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The Inclusive Secondary Teacher: The Leaders' Perspective

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Abstract: Australian legislation and policies over the last fifteen years have reinforced the rights of students with disabilities to be included in mainstream classrooms. To make this a reality, change has been necessary in a number of areas such as teacher knowledge, resource allocation, curriculum reform, and support services. This paper presents a profile of an inclusive secondary school teacher from the perspective of Australian educational leaders. A qualitative methodology was used in this study. Fifty leaders in inclusive education across Australia were interviewed. Shulman's (1986) model of teacher knowledge was used to analyse and report the data. The paper identifies the skills, knowledge and attributes deemed necessary for inclusion by the educational leaders.

Introduction

In its broadest context, inclusion refers to the acknowledgment, acceptance and respect of all people, regardless of culture, language , ethnicity , religion, beliefs, sexuality, age, disability, gender , socio-economic background, ability, image, or attainment (UNESCO, 1994). The UNESCO document, known as the Salamanca Statement, is a blueprint for inclusive societies and schools (Deppeler, Lorman & Sharma, 2005). This statement outlines the changes needing to occur at international, national and regional levels for schools to become inclusive. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) defines an inclusive school as one which can:

Accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities, and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups (p.6).

Legal and educational documents indicate that Australia has an inclusive context, with the necessary legislation, policies and curricula to shape Australia as an inclusive society having inclusive systems and schools. With the introduction of Commonwealth legislation, the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), students with disabilities were given the legal right to enrolment in regular schools and classes (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992). Further legislation, the Disability Standards for Education 2005, reinforced the right of students with disabilities to inclusion in the regular school curriculum.

Since the introduction of DDA, there has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of students with disabilities being included in regular classes in Australian schools Productivity Commission, 2003). An outcome of regular reviews of this increase in student enrolment is

professional development for all stakeholders, increased resources and reformed curricula (Department of Education and Training WA, 2004; Forlin & Bamford, 2005).

As the Senate Inquiry into the Education of Children with Disabilities (DEST 2002, p.30) warned, however, inclusive policies, programs and labels do not necessarily equate to inclusive educational systems of teaching practices. Research, senate and state government reviews into inclusion in Australian schools during the last decade have revealed that the inclusion of students with disabilities in schools has proved challenging (Department of Education WA, 2001; DEST,1998. 2002; Ministerial Task G Force, 2004; Ford, 2007; Hay & Winn, 2005).

The Traditional Teacher

For much of the twentieth century, the traditional role of secondary school teachers changed very little (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 219), with traditional education or "Old Learning" having a positivist or objective epistemology (Australian Council of Deans of Education, 2001, p. 21). Knowledge and the learner were separate entities; and knowledge was acquired through empirical, scientific methodology, with theory and values distinct from facts (Larochelle, Bednarz, & Garrison, 1998). Old Learning "focused on fixed content knowledge - undeniable facts and theories-to-be-applied, vocational skills and technical information, these being supposed to last for life" (Australian Council of Deans of Education, 2001, p. 21). The role of the traditional teacher was to transmit the core body of knowledge outlined in the syllabus to the next generation (Shulman, 1986). Learning was teacher-directed, focused on teacher input and the student was a fairly passive receptor of knowledge (Hargreaves, 1994). Secondary school teachers with subject expertise transferred knowledge through didactic teaching methods such as lectures, dictated notes, whole class teaching programs, textbooks, memorisation and rote learning (Thousand, Rosenberg, Bishop, & Villa, 1997).

The Traditional Special Education Teacher

For much of the last century, children with disabilities were denied an education (Foreman, 2001; Hallahan & Kauffman, 2005); many being institutionalised and categorised as ineducable (Center, 1987). Some of the larger schools in cities in Australia and the United States had special education classes for children with sensory or mild disabilities, but the majority of children with disabilities could only attend school if parents or charities founded special schools (Foreman, 2001; Hallahan & Kauffman, 2005). After World War II, specialist services, special schools and training for special education teachers began to expand (Center, 1987). In the late 1960s, parents in the United States of America lobbied for the expansion of services for the educable retarded, deaf/blind, autistic and those with learning disabilities (Center, 1987). A dual system was created, with children with disabilities being separated into special education classes and schools, away from their peers who must move rapidly through the syllabus.

Having evolved from medicine, traditional education and science, the epistemology of special education was also positivist, its pedagogy behaviourist and its methodology quantitative (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2005; Jaramillo, 1996; Sailor & Paul, 2004). Children who did not respond to traditional teaching, and did not learn as efficiently as their peers, were tested and categorised by medical professionals (Mock & Kauffman, 2002). Teachers who specialised in teaching exceptional children were trained in the educational, physical, social, medical and emotional effects of different categories of disability on learning and

behaviour (Mock & Kauffman, 2002). They were also trained in behaviourist pedagogy, such as direct instruction and mastery learning (Mock & Kauffman, 2002), becoming skilled in the application and interpretation of a variety of assessment and testing methods such as curriculum based assessment and standardised achievement tests (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001; Mock & Kauffman, 2002).

Special education classes were usually smaller than regular classes (Zigmond, 2003), thus giving teachers the time and opportunity to become familiar with their students' learning profiles and to provide more individual assistance. Unlike the regular teacher, the responsibility of the special educator was to individualise learning by matching pedagogy to students (D. Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995; Zigmond, 2003). With a behaviourist approach, routines and rules were practised for automaticity, lessons were structured, tasks were analysed and broken into smaller steps for teaching sequentially (Heward, 2003). Without the pressure to achieve the same academic goals as their peers, students could be given more time for guided practice, completion of tasks and skill development (Heward, 2003). With smaller classes, it was expected that teachers would closely monitor their students, provide feedback immediately and refine strategies to meet the needs of each student (Zigmond, 2001). Although the students may have followed the same program, they worked on different levels and tasks.

The special educator's contextual knowledge was gained from working collaboratively with all the people in the student's life, from being a part of the local community and the special education community (Kauffman & Hallahan, 2005). In this way, the pedagogical role of the traditional special educator was more like that of a primary than a secondary teacher, being student-centred rather than curriculum-centred. Secondary teachers were trained to teach subjects; primary teachers were trained to teach children; and special education teachers were trained to teach children with disabilities (Van Reusen et al., 2001; Vinson, 2002). The goal of special educators in secondary schools was for students to achieve their potential by learning skills which would enable them to live and work as independently as possible in the community after their school years (Conderman & Katsiyannis, 2002).

While the number of students attending segregated settings across Australia has increased with the rising population, better medical care and broadening of some disability criteria, the majority of children with learning disabilities, physical and sensory disabilities, and mild intellectual disabilities, are educated in regular classes (Vinson, 2002). In addition, an increasing number of children with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, autism, emotional/ behavioural disabilities attend regular classes in regular schools (Vinson, 2002). The rapid increase in the numbers of students in regular classes and the slow response of the education sectors created parental and teacher frustration. Their frustration has led to reviews into inclusion in every Australian state and the Commonwealth over the last decade (Angus, Olney, & Ainley, 2007; Department of Education of Western Australia, 2001; Department of Education Tasmania, 2000; DEST, 2002; McRae, 1996; Meyer, 2001; Ministerial Taskforce, 2004; Nitschke & McColl, 2001; Parkins, 2002; Vinson, 2002).

Inclusion requires more time for teachers to develop new skills, plan collaboratively and to differentiate the curriculum, strategies and assessment (O'Donoghue & Chalmers, 2000). The provision of additional time requires extra teachers, support staff, resources, equipment, technology or a reduction in class sizes, all of which necessitate substantial funding (Prochnow, Kearney, & Carroll-Lind, 2000). If funding is inadequate, the working conditions of teachers are affected (O'Donoghue & Chalmers, 2000; Watson & Hatton, 2002). The inclusion of students with disabilities intensifies teachers' work, producing negative teacher attitudes, stress and dissatisfaction with their roles (Chadbourne, 1997; Forlin, 2001; Watson & Hatton, 2002; Zipin & White, 2002).

A study in government schools in NSW revealed that 83% of experienced teachers were concerned about integration because they believed resources were inadequate (Watson & Hatton, 2002). The Vinson Report (2002, p. xxiii) concluded that "the majority of teachers are in full support of inclusion and integration for many students, but only if is, in their words, 'adequately resourced'". Feedback from the Review of Educational Services for Students with Disabilities in Government Schools (2001) indicated that teachers doubted that students with disabilities would ever be adequately resourced, observing: "While acceptance of the principles was high, there appeared a level of scepticism regarding the likelihood of funds being sufficient to implement the principles" (Crosby, 2002, p. 5). With a deterioration in work conditions and loss of salary relative to other professions, the status and morale of teachers declined and their cynicism increased (DEST, 1998; Lingard et al., 2000).

This paper presents the perspective of Australian educational leaders on what skills, attributes and knowledge teachers in secondary schools need in order to comply with legislation and changed nature of the secondary school population. Shulman's (1986) model of teacher knowledge is a helpful way to interpret and present the leaders' ideas. An overview of the domains follows.

Shulman's Model of Teacher Knowledge

Shulman's (1986) heuristic model of teacher knowledge established a unique knowledge base to distinguish teaching from other professions and gave teaching its professional status (Cumming & Jasman, 2003). Shulman's seven domains of knowledge have guided teacher practice and development for more than twenty years. The domains: content; curriculum; pedagogy; pedagogical content; learners and their characteristics; educational contexts; and educational ends, purposes and values and their philosophical and historical grounds are inter-related and interdependent and provide a structure for analysis and understanding.

Content knowledge is "the knowledge, understanding, skill, and disposition that are to be learned by school children", the teacher being both its interpreter and deliverer (Shulman, 1987, p. 228).

Pedagogical knowledge, according to Shulman (1986) is the teaching skills, strategies, and classroom management techniques, as well as teacher beliefs about how children learn and their role in that learning. It is these facets of pedagogical knowledge which give teachers their understanding of concepts, information, structures and the relationships between them within their subjects.

Knowledge of learners and their characteristics, however, is vital if pedagogy is to be matched to the needs of the student and refers to knowledge of learning profiles, backgrounds and personal interests. This means being aware of students' "conceptions, preconceptions, misconceptions, and difficulties, language, culture, and motivations, social class, gender, age, ability, aptitude, interests, self concepts, and attention" (Shulman, 1987, p. 15).

Curricular knowledge is the equivalent of teachers' "tools of the trade". Contextual knowledge is knowing "the territory" of teaching, an understanding of class dynamics, the family backgrounds, school governance and funding procedures, and communities and their culture (Shulman, 1987, p. 9). Teachers apply their contextual knowledge about students, the class, school culture, system and community to assist their students (Grossman, 1990).

The seventh domain, knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds, gives teaching its soul, being conveyed through all other forms of knowledge. For Shulman (1986, p. 11), values such as justice, fairness and equity "occupy the very heart of what we mean by teacher knowledge.

Methodology

Data were collected from members of the teaching profession directly responsible for the inclusion of students with disabilities in secondary schools. These members were regarded as leaders in the field and as such were required to have depth of knowledge and experience in supporting students with disabilities and their teachers in the secondary school context. Leaders were expected to be familiar with the practices, theories, processes, thoughts, values and emotions of secondary teachers, students with and without disabilities and their parents. Leaders who participated in the study were selected on the basis that their expertise was respected by teachers and peers, their advice was sought, they had a leadership role in their educational community and a broad perspective of inclusion from their experience supporting teachers in different schools and contexts.
The leader participants were 50 in number and drawn from all Australian states and school sectors, and were currently engaged in a range of roles (see Table 1 below).

Demographic Item	Number
Australian State/Territory	
NSW	**4**
WA	**36**
Tasmania	**2**
Victoria	**4**
Queensland	**2**
ACT	**1**
South Australia	**1**
Education sector	
Government	**21**
Catholic	**10**
Independent	**12**
University	**7**
Gender	
Male	**7**
Female	**43**
Current role	
Academic	**7**
Consultant	**16**
Psychologist	**1**
Administrator	**2**
Acting Principal	**1**
Secondary School Teacher	**1**
Head of Department	**1**
Head of Department (Support)	**4**
Head of Department (Special Education)	**4**
Learning Support Coordinator	**9**
Special Education Teacher	**4**
Specialist role of consultants	
Vision impaired	**1**
Learning Difficulties	**2**
Behavior/Emotional	**1**
Physical/Hearing/Vision	**1**
Highest qualifications	
PhD	**7**
Masters	**9**
Degree	**20**
Diploma/Grad	**14**
Qualifications	
Primary	**28**
Secondary	**17**
Primary and Secondary	**5**
Special Education	**36**
Psychology	**6**

NB Some leaders were qualified in more than one field

Table 1:Demographic Data on Leaders in Inclusive Education

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with 34 leaders and telephone interviews with the 16 leaders who were at a distance. Interviews varied in length but on average were one hour. Questions were emailed to the leaders before the interview.

Data analysis was based on the principles of content analysis outlined by Miles & Hubermnan (1994): data reduction, data display and examination, data conclusion and interpretation. As part of the data reduction process, similar codes were grouped. In the second stage of the analysis, data bearing the same codes were collated. The display of the data indicated the strength of the opinion within the sample. Each descriptor needed to be identified by at least five leaders to be included in the final profile. Once these stages of analysis were completed, data conclusions and interpretations were made and categories emerged.

Limitations of the Research

Although the sample of leaders in inclusive education was nation-wide, the sample of teachers was small and restricted to two states. The nature of qualitative research means that the findings are restricted to the opinions of the participants and cannot be generalised or assumed to be representative (Brantlinger et al., 2005). Extensive quantitative or qualitative research would need to be conducted to determine if the views are representative. The findings can, however, draw attention to issues which may be present in other context (Brantlinger et al., 2005). The research can inform teachers, parents and researchers who can then examine different contexts for similarities or differences.

In the next section, Shulman's (1986) domains of knowledge are considered and used to structure the data.

Knowledge of Curriculum, Content and Pedagogical Content Knowledge

The leaders in inclusive education acknowledged that the structure of high schools necessitated that inclusive teachers were "really competent and comfortable in their subject" (L24). With the secondary school structure organised around subjects, knowledge of curriculum and content was essential to teaching. Leaders discussed the importance of teachers knowing how to adapt their content knowledge to new courses through an understanding of "how courses of study and inclusive schooling can marry" (L32). Pedagogical content knowledge enabled inclusive teachers to establish subject-related goals, break tasks into steps, differentiate their teaching and have a broad range of strategies to teach their subjects.

One leader attributed complaints about the impractical advice of her colleagues with primary backgrounds to their lack of subject knowledge. In her view, without curriculum, content or pedagogical content knowledge, credibility quickly evaporated, the consequence being that teachers were reluctant to request advice from consultants. Leaders in Western Australia claimed that one of the reasons Learning Support Coordinators in their government secondary schools were selected from subject teachers was that subject knowledge gave teachers credibility with their colleagues.

Knowledge of the learner and their characteristics

Leaders reported that inclusive teachers collected data from multiple sources as they constructed a detailed profile of the whole child. They wanted to know why students were experiencing difficulties in learning. Student files and databases were accessed, students discussed with previous teachers, psychologists quizzed on IQ tests, students observed and their skills assessed using curriculum-based assessment. Inclusive teachers became familiar with the students' work, analysed errors, trialled different strategies and monitored the results. They thoroughly investigated how their students learned best, their learning styles, what they needed to learn, then matched the curriculum and pedagogy to the learning profiles. The learning profile was much broader than academic learning.

Leader 37 provided an example of the information teachers sought about their students:

What they know, what they can do, what they're interested in, and then looking at the syllabus and thinking about where the teacher would focus the work in relation to where the students are at the moment, thinking about where the teacher wants to take them. (L37)

In the leaders' opinion, the inclusive teacher, the student, parents and other IEP team members, shared their visions, planned long-term goals and how they would be achieved, just like their colleagues in special education. Everyone involved in the student's education knew what the student wanted "to be after Year 12 and how he is going to get there" (L5), or "the plan for this girl when she leaves school" (L24). Leader 35 stressed the importance of long-term vision:

I don't think it is Maths goals strictly in relation to the curriculum, as important as that is. I think it is Maths goals in relation to where Simon is going and what is the best guess of where he will be in three years and what he would like to do.

Teachers observed students' emotional, behavioural, social and physical reactions and mapped them against their knowledge of child development. They understood how one area of development and the student's disability impacted on another and how the teacher could assist the child to move to the next stage of development.

Impact of the Disability

Knowledge of the educational and behavioural implications of the disability was an essential component of the learning profile which enabled the inclusive teacher "to modify or change the curriculum to suit the needs of the child" (L41). Leader 39 had no doubt that if:

you're going to teach students with special needs, you are going to need to know what those needs are. You need to have some understanding of the condition, of how it affects them, what is possible for them and the ways in which you might change your teaching to support them.

Knowledge of the impact of the disability prevented teacher reinforcement or provocation of negative behaviours through ignorance, as Leader 32 observed:

A lot of our teachers are frightened to discipline because they don't want to upset the child whereas when they saw this is the expectation we have, this is what we do when this happens, they didn't need to feel bad about it.

Teacher knowledge that a student has autism, for example, an awareness of events that trigger negative or violent behaviours, and that the student responds to written or pictorial cues and checklists would become part of their Behaviour Management Plan. Without knowledge of autism, teachers would not be able to encourage communicative responses or include the student.

The ideal inclusive teacher, according to the leaders, used their knowledge of their students to assist each student to develop an awareness of their own strengths. The students were taught strategies that assisted them to overcome their learning, social, emotional or behavioural challenges. The inclusive teacher wanted the student to understand and accept their disability, and to appreciate "that there's more than just that in their life and being able to move on" (L42). Knowledge of their students gave inclusive teachers the capacity to offer students different pathways to success.

Personal Knowledge

Leader 34 emphasized the importance of a teacher's personal knowledge of a student by saying "if you want to do real justice to a kid, you have to get to know them". The concept of personal knowledge was further elaborated by Leader 8. "It's hard to know what advice to give without actually knowing him too well. It's actually knowing who that person is, acknowledging who that person is and making the adjustments that you can." Inclusive teachers described by the leaders knew the child's personality, interests and had a history of shared classroom experiences. Personal knowledge, such as "stories that he likes to tell" (L10), came from observation and interaction with the student in different contexts, such as the playground, excursions, school camps, social occasions, and from listening to the student, peers and parents.

As evidence of the importance of personal knowledge, leaders cited the difficulties of transition programs for students with disabilities who moved from primary to secondary school or into new classes. In her role as a special education teacher in a regular school, Leader 24 prepared teachers for inclusion by explaining the implications of the students' disabilities and sharing their learning profiles. Rather than welcoming the information, the leader discovered that inclusive teachers had quite different ideas. They asked her, "Well, can we just treat him like a regular kid first… and see what he needs ourselves?" (L24). Inclusive teachers wanted to observe and get to know the student first before deciding how they could apply their knowledge from other domains or which knowledge they needed to learn.

Until teachers knew the student, they could not make educational judgments to meet the needs of the child.

Pedagogical Knowledge

The importance of subject knowledge and the central position of student knowledge did not diminish the need for inclusive teachers to have excellent pedagogical knowledge. When the leaders spoke of "good teaching practice" (L27) during the interviews, they gave examples of teachers identifying and teaching prerequisite skills, previewing what the class would study, giving clear instructions one at a time, setting boundaries, establishing consequences, using graphic overviews, breaking tasks into chunks and lessons into different activities to help students stay on task. Teachers the leaders judged to have good teaching practices provided explicit instruction and regular direct feedback, constantly monitored outcomes, frequently revising work to improve long-term memory retention and negotiating topics and time frames.

Leaders observed inclusive teachers linking new learning to previous knowledge and explaining the relevancy of the task to the students' lives. Inclusive teachers considered how to engage their students, looked for intrinsic motivators and used rewards and reinforcers such as time on the computer or on computer games. Scaffolding and structure supported

students in their learning. Learning styles were identified and pedagogical methods which catered for them were selected. Leader 10 described inclusive teachers as "bower birds", birds with a penchant for collecting a wide variety of objects. A wide repertoire of strategies enabled teacher to individualise the curriculum, teaching strategies, tasks, assessment and reporting.

Individualisation

Leaders devoted a considerable amount of time in the interviews to discussing individualisation or differentiation of the curriculum, strategies, tasks, assessment and reporting. Individualisation, "the use of many different routes" (L10), was imperative for curriculum access. Leader 49 said that inclusive teachers accepted "full responsibility for designing an appropriate curriculum and for putting in place the appropriate modifications, the differentiation of that curriculum, to meet the needs of their students".

Leaders in inclusive education noted that the inclusive secondary teacher did not teach the same content or use the same strategies every year but continually adjusted their teaching in response to their students. They did not abdicate their responsibilities by allocating them to the assistant but designed universal programs to suit all their students because:
their approach is "we need to find out what level my students are at and then if there are those who are outside of that, how can I adjust the program to meet their needs and what kind of support do they need?" (L13)

Leaders in inclusive education acknowledged that individualisation was not a simple task, particularly if teachers had a limited range of pedagogical strategies or styles. Student achievement levels could range from counting from 1 to 10 to studying calculus, from pre-school to university levels. In primary school the gap may be noticeable but by secondary school there could be "a huge difference between the kids who can do and the kids who can't do" (L11). The leaders were enthusiastic about inclusive teachers who adopted Gardner's (1999) concept of multiple intelligences, catered for different learning styles, organised different activities on the same theme and different outcomes from the same activities:

Leaders thought that an inclusive teacher understood that pedagogy was inextricably linked to assessment. Instead of relying on assessment methods such as essays and tests, inclusive teachers offered, trialled and negotiated a range of methods to give every student the opportunity to demonstrate successful learning. Reports were adjusted if necessary, and were not confined to academic success. Teachers who were inclusive located a range of resources, such as books on the one topic at different literacy levels, to cater for the range of learning levels amongst their students.

Develops the Whole Child: Social Skills

Inclusive teachers had the pedagogical knowledge to teach the student "academically, socially, behaviourally emotionally, pastorally" (L3) and with their contextual knowledge knew who to ask for assistance. Leaders maintained that inclusive teachers understood that the social and emotional development of their students was a prerequisite for their academic development. If a student's social development was not comparable to their peers, the student could inspire laughter, ridicule and rejection. An unhappy student was unlikely to engage in learning. Leader 32 had witnessed the negative long-term effects of this form of exclusion:

If everyone's laughing because they're doing stupid things and they're being included in a negative way, then there are some huge social problems and unfortunately, they're the ones that tend to stick. It can take a couple of years to actually get over that.

Leaders described inclusive teachers who valued and drew upon the strengths of their students to improve the social skills of all students. In their view, teachers who fostered peer support, for example, gave the students "ownership and a role to play" (L32). Peers of a student with a disability in one consultant's caseload were described by the leader as "brilliant teachers" (L22). The leader believed that through their use of age-appropriate language, peers were more likely to explain concepts than adults. Leader 22 added, "We certainly value the students in the class greatly in terms of collectively working together to help our young people. It's not just the teachers."

Appreciation of the social importance of status and success of high school students was another characteristic of inclusive teachers that leaders identified. Leaders described inclusive teachers who gave students with disabilities responsibilities or leadership roles. The teachers created opportunities for students to enjoy shared experiences which could become a topic for conversation. Other examples of pedagogical knowledge which improved the status and self esteem of children with disabilities were being taught by the teacher directly, teaching skills prior to a lesson to assist the student answer questions, asking several children to answer the same question, distributing tasks between groups so the student could genuinely succeed, differentiating the curriculum and strategies, and giving the student tasks that their peers valued. Genuine success, no matter how small, was praised in an age-appropriate way by an inclusive teacher. Literacy, numeracy and living skills were prerequisites for social success.

Literacy, Numeracy and Living skills

Leaders expected secondary school students with disabilities in regular classes to be prepared for life and work beyond school, just as they would have been in a special education setting. There should be no trade-off in outcomes because the setting was different. Consequently, inclusive teachers not only had pedagogical knowledge related to social skills but to living, numeracy and literacy skills. Rather than devoting specific lessons to these skills, inclusive teachers embedded them in the curriculum. To do this, the inclusive secondary school teacher had knowledge of reading, writing and oral language development, could analyse literacy problems, such as decoding and comprehension, and knew how to overcome them.

Leaders accepted that inclusive teachers may not be able to provide intense instruction themselves but maintained that inclusive teachers could organise access to an assistant, a whole school reading program, specialist reading or literacy teachers, special education teachers, parent tutors, or recommend one-on-one private coaching.

According to the leaders, inclusive teachers were aware that students with disabilities were susceptible to dependence on parents, peers and assistants, and appreciated the significance of developing independence, self awareness and self-determination in preparation for life. Dependency reduced the status of the child, thwarted social interaction, academic and emotional development.

It was also the view of the leaders that inclusive teachers taught students the skills to become independent, such as such as improving memory and organisation through the use of colour-coded timetables and textbooks or checklists. With careful thought and planning, inclusive teachers could incorporate life skills, such as learning to write a signature, reading signs, travel training, nutrition, exercise, social skills, health matters, leisure skills and

relationship skills in the curricula. To encourage self determination, leaders portrayed the inclusive teacher as negotiating learning and goals with the student, offering the student choices and listening to their thoughts, feelings and aspirations.

The student with a disability was consulted about matters such as how they learned best, short-term and long-term goals, preferences in subjects, their strengths and interests. Leaders believed that once the student had clearly defined his/her goals and was aware of pathways to achieving them, the student was more likely to be motivated to work to achieve the goals. In order to teach the whole child, literacy, numeracy and living skills through the curriculum, however, the inclusive teacher had to be able to manage a diverse class.

Manages Diverse Classes

Leaders recognised that teaching a differentiated curriculum or social skills development through the curriculum required outstanding classroom management skills on the part of the inclusive teacher. Inclusive teachers were reported to be exceptionally well organised. "It's not like, 'Everyone else get started and now I'll find something for you'. It's like, 'Open your booklet. You're meant to be on this page', and away they go" (L32). Teachers planned "in advance what they could do to ensure all children would be included" (L49). This meant planning manageable goals, selecting strategies, knowing exactly what you intended to teach, why, and what you would do if a strategy failed. The inclusive teacher "can anticipate a need. They consider I am going to be doing this so I'll need to break that down for him first, or I'll pair him off with somebody else" (L24). Such teachers were "priority focused" (L35) and targeted the skills the students must learn. They "orchestrate the learning environment to get the learning done" (L35) by drawing upon all the resources and support mechanisms available to them such as volunteers, assistants, peers or special education teachers, particularly if students needed individual assistance.

"Creative and ingenious about generating time to maybe assist kids who have special needs" (L35), inclusive teachers ensured that they worked with every student, even if it meant using a formal schedule. Further, they organised and co-ordinated volunteers, teaching assistants and LSCs to give students individual assistance. Aware of potential learning and behavioural problems, inclusive teachers were prepared with both preventative and restorative strategies.

Manages Challenging Behaviours

The inclusion of a student in a class or school was at risk if teachers could not manage the student's behaviours. With the safety of children and teachers paramount, the inclusive teacher needed the skills to manage challenging behaviours because "unless you get that behaviour into line, it is going to be very difficult to progress in other ways" (L1). Leaders had assisted schools which failed to manage students with challenging behaviours so did not underestimate the enormity of the task. Nonetheless, to be classified as inclusive, the teacher had to accept responsibility for behaviour management rather than delegating it to an assistant or another staff member.

Effective behaviour management required inclusive teachers to change their teaching practices. Consequently, one of the criteria that leaders used to identify an inclusive teacher was that the teacher was aware of the cyclical link between learning and behaviour and realised that "kids who fail to learn, misbehave. Because they misbehave, they fail to learn" (L47). Leaders had no doubts that if pedagogy did not match student need, "you spend all

your time managing behaviour when all they're telling you is hang on, this is useless and I can't do it and I'm not going to do it" (L35). The leaders' perception was that inclusive secondary teachers worked collaboratively on specific goals and employed the same strategies consistently, although they did acknowledge this was far more difficult to achieve in a secondary school context than a primary school. In order to access the expertise they needed, inclusive teachers continually developed their contextual knowledge.

Contextual Knowledge

For teachers to access special education expertise and other professionals they needed to help them learn new knowledge and skills, leaders contended that they had to work in a supportive context and know how and where they could access the expertise. Leader 5 advised "You just can't ask one teacher to do this. These scenarios are pretty complex and all of them need to bring a lot of people together, families, outside agencies, lots of different teachers." The leaders in inclusive education pointed out federal and state governments were responsible for the funding upon which systems and schools depended for assistants, special education teachers, professional development, resources, access to buildings, time for collaboration, TAFE colleges and community services. The community needed to have the capacity to provide access to businesses, professionals, volunteers, disability support agencies, government agencies and community service organisations.

The interview questions presented to the leaders focused on the high school teacher. Concentration on the individual teacher, rather than the context, provoked some exasperated responses from leaders,

I think the whole issue is not really thinking about teachers including students but rather having schools that offer an inclusive approach. I don't think it's very easy for individual teachers to do the right sorts of things unless they're fully supported, and at the school level, there's a policy, a set of procedures. (L50)

The message the leaders conveyed was that teachers could only become inclusive if they worked in an inclusive context with inclusive principals, schools, communities, systems and policies to support them. Inclusive teachers relied on principals and executive staff who were committed to inclusive education. Leaders admired inclusive principals who fully understood their legal and moral obligations and actively promoted a positive climate and culture. They reported that schools with strong leadership were "doing some really great work and in some ways challenging current policy" (L37). Leader 10 maintained that inclusion depended on "courageous leadership" by principals who encouraged teachers to be creative, to "take risks and be adventurous in their teaching."

Knowledge of Context

Communities, systems, schools and principals not only had to contribute to the inclusive context, but keep teachers' contextual knowledge up-to-date with information on laws, policies, funding and available resources and support. The importance of knowing support is available to inclusive teachers was illustrated by statements from the leaders, such as "they just seem to calm down once I tell them that there's lots of help available" (L46), "I think if teachers are given support, then most of them will do it" (L2), and "I think it is so vital teachers are given support. Support is just the word" (L4). It was the leaders' experience that when teachers knew that support would be forthcoming, their confidence increased. The belief that they could teach students with learning needs beyond their current expertise led to

more positive attitudes to inclusion, and a positive attitude was at the core of the inclusive teacher.

Knowledge of Educational Ends, Purposes and Values

There was consensus amongst the leaders that inclusive attributes and attitudes were the most essential characteristics of inclusive teachers, more so than knowledge and skills. Another academic who had researched teacher beliefs over many years concurred:
I think the biggest issue is the attitudes and beliefs of teachers. Without doubt if they want the students to be there, then they will go out of their way to find a relatively simple or easy solution to enable them to be included. (L49)

The reasoning of Leader 39 was that "You can have all the knowledge in the world but if your attitude is that you don't think they should be in the school, that's going to come through no matter what you do." Inclusive teachers the leaders had observed were passionate about teaching all children. They not only accepted all children, but valued and welcomed them regardless of their abilities. In the opinion of Leader 47, inclusive teachers "don't see inclusion as being different. They see it as being part of what they do." Inclusive teachers accepted differences and focused on commonalities. As Leader 20 explained, "It's that acceptance, whether they have special needs or red hair or blonde hair or whatever. It's just that kind of personality." They "saw the child as a child" (L25) rather than a student with or without disabilities. Leader 1 elaborated. Inclusive teachers understood that disability "wasn't good or bad, it was just different" and difference was a normal part of life:

An inclusive teacher realised that a strategy implemented to support one student was likely to support others. For example, organising a number of activities within a lesson to support children with attentional problems assisted the concentration of all children. When a student with a brain injury in one of the vignettes needed to learn how to interact with others appropriately, a safety approach for everyone in the classroom was adopted.

Leaders thought that certain attributes predisposed teachers to having inclusive attitudes. Attributes which leaders nominated as being characteristic of inclusive teachers were being compassionate, approachable, kind-hearted, friendly, warm, fair, caring and nurturing. Other attributes were a very calm personality, a good sense of humour, being unflappable, patient, ignoring trivial annoyances, the capacity to prioritise and focus on important issues. The ability to "live with a fairly stressful life and stay sane" (L35) was perhaps even more essential. So too were effective communication and interpersonal skills. The attributes of inclusive teachers most frequently nominated by the leaders, however, were empathy, dedication flexibility, eagerness to learn, confidence, creative problem-solving skills, respect and high expectations. Empathy was selected by every leader.

Empathy, Dedication and Flexibility

Empathy was deemed to be so vital to inclusive teaching that Leader 39 suggested that "if you are a person who is not able to empathise with others, then it may be that teaching is not the right role for you".

Leaders described inclusive teachers as being able to "walk in that person's shoes" (L11), "that person" being the student with the disability or the child's parents. Empathy was considered to be the most "powerful" (L11) attribute because it inspired teachers to accept their responsibility to teach the student. A combination of empathy with other attributes, such

as dedication for example, meant that teachers would do whatever was necessary to support the student and to overcome problems as they arose.

Leaders were well aware that adaptation of the curriculum, teaching and assessment methods to cater for the individual learning profiles of each student required additional teacher time and effort. Teachers who felt empathy and were dedicated to meeting the learning needs of their students were prepared to devote the time necessary, often their own personal time. As Leader 5 observed, inclusive teachers "were the type of people that couldn't just do a job. They had to do it very well." Attending to the social, emotional and psychological needs of the students meant teachers were available to their students throughout the school day, which required not only dedication but exceptional management skills and flexibility.

"Flexible" (L17) or "flexible and fluid" (L37), as the leaders applied the term, meant that teachers were "willing to change" (L47). Leaders realised that inclusion required teachers to change their teaching. Traditional teaching practices which had worked well in the past may be ineffective for exceptional students. For example, strategies which relied on students being able to read and write were unlikely to be effective for students who had low literacy levels, ADHD, concentration difficulties or different learning styles. Leader 35 defined 'flexibility" as being "a good reactor to situations as they occur". Inclusive teachers had the flexibility to manage diverse classes and students with challenging behaviours. Teachers may need to have the flexibility to change their attitudes, beliefs and traditional teaching practices to teach students with disabilities, but first they had to know how.

If a strategy was ineffective, inclusive teachers simply tried another, without feeling any sense of failure or defeat. Leader 3 described creative problem-solving as "empowering" because teachers were being proactive and taking control rather than thinking they did not know what to do and diffusing responsibility to others. Leader 25 insisted that "we're not talking rocket science", but being "creative and sometimes ingenious in making things happen in less than ideal and unpredictable environments" (L35).

Respect

Respect was a feature of inclusive classrooms, teacher respect for students, respect amongst students for each other, and respect by students for the teacher. Inclusive teachers spoke positively to and about the students, as Leader 34 reported:

To be inclusive you have to have an equal respect for all students and find something about every child that you like and make the effort to tell and communicate that to every child very frequently. It's about relationships, so that the students respect you and vice versa.

The positive classroom environment with relationships of mutual respect motivated students to the extent that "they are prepared to do things for you because they like you" (L13). The same respect was extended to parents and colleagues. Teachers who had a combination of high expectations, respect and empathy were able to "create a safe environment in which students feel that they are able to learn new skills and risk failure" (L13). Students who felt valued strived to meet teacher expectations.

High Expectations

Leaders noticed that inclusive teachers had high expectations of every child they taught, "not only producing work but also quality of work" (L37) and acceptable behaviour. According to the leaders, inclusive teachers knew when to apply pressure and when to offer

support. Leader 18 described the expectations of an inclusive teacher in her school. "There are still basic expectations like they're not allowed to be lazy or cut corners. They are told this is what we expect you to do and this is what we expect you to achieve because you can" (L18). Leader 24 explained that inclusive teachers have "high standards and they're not interested in pussy-footing around or making this kid too precious. They're expecting them to contribute to the class in whatever way they can."

In order understand the leaders' conception of the inclusive teacher, and how this aligned to the skills, knowledge and attributes deemed by the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) necessary for inclusive practice, Shulman's (1986, 2004) model of teacher knowledge was a useful analysis tool.

Conclusion

The data showed that leaders considered a positive attitude to inclusion underpinned the inclusive teachers' knowledge and skills. The leaders identified empathy as the key attribute which inspired inclusive attitude, but a number of other characteristics as respect, high expectations, dedication, flexibility, eagerness to learn, confidence, effective communication and creative problem solving skills, were also necessary. Inclusive teachers were expected to be expert in their subject (comprising curriculum, content and pedagogical content knowledge); having personal knowledge of their students (awareness of the students' social, emotional, behavioural, academic, physical and psychological development; learning profiles); and an understanding of the impact of the disability on all areas of development.

According to the leaders in this study, inclusive teaching required breadth and depth of pedagogical knowledge, much of which was formally designated as special education. The knowledge and skills of an inclusive teacher included the capacity to individualise teaching; to teacher the whole child (social, literacy, numeracy and living skills); manage a diverse classroom, and accommodate challenging student behaviours. Inclusive teachers are expected to have contextual knowledge about the community, systemic and school resources they could call upon to support their students and improve their own knowledge and skills. Inclusive teachers were, therefore, considered to be dependent on their principals, schools, system and community to make inclusion a priority, and to provide the necessary support and resources.

This profile of the inclusive teacher articulated by the 50 educational leaders interviewed in the study consists of a vast set of skills, knowledge and attributes deemed to be necessary to be inclusive. The literature suggests a number of factors would need to be present in order for teachers to fit this profile:

- specialist training (Mock & Kauffman, 2002);
- manageable class size (Zigmond, 2003);
- collaborative planning (O'Donoghue & Chalmers, 2000);
- differentiation of curriculum strategies and assessment (O'Donoghue & Chalmers, 2000);
- resource commitment (Prochnow, Kearney, & Carroll-Lind, 2000).

Given that most of these factors are outside the control of the teacher, how attainable is the leaders' view? Is it possible for a classroom teacher to fit the profile, given the reality of the classroom?

Perhaps the answer to these questions lies with classroom teachers. What is their experience of inclusion in secondary schools, and to what extent does it mirror the view of the leaders? If there is a common view, perhaps we have made progress towards inclusive

secondary schooling as outlined in the legislation (UNESCO, 1994; Commonwealth of Australia, 1992; Commonwealth of Australia, 2005). If not, there is a need for greater recognition of the challenges and complexity of inclusion in secondary classrooms, with a view to more realistic expectations.

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