Week 1: Understanding Inclusive Education

Required:
Cologon, K. (2014). Better together! Inclusive education in the early years. In K. Cologon (Ed) *Inclusive education in the early years: Right from the start* (pp. 3-26). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Cologon, K. (2014). Ableism, disablism and the early years. In K. Cologon (Ed) *Inclusive education in the early years: Right from the start* (pp. 27-48). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
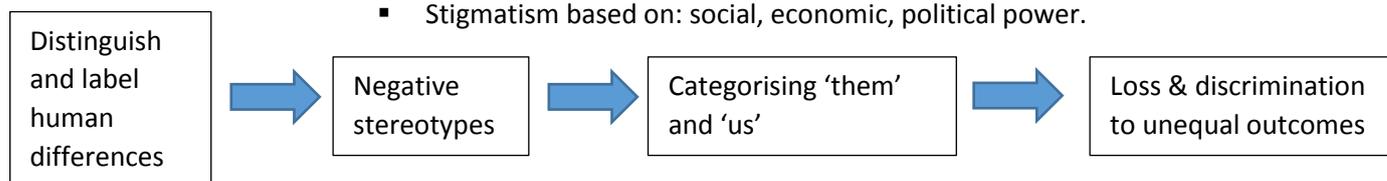
Ch 1 – Better together: Inclusive education in the early years

Inclusive education involves embracing human diversity and valuing and supporting the belonging and full participation of all people together (Cologon, 2013).

→ Valued equally with respect and equal opportunities, rights of all children, free from discriminatory beliefs and attitudes.

Barriers to inclusion

- Stigma and dehumanisation
  - Dehumanisation – 'them' and 'us' – being normal is better
  - Stigma – situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance.
    - Enacted stigma – active. (Experience)
      - Preventing stigmatised person from attending/participating in an education setting.
    - Felt stigmatism – awareness and fear of stigma and feelings of shame from being stigmatised. (Feelings).
    - Courtesy stigma – Eg. family of a person who experiences a disability
      - (those around them)
  - Link and Phelan (2001) – Process of stigma
    - Stigmatism based on: social, economic, political power.

| Distinguish and label human differences | → | Negative stereotypes | → | Categorising 'them' and 'us' | → | Loss & discrimination to unequal outcomes |

- Misunderstanding inclusion
  - Inclusion ≠ assimilation
    - Assimilation is trying to get a person with a disability to hide their characteristics to pass for normal.
    - Rather than changing the setting, we try and change the child. The setting should be changed to include the child.

The journey towards inclusion

- Exclusion and segregation
    - Macro-exclusion – children denied education or excluded from general schools and are put into 'special' schools.
- Mainstreaming
    - 1960s – Mainstreaming – all children together in same setting, no adjustments to facilitate inclusion.
- Integration
    - 1970s – Integration – making adaptations or accommodations to enable participation within a mainstream experience or setting.
        - Can imply someone who is 'different' needs to be 'fitted in' –rather than including, valuing and meeting the needs of all children.
    - Micro-exclusion – physical presence/placement alone is misunderstood as inclusion.
- Inclusive education
    - Inclusive ed. – embracing human diversity and valuing and supporting the belonging and full participation of all people together.
        - Social and academic inclusion, free from discriminating in any form.
    - *Confusion between inclusion and integration/mainstreaming*
        - Integration/mainstreaming: *Can we* provide for the needs of this student?
        - Inclusion: *How will we* provide for the needs of this student?

Why is inclusion important?

- → Experiences of exclusion are likely to lead children to think that their partners are inferior, incompetent and undesirable group members, which can cause them to impact their motivation to seek inclusion.
- → Inclusion goes to the heart of how we as communities of human beings with to live with one another.
- Inclusion as a human right
- Policy and Legislation – EYLF, Framework for School Age Care, Australian Curriculum
- Outcomes of inclusion
    - <u>Academic outcomes</u> – children who do not experience disability benefit from inclusive education and demonstrate equal/better academic outcomes than children educated in non-inclusive settings.
    - <u>Inclusion and behaviour</u> – facilitates positive behaviour development: development of greater independence, patience, trust, acceptance of diversity, responsive to the needs of others.
    - <u>Communication, language and physical development</u>
    - <u>Inclusion and bullying</u> – inclusive education promotes social development, facilitate friendships, and support the development of a sense of belonging.
- Inclusion and belonging

Inclusive EY professionals

- Developing inclusive attitudes
    - Beliefs and attitudes of EY professionals impact on children's beliefs – critical to the development of an inclusive culture.

Ch 2 – Ableism, Disablism and the Early Years

Medical and social model understandings of disability

- The Medical model of disability
  - Def: disability is impairment, or is caused by impairment, that is a tragedy (person needs to be 'fixed' or 'cured').
  - Does NOT consider that society plays a role in disabling people, other than exposing to environmental 'risks' (eg. alcohol during pregnancy, rubella)
  - Operates as though individuals live isolated and separated. – disability is solely within the person.
  - Person is viewed as broken and needing to be fixed.
- The Social model of disability
  - Def: disability is a socially created problem (people, structures, institutions), it demands a political response.
  - Considers impairment and disability as two different things.
  - Lack of accommodations within the environment/curriculum resulting in disability for a child.
    - Eg. A person is disabled when he/she is socially prevented from full participation by the way society is arranged.
  - Person is viewed as whole, the society is viewed as broken needing to be fixed.

Deconstructing disability

- When the starting point is accessibility, rather than impairment, the question becomes:
  - Who is disabled? How? Why?

Towards a social relational understanding of disability

- Def: suggests that disability is always socially situated, and arises from social interaction between people with ascribed impairments and people without, with the former being constructed as 'second rate'.
- Barriers to doing
  - Involves socially imposed restrictions in the form of environmental or economic barriers such as access issues
    - Eg. Preventing use of a building or environment, communication, participation (modified equipment or pace not provided), translation (not provided).
- Impairment effects
  - Are bio-social (biological and socially constructed) – direct and unavoidable impacts.
  - Eg. Woman missing a hand. In society, she cannot hold a boiled kettle and lift a jug to receive the boiled water. This restriction of activity is an immediate *impairment effect*. If other people in positions of authority decide she is unfit to be a paid care worker because she is unable to perform 'two-handed' actions – this constitutes Disablism.
- Barriers to being
  - Involves inappropriate, hurtful or hostile behaviour, has a negative impact on an individual's sense of self → affecting what s/he can be.

Ableism

- Disablism – social imposition of avoidable restrictions on the life activities, aspirations and psycho-emotional well-being of people categorised as "impaired" by those deemed "normal".
    - Social constructionist understanding of disability.
- Ableism – discriminatory and exclusionary practices that result from the perception that being able-bodied is superior to being disabled.
    - 'Them' and 'Us'
    - Ableist views –p.41

Children's experiences of disability

Week 2: Understanding Inclusive Education

Required:
Cologon, K. (2014). More than a label? The power of language. In K. Cologon (Ed) *Inclusive education in the early years: Right from the start* (pp. 49-69). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Petriwskyj, A. (2014). Legislation and policy in early years inclusion. In K. Cologon (Ed) *Inclusive education in the early years: Right from the start* (pp. 70-88). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Ch 3 – More than a label? The power of language

Acceptable and respected language use in Australia will be discussed, with attention to the relationships between labels, beliefs and practices.

Respectful language use and 'disability'

- The language that we use is one aspect of this power – requires careful and ongoing reflection.
  - The language we use reflects and shapes our understandings and influences those around us.
- Variations in 'disability' terminology
  - This book – "children who experience disability"
  - From social model perspective – "disabled person" (defining factor of a student)– identifies social imposition of disability – person is disabled through society and the environment, rather than disability being a personal characteristic.
  - Book terms:
    - 'child/person with disability' or 'child/person with disabilities' – example of person-first terms.
    - 'person with', 'person labelled with' – in relation to impairment labels because impairment is not the same as disability.
  - Eg. I have microtia, which impacts my hearing and the appearance of one of my years.
    - I am a 'person with microtia'. While I always have microtia, I only experience disability if people impose barriers to being or doing (see Ch 2).
  - Eg. 'person labelled with autism' (rather than person with autism) –as autism is a subjectively applied label that describes a set of human characteristics that can be alternatively be viewed as neurodiversity.
  - 'd/Deaf'
    - Deaf – those belonging to the Deaf community in Australia identify as being culturally Deaf. Do not consider deafness to be an impairment. Prefer to be called a 'Deaf person'. *Cultural identity.*
    - deaf – used to talk about hearing/deafness. Prefer person-first language (eg. 'person who is hard of hearing', 'person with a hearing impairment')
  - Less frequently… some people with autism are proud of the term 'autistic person' – recognising it as an aspect of human neurodiversity, rather than as an impairment.
    - DO NOT ASSUME

- o Person-first language
  - ▪ Person-first or People-first – placing the person before the label. – recognises personhood.
    - • Eg. A person with chronic illness.

Person-first language		Disrespectful language
'A child with cerebral palsy'	**NOT:**	'A cerebral palsy sufferer'
'People living with disability'	**NOT:**	'the disabled'
'Children with and without autism'	**NOT:**	'Autistic children and normal children'
'A child with Down syndrome'	**NOT:**	'A Down's syndrome child'
'A person who has epilepsy'	**NOT:**	'An epileptic'
'A child who is identified as gifted'	**NOT:**	'A gifted child'
'Children living in foster care'	**NOT:**	'Foster child'

- o *Suffering or living?*
  - ▪ Suffer – implies that autism is a kind of wound. Tragedy-based assumption.
    - • While many people with labels may suffer, it is not up to someone else to determine whether someone is 'suffering'*.*
  - ▪ Language such as 'poor things' or people ''suffering from' comes from a medical model view (person who experiences disability is deficient).
  - ▪ Children 'internalise the attitudes that they encounter within the disabling society, through the process of socialisation'.
- o *The myth of 'normal'*
  - ▪ 'Normal' people – implies that a person who has an impairment and/or experiences difference or disability is *not* normal.
  - ▪ When children are compared to the mythical 'normal child' – shown as lacking.
    - • The focus becomes on 'fixing' or 'curing' a child.
- o *Is the label even necessary?*
  - ▪ Eg. I am going out for dinner with me friend [who has Down syndrome].
  - ▪ Reason – person-first language
    - • Child to hospital because they were having a seizure – "This is Henry and he has epilepsy".
- o *Irregular settings*

Euphemisms

- • Euphemisms: words that are used with the intention of being less blunt or direct when a topic or term is considered embarrassing, rude or unpleasant.
  - o Seem good? – Exceptional children, special children, children with special/additional needs/rights, handi-capable, able-disabled.
    - ▪ Terms may reinforce stereotypes – patronising and imply that impairment is too tragic and negative to be discussed openly.
  - o They maintain a medical model – focus on 'problem', rather than the barriers within society and environment that produce disability.

Recognising 'difference' or stigmatising

- Problem – we make *erroneous* assumptions about the *causes* of differences and difficulties and we either *ignore* differences or *stigmatize* those who are considered different.
- Stigmatising – people label human differences, link labelled persons to negative stereotypes.
  - 'Them and Us' → loss and discrimination.
- *In denial?*
  - Labelled people are not passive recipients of oppression. They are active and resilient social members.
  - When parents do not wish to have their child labelled, when they do not wish to use or share the label, or when they do not view their child as needing to be fixed, those around them often assume the parents are unable to accept their child and are grieving or 'in denial'; in short, they make assumptions regarding the person and their psychological processing or status.
  - ^^^ these require critical examinations.
  - Finlay and Lyons (2005)
    - *Denial as repression*
      - → Person aware of label, suppresses this from themselves and others.
      - → Medical model – personal tragedy and undesireable.
    - *Denial as passing*
      - → Person accepts label, is aware of associated challenges.
      - → Will try to pass as 'normal' to avoid stigmas.
    - *Denial as the rejection of the usefulness of the concept or the rejection of others' definitions*
      - → Person is aware that other people label them, know their own support needs, strengths and limitations.
      - → Doesn't find label useful. Prefers not to be labelled.
  - Label is not part of their identity.
  - Labels used when it serves a useful purpose (disability parking permit), free of stigma.

Ch 4 – Legislation and Policy in Early Years Inclusion

Discusses legislative and policy frameworks. Also identifies some implications for practice.

Contemporary perspectives on inclusion

- EYLF – Inclusion involves diversity such as:
    - Characteristics (eg. gender, learning style)
    - Abilities (eg. giftedness, impairment, learning difficulty)
    - Background (eg. socio-economic, cultural and linguistic experiences, geographic location)
- ACARA – statements on principles of equity and personalised learning
    - Multiple types of learning opportunities or tasks
    - Multiple teaching strategies for supporting learning
    - Multiple means of assessment for and of learning (Van Kraayenoord, 2007)
        → Learning support teachers, ESL, advisory teachers for vision impairment.

International Position Statements and Conventions

- United Nations Convention on the *Rights of the Child* – best interests of the children, free from discrimination, rights of all children to education.
- UNESCO *Guidelines on Intercultural Education* – respect for cultural identity,
- The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities*

National universal legislation and policy

- Discrimination Legislation and National Standards
    - *Australian Disability Discrimination Act 1992 & Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
        - ^^ protects rights of all children to participate in education.
    - The *Disability Standards for Education* 2005
        - Includes: Participation support (eg. flexibility to provision, alternative activities), reasonable adjustments of classroom practices (adaptations to assessment strategies – children with disabilities demonstrating learning).
    - The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians 2008*
        - Education promotes equity and excellence, free from discrimination, respect for cultural knowledge.
        - Young Australians become successful learners, confident, creative, active and informed citizens.
    - The *National Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL)
        - Teachers' knowledge of students with diverse backgrounds, those with disabilities, differentiating teaching to cater for diverse abilities.

Sector-specific national legislation and policy

- ECEC National Legislation and Policy
    - NQS – program and practice, physical environment, relationships with children, collaborative partnerships with families and communities.
    - Bicultural support – children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
    - Support Subsidy – children with significant support requirements (eg. children with diagnosed disabilities and children who are refugees).

- ▪ Not for shadow assistant (additional educator, not as a shadow assistant – focus on one child).
- Early Years of School National Legislation and Policy
  - o Inclusive: curricular differentiation, support processes for target groups, reasonable adjustments to statutory assessment.
  - o *EYLF (+ Educator's Guide), Framework for School Age Care, Australian Curriculum*
  - o Inclusive content with social and cultural emphasis in the *Australian Curriculum*:
    - ▪ General capabilities – Personal social capacity, Ethical behaviour and Intercultural Understanding
    - ▪ Cross-curricular priorities – ATSI, Asia, Australia's engagement with Asia.

National policy for target groups

- Policies for disability groups
  - o The *Better Start for Children with Disability* – intended to offer early intervention for children.
  - o *Helping Children with Autism* – links families of children on autism spectrum to autism-specific play groups.
  - o The *National Disability Insurance Scheme* – combined national and state program for improved lifetime support.
- Policies to address disadvantage
  - o *Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)* – families offered home tutoring in strategies to engage their preschool child in learning activities.
- Policies for cultural groups
  - o The *National Statement for Culturally Inclusive Schooling in the 21st Century*
    - ▪ Rights of Indigenous children to high quality education, role of Indigenous parents as first educators of their young children.
  - o *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Action Plan 2010-14* – children's participation in high ECEC programs, support for school transition, partnerships.
  - o *Closing the Gap* – improved health, access to preschools, enhanced school education.
  - o The *Cultural Support Program* – cultural support and information for the educator to assist with the social inclusion of children and families from diverse backgrounds.

Targeted state-based policy

- NSW – The *Gifted and Talented Education Quality Teaching Framework 2008*
  - o Differentiation in curriculum content
  - o Process and skills to offer additional challenge in school.