Inclusive Education and Work Based Learning- Managing a Process of Change: The Arguments of Jennifer Todd, Thomas and Loxley

Elda Nikolou Walker, Institute for Work-Based Learning, Middlesex University

Abstract

The aim of this article is to discuss some of the latest developments in inclusive education in respect of special educational needs. It considers approaches from various authors, and chiefly focuses on Jennifer Todd's 'Post-structuralist' theory and its contribution to furthering the inclusive education argument.

This article compares and contrasts Todd's views with those of Thomas and Loxley and draws relative conclusions as to how these might best fit with special educational needs. Though the research methods adopted by all researchers involved differ, these scholars are fundamentally in agreement regarding a common approach towards inclusive education. Todd places herself, for example, in the centre of the research, basing her new theory of post-structuralism, as well as other narratives, on her own experience, usually validated by her fellow educational psychologists (using, amongst other means, 'face-face' interviews). Thomas and Loxley, on the other hand, seem more remote from their, otherwise, similar in nature, research. Thomas and Loxley's use of 'passive' language, 'third party' terms and generic terminology makes this research, some could argue, harder to validate. Attempts are made to indicate that for inclusive education to be successful it is imperative for the traditional roles, usually carried out by individuals representing the various professions (i.e. teachers, psychologists etc..), as well as parents and children, to change. This is not, however, a seamless change, but, one which involves a significant 'culture shift', in order to accommodate the revised demands being placed upon the developing new roles.

Finally, the article considers the direction inclusive education is taking and suggests that Work-Based Learning (WBL) may be the catalyst to assisting and/or providing a pragmatic method for its implementation, drawing on the possible benefits of WBL, in order to further inclusive education.

Introduction

This paper discusses the concept of inclusive education. In order to do this, two main authors in this area of work are examined: Jennifer Todd ('post-structuralist' theory) and Thomas & Loxley. All these scholars propose that inclusive education needs to progress, arguing that a radical assessment of both *theory* and *practice* is now feasible. This process is illustrated through a Work-Based Learning (WBL) approach. This article argues that WBL can become a successful tool of delivery for the intimated progress. Important, is also a review of the educational system, by the governing Body, through the consultation document 'Every School is a Good School'. This document is, specifically, commented upon, as to the ways it suggests to promote the *ideal* of inclusive education.

Section I: Critical Analysis of J. Todd's '*Post-Structuralist*' Argument.

Before examining the developments within inclusive education it is necessary to commence with an explanation of what special educational needs actually mean. This terminology, it is argued, chiefly denotes those children with learning difficulties or disabilities which present greater challenges to learning, when compared with children of their same age. These children, therefore, require additional support, which can come from *within*, or *outside* the school. Like the actual *need* itself, this support may be permanent or temporary, which is the subject of assessment by professionals. This assessment usually determines whether or not the child can be educated in a mainstream school (or requires specialist support from a specialist institution). The debate around inclusive education, it has to be stressed, addresses both approaches with the child at the *centre* of the discussion.

Inclusive education, therefore, attracts many interpretations and definitions, one being provided by Allen (1999) as being '..about responding to diversity..about listening to unfamiliar voices, [about] being open, [about] empowering all members and celebrating 'difference' in dignified ways.' From this perspective, the goal is not to leave anyone *out* of school. Thomas and Loxley also define inclusion as being about '.. comprehensive education, equality and collective belonging.' These scholars, therefore, consider inclusive education as being *more* than integrating children with special educational needs into mainstream schools, or about these needs necessarily emerging from learning difficulties, or disability. It is argued that children who are, for any reason, disadvantaged should not be excluded from mainstream education.

In relation to inclusive education, Todd places the concept of *partnership* at the centre of her research. Todd's views on working alongside parents and children are pivotal to successfully moving towards *real* inclusive education. She calls this process, an enabling practice, '..an involving one, working alongside parents and children in ways that engage with an agenda for inclusion.'. (Todd, 2006).
Thomas & Loxley (2007), also believe that inclusion is part of a more complex process (than the one currently in existence), a process which is *more* than how teachers and academics conceptualise the differences.
Today's need for inclusion attempts to involve those children and young people who society has, possibly, *excluded,* as they are considered *different* because they do not conform to societal norms. In terms, for example, of 'behaviours', 'language', 'learning', and 'beliefs'. However, Tawney (1964), through his 'social model' for inclusion, suggests that a (truly) civilised society strives to reduce the inequalities that arise from 'given' and from its relative organisation. The organisation of society's institutions, such as schools, should 'lighten', in order to reduce those inequalities (that frequently arise from birth or circumstances), rather than exaggerate them.

It is generally accepted that current approaches to teaching are incorporated into a world where *hypothesis testing* is widely used, for example, to solve difficult mathematical or scientific problems. This (scientific) approach, indisputably, justifies an accepted level of objectivity, as solutions to problems usually derive from a formula being developed, in order to prove a corresponding theory; thus, it is *believed* to be achieving an informed outcome. The latter attaches to this historical scientific rationale a high *authority* and one which, it could be argued, would be difficult to challenge. An earlier approach by Mezirow (1991), though, also considered the need to challenge people's perceptions regarding inclusive education, in order to *change* them and (ultimately) move forward. '..Conceptualised transformative learning [can only occur] as development through challenging old assumptions and creating new meanings that are more inclusive, integrating, discriminating and open to alternative points of view.' (Mezirow, 1991). Todd, also, soon became aware that any *new* theory attempting to further inclusive education would have to be 'brave'. Todd, therefore, developed her 'post-structuralist' theory, in order to encounter individual perspectives and acquire the capacity to critically analyse the themes and discourses which underlie the concept in question. According to Todd, special needs is a fluid concept which grows with people

and it is, therefore, desirable for people to govern their own actions in accordance with their circumstances.
Todd considers a partnership approach (professionals, parents, child) to be the key to resolving problems regarding inclusive education. Todd argues that it is through effective discussions between *all* the partners that the children will receive meaningful help to separate themselves from their problems. She identified that such an approach would be crucial to inclusive education and has argued that the process has either been entirely absent, paid 'lip service' to, or has been badly managed. (Todd, 2000).
Increasing the levels of communication between the parent, child and professionals, Todd believes, will lead to establishing a revised set of accepted norms. These, it is then hoped, will be equally shared by both the individual, and family, as well as the community. Thomas and Loxley (2007) are, some would argue, even more radical in their thinking, as they believe that inclusive education is based upon the fact that similar difficulties (as described by Todd) are constructed out of an *assumption* regarding concepts of for example, 'deficit', 'weakness', 'disturbance' and 'vulnerability'.
If inclusive education is to be seriously considered it will mean a *change* in the *traditional* roles of those involved, namely the professionals, parents and children. It is accepted that within schools, senior staff are, frequently, trained to undertake, amongst others, the role of 'Inclusion Managers'. 'Parents, unfortunately, [are afforded] no such opportunity [of training/retaining] and such roles would cause them undue stress' (Duncan, 2003).
The training of senior staff can in itself be viewed in two contrasting ways. Firstly, it can be seen as holding onto traditional pedagogy. For example, senior staff who carry with them their teaching experience would, perhaps, be capable of moulding this new ideology (inclusive education) into the *existing* teaching fabric and possibly justify the current 'status quo'. Secondly though, (and perhaps more akin to 'Change Management'), would be the attempt to convert the individuals who are negatively pre-disposed. Once these senior staff, it could be argued, have been convinced of the merits and benefits that inclusive education brings, they can expound such advantages, in order to significantly increase the pace for introducing, and/or furthering inclusion, within their individual schools.

The use of senior staff may also help with what Armstrong et al (1993) terms as the 'deferment of responsibility'. Senior staff, inevitably, create their own reputation over their working years. Thus, any disability exhibited by a child can be attributed to *other* causes, as opposed to a teacher's (possible) failings. For instance, "the deferring of

responsibility from the teacher to other causes accommodates the teachers' own integrity and reputation, as they [teachers] can redefine their roles in terms of skills associated with teaching 'normal' children." Newly appointed teachers, however, could have a much harder job with such deferments. Securing the teachers' 'buy-in', could contribute to the "shift from treating it [special education] as [a] marginal and problematic aspect of the state-maintained schooling, to a more central component in the wider 'inclusion' project." (DFES, 2001).

It has been argued that starting to give the parent and the child a 'voice', resulted in the breakdown of the traditional model of 'teacher/psychologist' partnership which, however, produced a 'teacher-led' solution. Indeed, Morgan (2000) also argued that 'for inclusive education to take place professionals should adopt practices that assist people develop their own preferred identities.'.

Todd acknowledges that her research showed that some professionals view themselves as actual representatives of the parent and/or child. This [both Murray (2006) and Todd (2007)] it is claimed can result in the professional views being considered, but not necessarily being assimilated to the opinions, or choices that the parent or child *may* consider important. Thomas and Loxley (2007) also agree with seeking the views of children as their 'freshness and common sense in these suggestions derive in large measures from the fact that they are uncluttered by the constructs, dreams and jargon of the professional educators'.

Psychologists also appear to be aware of the need to increase the involvement of the child and have developed many tools and methods to do this (Hobbs et al.,2000). It has been argued that any lack of involvement for the child can disengage him/her from the process of finding a solution for their inclusion. In that case, therefore, the solution will be the one which the teacher, or psychologist(s) consider best fit. However, it can also be argued, that the latter perspective has helped, until now, to shift the element of blame, (problem), from the 'child', to, possibly, other causes (ie: 'school', 'family', 'community', 'culture', etc..).

Thomas and Loxley (2007) considered inclusion to be much more problematic as they argue that 'it cannot be effected simply on the basis of the way that teachers and academics conceptualise difference: it is part of a complex picture.'

Todd's 'Post-structuralist' theory removes the need for professionals to give a 'child' or 'young person', a label which best identifies them because of the nature of their disability. Todd suggests that facilitating scrutiny of both 'language' and 'processes' (which have been constructed around the disabled child), would help consider if these

actually *help* or *hinder* that child. These can then be deconstructed, as Parker(1999) also stated, in a process of critical reading and unravelling of 'loaded' terms, that construct *how* we 'read' our place in 'culture', 'family', 'relationships' and *how* we think about who we are and what it might be *possible* for us to be.

This deconstruction of terms and language used, supported by Todd's collaborative approach, has resulted in a change of emphasis from the 'need' for a child to get an education, to a 'right' for a child to receive education.

The latter point was also supported by Article 2 of the 'European Convention for Human Rights', which concerned the 'Right to an Education'. This has subsequently, been incorporated into the UK (within the 'Bill of Rights') and has been addressed in the Northern Ireland context, by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, (2000). All these legislative requirements, although not yet primary legislation within the UK, further the inclusion education approach by highlighting the need to embrace *diversity*. However, this intention has, some could argue, 'fallen short' of protecting the 'vulnerable' (ie: those with special education needs), as it has failed to find its way into current Education law.

It has also been argued that a successful method aiding inclusive education is the use of 'multi-agency' working. This involves the partnering of various organisations working together, in the interest of the child. With regards to special educational needs, a typical composition of a 'multi-agency' team would be, for example, an 'educational psychologist', an 'occupational therapist' and a 'speech and language therapist'. This composition of the team is, usually, convened when the teacher identifies that a 'child' or 'young person' is underperforming. Some scholars have argued (Todd, 2007 and Thomas &Loxley, 2007) that a possible danger of this process is the inherent understanding that the child has already been labelled ; therefore, the team sets about introducing both the *objectivity* and *rationale* needed, in order to decide if a problem actually exists and the 'label' is an *appropriate* one. Todd (2007), argues that these "multi-professional assessments can be seen as combining rationality, objectivity, bureaucracy, and control into 'totalising identities' ". Watson, also illustrated this (as early as in 1999), by arguing that 'the label may become the child's identity whereby everything related to the child being explained by their impairment.' (Watson et.al.,1999). 'Multi-agency' teams, therefore, can also lead to actual exclusion for the child who is being assessed. The parents are, usually, invited to the school to discuss (or be informed on) what intervention the school believes will serve the child's best interest. The exclusion, it has been argued, emanates from removing the child from its normal classroom activity for assessments, away from its peers and inviting the parents to the

school, outside the normal ‘parent-teacher’ meeting schedules. Questions are frequently encouraged from those who are not afforded the same attention. Corker and Davis (2002) have claimed that ‘disabled children and their parents become the objects of scrutiny and separation from the moment the impairment is identified, and identification leads to separation in terms of policy and practice, irrespective of grand claims of inclusion’.

Thomas and Loxley (2007), also agree that the aforementioned approach could be counterproductive to the problems it was trying to remedy. “These kinds of feature, with assumptions of deficit and all attendant paraphernalia of special pedagogy and its ‘remedial’ and segregative methods, exaggerate existing difference”.

Developments around inclusive education are, indeed, continuing. It is important, as Todd claims, to move away from the ‘problems’. Instead, people have to be viewed as part of a ‘*system*.’

In this case, Northern Ireland presents us with an example: the responsible government department, the Department of Education, set up a ‘Special Education Needs and Inclusion Team’ to review its current approach. This was welcomed amongst academics and professionals, as it is the first major review of its kind for twenty five years. However, the consultation document ‘Every School is a Good School: The Way Forward for Special Education Needs (SEN) and Inclusion’, has in itself being criticised, as there is a strong belief that its structure lends itself more to the re-packaging of the historical approach, rather than a fundamental re-visioning of special needs education and inclusion within Northern Ireland (Smith, R.,2010). Allen and Slee, (2009), are also in agreement, claiming that ‘attempts are made to get behind the meaning of the word, [though] little real substance, and/or confusion is found’.

The document also interchanges the words ‘integration’ and ‘inclusion’: ‘integration’ seems to be concerned with ensuring that children with ‘special needs’ are placed in mainstream schools alongside other children without these needs; whereby ‘inclusion’ is presented as the process of the assimilation of children with ‘learning difficulties’, ‘sensory impairments’, or ‘physical disabilities’ to mainstream schools. This definition also has its critics as the terminology of ‘special needs’ can also have its limitations- in this case, it frequently continues to involve a concept which excludes *any* child, for *any* reason, from mainstream schooling. This, in the past, resulted in Warnock (DES,1978) redefining ‘special needs’, as a move away from ‘labelling’, or ‘categorising’ the children, into a more accepted approach to define ‘child’s needs, as and when they arose.’(DES, 1978).

The document itself, it can be argued, still revolves around the language of ‘barriers to learning’, or ‘child’s difficulties’. This, when compared with Armstrong’s ‘deferment theory’, still puts the onus of *blame* on the child; rather than considering the education system as an entity (ie: ‘school’, ‘education professionals’, ‘environment’, etc..)
The document though, considers a school improvement policy and a wider education reform for those who ‘support, govern, inspect and work in schools’, but there is still no mention of those who *use* the schools, (i.e: the children).
The entire premise for these improvements seems to centre around resources and the suitability for the planned improvements. However, very early in the document the DE sets out that, ‘the Department is also reviewing its funding allocation policy for schools.’. Is this, possibly, demonstrating that the DE is merely committed to providing a framework for these improvements, but will (inevitably?) leave it up to individual schools to ‘action’ this framework? Would, perhaps, a more committed approach from the DE, be to have indicated a suitable budget which schools can ‘tap into’, as they develop their inclusive projects?
Inclusion is argued to be placing the child’s *needs* at the centre. With that in mind, as a key principle, it could, possibly, be argued that this document contradicts itself regarding this central role: though it refers to the ‘absolute centrality of the role of the classroom or subject teacher’, it also refers to ‘the interests of the pupils rather than the institutions’ as having to be at ‘the centre of efforts’. Is the latter conforming to the ideology of inclusion, whereas the former isolates this single entity from the systematic improvement required?
The document, however, has harnessed Todd’s (2007) ‘activity’ approach, as it intends to involve all stakeholders, ‘the improvement process is a collaborative one, requiring communication and co-operation within the school and between the school and its parents and wider community that it serves.’(Todd, 2007). However, there is little mention of how this will be catered for and/or specifically what finances will be available to implement this, due to the *changing roles* of all involved.
The document recognised that the educational law does not bestow legal responsibilities on the strategic decision makers. Is it, therefore failing to grasp this opportunity to rectify this and assign such roles and responsibilities in its improvement policy which the legislation fails to provide?
A reader might also argue that the document uses statistical information (ie: ‘one half’, or ‘one third’), more as a defensive mechanism of the educational system, as opposed to deriving real learning from its mistakes. Is the presentation of current performances somewhat ‘masked’ by passive terminology (ie: ‘generally good’, or ‘not good

enough'etc.)? Perhaps these terms would be more meaningful if actual numbers were used and the reader could ascertain what the current levels or standards of inclusion are, and what, if any, improvements are achieved through this approach?

Section II: Discussion of the Implications of Inclusive Education for Work-Based Learning in a Higher Education Institution.

It is argued that inclusive education can be effectively implemented through a Work-Based Learning (WBL) approach, as opposed to *mainstream* studying. The structure of WBL programmes, arguably, places the student at the centre of the learning, while the teacher provides the guidance and direction required to achieve the desired outcomes. This is one of the ways then, that the teaching becomes both 'learner-centred and experience-led'. (Boud & Solomon, 2001). Also, a WBL programme usually includes (from the beginning of the learning), the crucial partnering and/or collaboration, which is an absolute requirement for all inclusive education programmes. Both the pace of this learning and the pressures surrounding the learner can, usually, be facilitated, in order to ensure that learning continues. Costley (2006), stated that the issues around quality assurance regarding inclusion and management of the barriers to learning can, indeed, be delivered through three main elements: Costley talks of 'descriptors' as general statements defining what each module, or subject, entails. It is reckoned that the language, or conveyance of these details can be in a format best suited for the learner to understand; while 'learning outcomes' should be agreed with the individual in advance, in order to clarify what are the expectations regarding what it is to be achieved. This process is viewed as particularly important, since it aspires to provide the learner with a 'picture' for the learning journey; in other words, what the learner will be capable of achieving after the subject has been covered. Finally, Costley talks about 'assessment criteria' as being elements through which the individual declares commitment and discovers, long in advance of the critical 'testing time', the ways in which he/she will be assessed, in order to ensure that the actual learning has taken place.

Within main school pedagogy, children, usually, only have certain landmarks in their minds with regards to their testing (ie: how much they have learned). Typically, these are Key Stage tests (ie:'11+'and/or 'P7 Transfer tests', etc..) where a child's *only* choice in the latter, is to possibly 'opt out'. With Work-Based Learning, the involvement of the learner from the onset can help deal with these stages more effectively, as the 'lead in' period would, arguably, be more guarded.

A Work-Based Learning approach would support inclusive education programmes, as it could be argued that it (WBL) can effectively cater for stakeholder partnerships, such as those made-up from a combination, or all of the' teacher-child- parent-professional' network. This collaboration is also hoped to be effective in reducing any resistance to change; thus increasing the *ownership* of important decisions made to solve difficult problems. This *ownership* is intended to be 'spread across' each distinct party involved; thus avoiding the element of 'blame' being afforded to just one person- the language is transferred to 'situations', as opposed to 'people'. Arguably, the aforementioned process can be demonstrated throughout a Work-Based Learning programme, where the 'content', 'teaching methods', 'attendance patterns' and the actual 'assessment processes', are previously *discussed* and *agreed.* It is then hoped that all can have a 'voice' which can lead to steer the learning process to ensure that everybody's objectives are fulfilled.

The issue of removing a child from the peers for the purposes of assessment can also be, subtly, managed through Work-Based Learning. WBL requires interaction on a 'one-one' basis, whereby the tutor guides the student individually, to achieve the relevant 'learning outcomes'. This is, generally, accepted as the usual norm to studying. This approach can ensure that any barriers to learning are accommodated and confidentiality is usually retained between the individual concerned and the teacher; though it has also been argued that it is *exactly* because of these inherent elements of 'secrecy', that there is the possible danger that this approach can, indeed, 'mask' difficulties to learning for the individual.

However, Work-Based Learning methodology, it is argued, has the virtue of avoiding segregation from other students, thus successfully addressing most issues underlying the rationale for inclusion.

Work-Based Learning and the close relationship between the teacher and the learner can also be used to optimise the opportunity for the individual to share any problems external to the learning which may have an impact on the actual learning

process. These can derive from a ‘cultural’, ‘family’, or ‘environmental’ context. Work-Based Learning, however, also facilitates an opportunity for the student to discuss other issues which impact upon their learning that can be, generally, ‘missed’ by a teacher, due to, for example, other classroom activities and inherent distractions, (such as other pupils). These may, generally, be of minor relevance to most people, but of grave importance to the individual concerned and their learning, (ie: inability to see the board clearly, copy notes from it, or hear the teacher adequately). These issues, though not in warrant of formal medical assessments, or indeed, ‘special’ treatment, can, nonetheless, have an impact on the individual’s *learning capacity* and can, perhaps , lead to the individual being labelled by the peers as ‘slow’, or even ‘stupid’.

If government ministers and policy-makers are resolute in their plight for inclusive education, they should, perhaps, adopt a stance that removes such barriers. A Work-Based Learning approach would be particularly helpful to mature students who are in full-time employment, but return to study for career and/or personal development purposes.

An analysis of the current education law identifies that the aforementioned group of people can find no protection, or recourse of mistreatment, therein. Their barriers to learning, however, usually derive from having a ‘family and children ‘, as well as other commitments linked to adulthood (ie: full-time employment). The mature students’ time should, therefore, be equally divided amongst all of these priorities. Also, the need to pay University fees can provide an additional burden for the mature student. These fees, which are usually required as soon as a learning programme starts, can significantly limit the training budgets’ capacity to accommodate all interested participants; frequently leading to disappointed candidates, purely on a financial (not intellectual) basis.

It is hoped that Work-Based Learning has eased many of the barriers disadvantaging the mature student. If educational policy-makers, however, want to realise their vision of an all inclusive education society, then it seems that they will have to make,as a priority, the relevant funds available, in order to support the mature student and ease the additional pressures that education, usually, places on an, already, strained ‘family budget’!

Section III: Discussion of the Implications of Inclusive Education for the General Practice of Work-Based Learning.

It is argued that WBL makes a major contribution to resolving learning barriers through creating an inclusive educational approach (i.e. flexibility/time/structure of classes, ‘one-

one' tutorials, a close relationship and support from the course leader etc.). All these elements culminate in a more 'student –friendly' product which facilitates the individual's domestic, working and studying life.

It can therefore, be argued that the increased implementation of WBL can, indeed, influence the pace at which inclusive education is developed, (especially for the mature student in full-time employment). WBL accommodates the current changes within the working environment from one that was entirely based in an industrial economy to one that now recognises the contribution and value that *knowledge* can make to the individual, family, schools, Universities, employers and communities, in general. WBL represents a new paradigm in education but one which continues to evolve as *knowledge* becomes, increasingly, more valuable. '*Work-Based Learning is situated within the context of a paradigm shift from industrial to knowledge society. The rhetoric of knowledge and work is persuasive and dominant in a developed world'.* (Nikolou-Walker, 2008).

It is believed by some scholars that the concept of inclusive education can be realised through WBL. Work-Based Learning programmes are structured upon the premise of learning partnerships. The make-up of these partnerships can be tailored to the individual and consists of various stakeholders (i.e: 'student', 'teacher', 'parents', 'employers', Universities, 'communities', 'other agencies', etc..).

In reference to tackling the issues of 'integration' and 'segregation', a WBL approach has a greater tendency to *mask* the underlying reasons behind the original need to integrate or segregate the learner. This need for integration, possibly, becomes an issue when *others* are aware of the 'difference' (ie: when attention is unnecessarily drawn to the 'special need' differentiating the learner from their peers). WBL, it can be argued, also removes the need to segregate the learner from their peers, as all learners follow the same learning pattern and 'one-one' contact with their course tutor becomes the norm. (In these cases, does anyone else need to know or be informed of the 'special need', outside of the stakeholders involved in the aforementioned partnerships?).

The structure of the WBL programmes also facilitates the learning as they are usually more flexible than traditional modes of study. (The mature student in employment can then liaise with their employer to secure 'time off' etc.).

The relationship built-up between the learner and the tutor can help, with the tutor identifying any other 'barriers to learning,' which the teacher in a traditional classroom situation may 'miss'. This is a direct result of the student feeling more comfortable and

potentially releasing more information for the tutor to manage, as the WBL programme rolls out.

It has also been argued that WBL as a vehicle for implementing inclusive education, can cater for both the needs of the education system, as well as those of the learner. The 'one-one' WBL structure, allows the learner to ask and seek additional support without being 'labelled' by their peers. This may form one of the barriers of learning for the individual, without however, being readily apparent (ie: inability to write quickly and take notes during lectures, difficulty in copying from a board etc..).

The progress of the WBL learner is measured through assessments as opposed to examinations. This removes the pressures from traditional examinations which have a tendency to test what the individual can remember under pressure, instead of what the individual is capable of.

It is hoped that the use of WBL can harness and embrace the issue of diversity and deliver the aims and objectives of an inclusive education system. The contribution and effectiveness of WBL remains, however, at the mercy of the firm hold of *traditional* education approaches.

Conclusion

Inclusive education is less about integrating children with special needs into mainstream schools and more about ensuring that any barriers to learning, experienced by any child are provided with the platform to be sensitively managed to prevent the child being overtly treated differently from the peers.

The ways that this practice is maintained may call for those in authority to explore *new* arrangements for schooling and learn the lessons of alternative approaches to education which have, already, demonstrated having a positive contribution to make to progress inclusive education initiatives.

These new ways must safeguard the child's integrity and gain their involvement on what affects them. Their parents, too, must be supported and involved to ensure the decisions being made, regarding the child's education, are ones which the child has contributed to, and not ones which only teachers, and professionals think would be best fitted to them. Todd (2003) has also considered the use of 'Parent Partnership Schemes' (PPS). These were set up in 'Local Authorities' to train independent parents whose children had been identified as having special needs. However, there is little evidence of widespread take-up for these. (Duncan,2003). Todd (2003), had, indeed, her reservations regarding

PPS's, as she felt that those were further removing the parents from the *real* centre of decision-making.
WBL has become a helpful way of learning, supported generally by both government and employers/ employees. It can therefore, assist those students who have *other* barriers to learning (ie: 'family commitments', 'challenges with personal finances' etc.), as WBL claims to be addressing the aforementioned 'disruptions' to learning.
Is there an inherent danger in what Robbins (1960) famously referred to as '*if you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got!'?*
This was reinforced within the inclusive education debate by Sketic (1995) who stated that *'rather than resolving the special education problems of the late twentieth century, the inclusion debate will reproduce them in the twenty-first century'*.
Thus, any change to the current schooling system and the challenges of inclusion will most definitely have to be 'brave'; but nonetheless, perhaps if based upon the foundations of the learning and experiences afforded by WBL, (already adopted by some Higher Education Institutions), these will be, ultimately, justified and proved effective.
Work-Based Learning should not be about a controlled acquisition of pre-determined skills, knowledge and working practices. It is rather, hoped that Work-Based Learning helps to formulate what type of learning should be covered, how the success of such learning can be measured and most importantly, how this process will be developed. Such approaches is argued, can help the development of inclusive education and the special needs concept can have the assumption of predictability reduced especially, in relation to the usefulness and impact of the various pedagogical interventions.

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