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One School for All: A Multi-Faceted Practice  
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## Editorial

Recent ideas about inclusion have seen the promotion of a broader concept that aims to strengthen sustainable development of education by providing lifelong learning for all learners and by enabling equality of access (United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2008, November). Addressing diversity requires education that is relevant, equitable, and effective. The important role of governments continues to be raised with an emphasis on the design, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of educational policies as a way to further this achievement.

The education for all approach that was first adopted by the World Education Forum held in Dakar in April 2000, aimed at providing quality basic education for all children, young people and adults by 2015. By 2008, which was half way towards achieving the Dakar goals, this had not been as fully embraced as had been hoped, as many jurisdictions were still struggling to manage and implement an education system that really catered for diversity (UNESCO, 2008, Spring). One of the failures identified by UNESCO was that policies and practices were not taking into account that education must be seen as a life-long process. It was suggested that to meet these goals governments needed to take a:

... multi-sectoral approach to education and forging coherent strategies for sustainable change at three key levels: policy and legislation, attitudes at the society and community level and how teaching and learning takes place, how it is managed and assessed (UNESCO, 2008, Spring, p.1).

During the compulsory years of schooling the inclusion movement has meant a paradigm shift in the way schools operate and in the diversity of students that they cater for (Forlin, 2010). Internationally, there has been a strong movement away from providing segregated education facilities for those with different learning needs to enabling all children to be educated within the same regular school system. Inevitably, this has challenged the curriculum and pedagogical approaches that have been traditionally employed in regular schools. Different school systems have adopted a range of ways to implement these changes. While a plethora of terminology has been used to explain these new approaches, for example 'education for all', 'child-centred', 'child friendly', 'whole school approach' and 'whole schooling', each of these has basically focused on providing appropriate education for every child within a regular school.

The focus of a one school for all approach, therefore, requires schools to create effective learning environments that are conducive to learning and growth for all children within the same classrooms. Peterson and Tamor (2003) outline six principles that their team has developed that form the basis of what they refer to as 'whole schooling'. These are: empowering citizens in a democracy; including all; authentic multi-level teaching; building community; supporting learning; and partnering. While they suggest that these represent a fairly simple synthesis of a diverse range of research, they consider that together these six principles form an effective approach to providing education for all.

A greater emphasis on how teaching and learning takes place, though, as recommended by UNESCO (November, 2008) is critical if inclusion is to achieve its goals of providing equitable education for all students within a one school for all approach. For classroom interventions to work teachers require appropriate professional support to develop their techniques to enable all students to achieve their own potential. A traditional approach of schooling students by allocating them to classes based on

academic achievement increases inequalities and creates social differences that are not conducive to developing an inclusive society (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], January, 2008). Yet an inclusive approach will only have a chance of being successful if teachers have the skills, supportive dispositions, and the power to be able to modify the curriculum and adopt inclusive pedagogies to accommodate the diversity of student needs to be found within their unique classrooms.

If teachers are to be able to move beyond performing what Schön (1983) earlier referred to as ‘technical rationality’ which required purely teaching as directed, toward becoming independent reflective professionals, who are not only capable of making decisions regarding the curriculum and pedagogy but who are also empowered by their principals and educational systems to do so; then there needs to be a much greater prominence at systemic levels to discuss how this can occur. While education systems have a tendency to promote inclusion as the panacea for overcoming all problems within education, there continues to be limited discussion at a policy level about how schools can develop and implement effective inclusive practices; especially when there remain many inflexible structures regarding teaching and assessment. As reiterated by Save the Children (2009), it is governments that ultimately have the main responsibility for making education accessible and beneficial for all children.

The change in emphasis from an earlier focus on rights and social justice to a much greater accent on issues of equity and access has resulted in quite different approaches to how inclusion has been enacted across the globe. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, January, 2008) has identified ten steps to providing equity in education that cover education design, practices and resourcing. Regarding the aspect of practices there are three advocated steps: 1. Identify and provide systematic help to those who fall behind at school and reduce year repetition; 2. Strengthen the links between school and home to help disadvantaged parents help their children to learn; and 3. Respond to diversity and provide for the successful inclusion of migrants and minorities within mainstream education. Each of these supports the ideology of one school for all.

The collection of articles in this special edition addresses some of these practice issues as schools aim to provide systematic help to their students, involve parents in the journey, and respond to diversity by organizing appropriate professional learning (PL) for their teachers. If teachers are to be able to adopt and implement successfully this new philosophy of teaching and learning then it is apparent that they need to be prepared and willing participants in this change. Many existing teachers, though, have had little experience of working with diverse groups of students in the same classroom. Older teachers were trained to teach homogenous classes where the focus was on the three Rs. Even new graduates continue to express concerns that current training programs do little to prepare them to cater for the breadth of diversity to be found within schools (Winter, 2006) or to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of inclusion (Booth, Nes, & Stromstad, 2003). The importance of providing appropriate PL opportunities is, therefore, extremely pertinent.

The first article in this edition considers how the PL of specialist inclusion teachers can be effective. Elizabeth O’Gorman reviews two aspects of PL that focus on the preference of teachers and which opportunities are seen by them as being the most beneficial for enhancing their role. She concludes by providing a 4–ply model that draws

on four complementary layers of support involving system supports, tertiary level input, school development and teacher self-enhancement. This framework provides a very useful foundation as a scaffold for schools to enrich teachers' learning for inclusion by utilizing both external expertise and in-school support.

The importance of ensuring that tertiary programs are also meeting the needs of newly graduated students for becoming inclusive practitioners is the focus of the second article by Elizabeth West and Roxanne Hudson. Their research considers the reform of a teacher preparation program by co-constructing this with early career teachers. One of the most critical concerns raised by these teachers, and one they suggested they needed most assistance with, is the difficulties they faced in working with families and children who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Engaging new teachers in dialogues with tertiary staff about the effectiveness of their preservice training has allowed programs to be refined to better meet the specific practice needs of teachers.

For many jurisdictions the issue of preparing teachers for inclusion is quite a challenge when they have so many teachers who need up skilling. The third article considers how one system has undertaken a major initiative in an attempt to do this by providing a structured PL program for its teachers through collaboration with a tertiary institute. Chris Forlin and Kenneth Sin explore the effectiveness of a basic PL course on improving teachers' dispositions about inclusion and their perceived self-efficacy in implementing inclusive practices. This article also discusses how schools can become more inclusive when still constrained by many inflexible systemic practices that are contrary to inclusion.

Identifying the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding inclusive education is the focus of the next paper by Todd Fletcher, David Allen, Bradford Harkins, Kristen Mike, Cristian Martinich and Helena Todd. Employing a guided focus group technique Todd Fletcher and his colleagues were able to develop a coding system checklist protocol for discovering and determining deeper levels of detail regarding participants' perceptions of inclusion. This research has opened up possibilities for developing online surveys that better target the opinions, attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders regarding inclusive education. By better understanding teachers' and administrators' perceptions about inclusion professional learning can be more focused on addressing their specific concerns as they relate to the local context.

Strengthening the link between home and school by developing effective partnerships is reviewed by Garry Hornby and Chrystal Witte. Their research investigated parental involvement practices across a large number of primary schools. While identifying a number of strengths, several weaknesses such as a lack of school policy, the ad hoc approach to parental involvement and the limited number of ways in which parents were involved, together with limited training for teachers on working with parents were key aspects. This lack of training for teachers at both pre and inservice levels was considered as detrimental to the government's desire to improve parental involvement in schools as a means of improving outcomes for all children.

Developing more inclusive practices that at the same time develop more positive links between parents and teachers was the philosophy of the PL program reported in the final article by Pennee Kantavong and Suwaree Sivabaedya. This PL program was an initiative to enhance the learning of students with special learning needs in inclusive classrooms in Thailand where inclusion is a relatively new concept. It was focused on

enabling both teachers and parents. The parents involved in this PL came from very diverse backgrounds with many reporting that they themselves were illiterate and lacked the skills to be able to help their children learn. The training allowed them to gain greater self-efficacy and an increased willingness to try to help their children. The collaborative training program demonstrated how such an approach to PL could provide an ideal and unique opportunity for teachers and parents to communicate with each other and to start to develop more positive interactions to help their children learn.

The focus in this special edition is on strengthening practices for enabling more inclusive schools by employing whole schooling approaches. Consideration has been given to different aspects of PL that in their own diverse ways aim to improve inclusive school practices. Developing and maintaining a one school for all is a complex and multi faceted ongoing task. It is not possible to be able to declare that a school has now become inclusive and so can rest on its success. As soon as practices are put in place that are starting to produce effective outcomes, student populations change, education reform occurs, current philosophies become challenged and transformed. All of these result in a need to adapt practices to accommodate these enduring developments.

Equally, inclusive practices are incredibly diverse as different jurisdictions endeavor to provide contextually and culturally appropriate ways to foster the education of all of their children. Cultural traditions, social customs, religious beliefs, and ethnic values, all inform the different development of inclusive practices. There is undoubtedly no single way to provide appropriate PL for all teachers. The innovative ideas shared by these researchers proffer a range of activities that can be used to support inclusive practices. Such ideas, though, should be considered in light of local contextual needs and further modified to accommodate the diversity of schools found within each jurisdiction.

The reality of teaching in multi-cultural and multi-diverse schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires a commitment to constant change and the acceptance that inclusion within a one school for all may just be idealism that is unlikely to result in perfection. What is important, though, is that PL should aim to provide the most relevant preparation for teachers so that they can work towards becoming as inclusive as is possible within the rather inflexible and constantly fluctuating constraints of educational systems and societies. Education like many aspects of society is in constant flux and changing incredibly rapidly; with teachers increasingly being asked to take on roles that go far beyond traditional academic outcomes.

An inclusive philosophy requires an open and collaborative approach that acknowledges that success will be the result of shared inputs. It flourishes when university faculty and school teachers mirror effective inclusive practices by engaging in more productive dialogues among themselves to determine what new knowledge is required for effectual inclusive professional learning to support a one school for all approach.

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