now)**

34. Student ability is fixed

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

35. All learners can participate in classroom life

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

36. Students don't mind being known as having 'special needs'

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

37. Grouping students by ability is an effective way of teaching

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

38. Students who experience difficulties in learning new things need different or additional work

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

39. It is the teacher's responsibility to teach all learners

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

40. My workload will increase if I have students with disabilities in my class

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

41. Students who are inattentive should be in mainstream classes

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

42. Students who require communicative technologies (e.g. Braille / sign language/laptops/iPads) should be in mainstream classes

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

43. Students who frequently fail exams should be in mainstream classes

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

44. Some students need an individualised academic program

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

45. It is possible to plan lessons that will involve all learners

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

46. Classroom teachers don't really need to know about laws and policies relating to the inclusion of students with disabilities

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

47. The inclusion of a student with a disability in my class will lead to a higher degree of anxiety and stress in me

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

48. The academic achievement of students without disabilities will be affected if students with disabilities are present in my class

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

49. It will be difficult to give equal attention to all students in an inclusive classroom

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

50. I can design lessons that allow students to choose activities that best suit their style of learning

	Disagree 1									Agree 10
Then	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Now	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Thank you for your time and effort. Be assured that all information will be kept confidential.

You are now invited to participate in a follow-up interview

Your participation in a follow-up interview will yield valuable information forimproving secondary teaching graduate diploma courses and the well-being of young people in New Zealand. If you would like to participate, please contact the researcher at sophiaattwood@outlook.com.

As with the questionnaire, all the information shared in the interview will remain confidential. The interview transcriber has signed a confidentiality agreement and no names of institutions or individuals will be identified in any reports that follow. During the interview you have the right to ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time, decline to answer any question and, withdraw from the study at any point.

Appendix C: Beginner Teacher Interview

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Your contribution is invaluable and will add to the growing discussion about inclusion in education. Please remember that this interview is entirely confidential and will not be seen by any member of your staff and therefore not be used as a means of appraisal or anything similar. I will send you the interview transcript at which time you can amend or delete omit anything we have discussed today.

I'll start by telling you a little about myself. I am a secondary school science teacher who has worked in New Zealand and the UK. I have been studying towards a Master's in Educational Psychology and this research is part of my thesis. My area of interest is teacher education and its role in preparing teachers to be confident and effective practitioners. My drive to research early career teachers comes from my own experience of feeling ill-equipped to help the diverse group of learners in my classroom as a new teacher.

Just before we start I just need to double check that you completed a diploma in secondary teaching in the last three years and you are currently a classroom teacher at a secondary school?

We will start with some questions about you and your understanding of inclusion. Then we will talk about your initial teacher education.

1. What does the term 'inclusive education' mean to you?
2. Could you describe for me what an inclusive school would look like? What about an inclusive classroom?
3. What would you see the teacher doing in an inclusive classroom?
    - In terms of teaching approaches being used
    - How would adults in the room be working – teacher, teacher aide, other teachers such as ORS funded teacher, SENCO?

I would like to ask you a few questions now about your initial teacher education in the area of inclusion:

4. How well prepared do you feel to teach children with disabilities in your classroom? (Prompts - in your first year, and now).
5. Is there anything in your past experiences that you feel have contributed to your sense of preparedness to include students with disabilities?
6. What was covered in your initial teacher education programme that supports you to include students with disabilities in your classes?
7. What content did you cover about inclusive education?
    - Prompt content/topic areas (understandings about disability; policy and legislation to support inclusion; disabled children's rights; inclusive approaches to teaching learning such as universal design; working with other professionals such as

teacher aides, specialist teachers; using language that demonstrates the value of all students)

- How did you learn about inclusion – was it through modules in professional practice papers? Separate paper? Infused through each subject area?
- What learning about inclusion would you say has been most useful now that you are teaching?
- What about the gaps? If nothing was taught, what would you have appreciated learning more about now that you have had experience in the classroom?

8. The results of the questionnaire revealed that most teachers felt they didn't learn much about human rights, policy and legislation underpinning inclusion in New Zealand during their teacher education.
    - What was your experience of this during your training?
    - How do you think learning more about this would influence you and your teaching practice?
9. Another important finding of the questionnaire was that teachers had little practical experience throughout their teacher education of working with students who have disabilities in diverse classrooms.
    - How many practicums and how long were they?
    - Can you tell me a little about what your experience of this was like?
    - How do you think more experience on practicum with students who have disabilities would influence you and your teaching practice?
10. How was your learning about inclusive practice assessed during your initial teacher education? (assignments; practicum/teaching practice experiences)

The next few questions are about your present teaching practice:

11. Let's start with what you're teaching at the moment and what you feel is going well - what do you do in your class now to ensure all learners are included in all activities in your classroom?
12. Having taught for one/two years, is there anything that would help you to include and teach students with disabilities well in your classes? (Prompt if needed - What would you like to know more about to help you enhance the participation and achievement of all your students?)
13. How do you collaborate/work with teacher aides? What about with other professionals (e.g. educational psychologists, RTLBs, SENCO, HOD learning support,.1/.2ORS teachers?)
    - Is working with teacher aides something you learned about during initial teacher education?

- What about working with other professionals – did you learn about this also? (Prompt - professionals who are external to the school e.g. RTLB, Ed Psych, itinerating specialist teachers ; and internal e.g. SENCO, HOD learning support)

14. How do you use Individual Education Plans?
    - Is this something you learned about during initial teacher education?
    - Do you know how many children in your classes have educational psychologist's reports or IEPs?
    - How useful have you found them?
15. How do you include and collaborate with families? For what reasons?
    - Is collaborating with families something you learned about during initial teacher education?
    - What is the basis of your conversations/dialogue with parents of children with disabilities?

Appendix D: Thematic Analysis Codebook

Interview Topic	Interview Guide Q#	Structural Code Name	RQ#	Structural Code Definition
Definition of Inclusion	1,2,3	DefInc	1	**Brief Definition:** Understanding of inclusion. **Full Definition:** Participant understanding of inclusion and what inclusion looks like in a classroom and school. This includes social, pedagogical and physical aspects of inclusive practice. **When to Use:** To code for participant current understanding of inclusion, inclusive practice and how it is/can be demonstrated. **When Not to Use:** Not to be used to describe what students learnt about inclusion during ITE.
ITE Experience	4,6,7,8,9,10	ITE	2	**NOTE:** This is a network code and is not used for coding. Responses to questions 4,5,6,7,8,9,10 are captured under their respective structural codes (ITEPrep, ITEContMod, ITEAss, ITEPrac, ITEAss)
ITE Experience-*General Preparedness*	4	ITEPrep	1,2	**Brief Definition:** Participants general feelings of preparedness for inclusion **Full Definition:** Participants general feelings of preparedness to include students and employ inclusive pedagogy based on their ITE. **When to Use:** To describe feelings of preparedness/unpreparedness due to their training alone **When Not to Use:** Not to be used to describe feelings of preparedness due to personal experience and time in the classroom.
ITE Experience-*Content and Mode of Delivery*	6,7	ITEContMod	2	**Brief Definition:** Content covered during ITE and its delivery **Full Definition:** Content includes but is not limited to: theories of learning, learning support strategies, appropriate language to describe students, inclusive pedagogy, reasons for exclusion, UDL, collaboration with professionals, and differentiation. This code also covers

				the way in which this content was delivered, i.e. in separate modules, infused through subject area teaching/professional practice papers, separate papers, electives etc. **When to Use:** To code any data regarding content and its delivery, and how useful it was for participants' inclusive practice. **When Not to Use:** Not to be used to code for children's rights, policy legislation, practicum experiences, or assessment.
ITE Experience-*Rights, legislation, policy*	8	ITERig	2	**Brief Definition:** Any learning during ITE relating to rights, legislation or policy. **Full Definition:** Any data relating to how, if at all, the UNCRC, the UNCRPD, the NZ Disability Strategy, Success for All, and the Education Act were taught during ITE. **When to Use:** To code for what was taught, how it was taught and in what detail. Also, codes for how useful it was for participants' inclusive practice. **When Not to Use:** NA
ITE Experience-Practicums	9	ITEPrac	2	**Brief Definition:** Participant experiences of practicum. **Full Definition:** Descriptions of practicum experiences involving students with disabilities, or diverse learners. Data under this code should include how lack of experience has influenced feelings of preparedness. **When to Use:** To code for descriptions of practicum experience or lack of experience and its influence on feelings of preparedness. **When Not to Use:** Not to code for any kind of assessment about inclusive practice during ITE.
ITE Experience-Assessment	10	ITEAss	2	**Brief Definition:** Any assessment of inclusive practice during ITE. **Full Definition:** Data relating to any form of assessment of participant learning about inclusive practice that took place during ITE. Assessment could be in the form of planning

				assignments, case studies, reflections, tests etc. **When to Use:** To code for any content relating to assessment (or lack thereof) of inclusive practice, learning support, differentiation. **When Not to Use:** Not to code for assessment, children's rights, or content.
Current Practice	11,12,13, 14,15	Cur	1,2,3	**NOTE:** This is a network code and is not used for coding. Responses to questions 11,12,13,14,15 are captured under their respective structural codes (CurGood, CurGap, CurColl, CurIEP, CurWha)
Current Practice- *What's going well*	11	CurGood	1	**Brief Definition:** Information relating to what participants feel is going well. **Full Definition:** Details regarding what participants feel is going well for them, particularly with relevance to inclusion. This includes what teachers are doing that ensures all learners are included in classroom activities. **When to Use:** To describe current pedagogy that participants feel is effective. **When Not to Use:** Not to code for gaps in knowledge they are currently experiencing.
Current Practice- *Gaps*	12	CurGap	1,2	**Brief Definition:** The gaps in knowledge and skills identified by participants. **Full Definition:** Gaps in knowledge and skills identified by participants include, but are not limited to: theories of learning, learning support strategies, appropriate language to describe students, inclusive pedagogy, reasons for exclusion, UDL, collaboration with professionals, and differentiation strategies. **When to Use:** For areas of weakness in participants' own practice. Also used for silent/missing data. **When Not to Use:** Not to code for gaps in knowledge that do not relate to inclusion.

Current Practice- *Professional Collaboration*	13, 14	CurColl	1,2	**Brief Definition:** Ways in which participants collaborate with professionals. **Full Definition:** Data relating to how participants collaborate/work with teacher aides, educational psychologists, RTLB, SENCO, learning support staff, ORS/specialist teachers and whether they learnt about this during ITE. This code also encompasses the application of IEPs in current practice and how whether this was something covered during ITE. **When to Use:** To be used when data relates to collaboration with other teaching professionals or IEPs for students with disabilities. **When Not to Use:** NA
Current Practice- *Whānau collaboration*	15	CurWha	1,2	**Brief Definition:** Ways in which participants collaborate with family. **Full Definition:** This code covers ways in which participants are currently including whānau in dialogue about their children with disabilities including reasons for contacting whānau and the basis of conversation had with them. Data under this code includes whether this is something that was covered during ITE. **When to Use:** For data that relates to participant communication with whānau of students with disabilities. **When Not to Use:** Not to be used for collaboration with family for reasons other than improving inclusion of students with disabilities.
Personal Experience	5	Pers	3	**Brief Definition:** Personal experiences that enhance teacher preparedness for inclusion. **Full Definition:** Any personal experience including previous experience with disability, place/type of schooling, sense of personal responsibility for learners etc. **When to Use:** To be used for any personal circumstance or experience that participants identify as influencing their feeling of

				preparedness and/or ability to be inclusive practitioners. **When Not to Use:** Not to be used for experiences had during practicum or learning that took place during ITE.

Appendix E: Email to Principals

Dear Principal,

My name is Sophia Attwood. I am conducting research for a Master's in Educational Psychology. My research is investigating *the extent to which beginning teachers feel prepared to teach and include students with disabilities in their classrooms.*

I have prepared a questionnaire for teachers who are in their first 3 years of teaching. It is available by clicking the following link xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. A pdf of the questionnaire is attached. The questionnaire is completely anonymous. No names of individuals or institutions will be identified in any reports that follow. Importantly**, participants will not be asked to name their school and there are no questions that pertain to your school, its staff members and, it practices or policies.**

I would appreciate it very much if you could please forward this email to any teachers in your school who are in their first 3 years of teaching.

Thank you for reading this email. Your assistance in this will help to ensure that future graduates are confident and capable inclusive practitioners. Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

Sophia Attwood
BSc, GradDip Teach (Secondary), PGDip Ed (Educational Psychology)
sophiaattwood@outlook.com
0211856023

Appendix F: Principal Permission Letter

Beginner Teacher Preparedness for Inclusion

Permission Letter

Please complete and return to the researcher at sophiaattwood@outlook.com

I,_____, give permission to the researcher to access teachers at my school to participate in this research study.

Name of School: _____

Date: _____

Appendix G: Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

Beginner Teacher Preparedness for Inclusion

TRANSCRIBER'S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I Pamela Sian (Full Name - printed) agree to transcribe the recordings provided to me.

I agree to keep confidential all the information provided to me.

I will not make any copies of the transcripts or keep any record of them, other than those required for the project.

Signature: Pamela Sian **Date:** 22/05/17.

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