

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master

of

Educational Psychology

at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Hayley Marie Armstrong

2014

ABSTRACT

This is a single site qualitative case study to investigate how inclusion is understood, and put into practice in one classroom within a school that has inclusive values. The focus classroom, Room 2, is a new-entrant/year one classroom. The participants included the principal, the class teacher, the teacher aide, the ORS funded teacher, a child with high needs on the ORS scheme and her mother and four peers from the class (ORS refers to the Ministry of Education's "Ongoing Resourcing Scheme" for students with 'High and Very High Needs'). The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How is inclusion understood by the various participants?
2. What are the values and practices in the classroom and the wider school that are associated with inclusion?
3. How do children experience a classroom that focuses on being part of an inclusive school community?

Social constructionism was used as the theoretical framework to explore the participants' understandings and experiences. Data were gathered through observations, semi-structured interviews, and archival data. The emerging themes were identified and linked back to the research questions.

The findings show inclusion was understood to be welcoming and teaching all children, not just those with disabilities, reflecting the diversity with the wider community. The values and practices associated with inclusion included building a sense of community, clear values, caring relationships between children, staff and families and good collaborative practices. The children experienced the classroom as a safe positive place, where they helped each other and enjoyed learning. There were also some tensions between the values and practice identified that may inadvertently contribute to students with disabilities being perceived as different.

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

I would like to acknowledge the school and the participants for their generous and valuable contributions to this research. It was a pleasure to spend time in Room 2 and I felt the welcoming nature of the school and class in person. I also wish to thank my thesis supervisors, Jude MacArthur, and Wendy Holley-Boen for the guidance, support and positivity throughout this research. Finally, a thank you to my family and friends who have been supportive throughout this study.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
CONTENTS	iii
List of Figures	vii
CHAPTER ONE	1
Background and Justification for the Study	1
My Background and How I am Positioned in this Study	2
The Organisation of this Thesis	3
CHAPTER TWO	5
Literature Review	5
What is Inclusion?.....	5
Exclusion and exclusive attitudes and practices.	6
Developing inclusion	8
Achievement (social, developmental and academic).....	10
Theoretical Discourses	12
Medical model discourse	12
Charity discourse.....	13
Social/human rights model.....	13
Inclusive Education in Aotearoa/New Zealand.....	14
Education Act 1989.....	16
SE2000.....	16

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

The NZ Disability Strategy	17
Review of special education	18
Success for All	19
Ongoing Resourcing Scheme.....	19
Leadership	20
Pedagogy	22
Teacher education and professional development	26
Teacher aide education and professional development.....	27
Social Constructionism as a Theoretical Framework.....	27
The Present Study	30
Research questions	30
CHAPTER THREE.....	31
Methodology	31
Qualitative Research Paradigm	31
Case Study Methodology	32
Ethics.....	33
Procedures	34
Steps for recruiting participants and consent	34
Research setting and participants	36
Data Collection Methods.....	37
Observations.....	38
Documentation and physical artefacts	39

Inclusion Through Different Eyes

Interviews	39
Data Analysis	41
CHAPTER FOUR.....	43
Results	43
The Context.....	43
Special education policy	44
Values.....	45
School management	47
How is Inclusion Understood?	48
Principal	48
Teacher/teacher aide/ongoing resourcing scheme funded teacher.....	51
Mandy's mother	53
Values and Practices in the Classroom and the Wider School Associated with Inclusion	54
Values.....	54
Approaches to teaching practice	55
How Children Experience the Classroom	73
CHAPTER FIVE.....	76
Discussion	76
Understanding Inclusion	77
Values and Practices in the Classroom and the Wider School Associated with Inclusion	79

Inclusion Through Different Eyes	
Inclusive values and values in practice	79
Inclusive practices in the classroom and school	81
How Children Experience a Classroom that Focuses on Being Part of an Inclusive School Community	84
Tensions between inclusive values and practice	85
Summary	92
CHAPTER SIX	93
Conclusion	93
Contribution of this Study	93
Where to from here?.....	95
Further Research	97
Limitations	97
Conclusion	98
References	101
Appendices	111
Appendix A: Letter to the School Board of Trustees.....	111
Appendix B: Information Sheets and Consent Forms	114
Appendix C: Letter to Class	139
Appendix D: Interview Schedules	140
Appendix E: Transcript Release Authority	150

List of Tables

Table 1: *Research participants and data collection methods*.....37
Table 2: *Reading Tumble example*.....58
Table 3: *Mandy’s timetable*.....60

List of Figures

Figure 1: *St Gabrielle’s charter overview*.....46