

**CONSTRUCTING INCLUSION:  
MEANING-MAKING, PROCESS, AND  
CHANGE IN PROFESSIONAL  
EDUCATION**

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A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination.

- *Albert Einstein*

The paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which [s]he is being educated.

- *James Baldwin*

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## **Abstract**

The core focus of this Ph.D thesis is to explore how a set of teacher educators responded to the opportunity to develop and teach in a new initial teacher education (ITE) programme with inclusive education as a core goal. The opportunity to develop this new ITE programme emerged as a request of the Aotearoa New Zealand Ministry of Education (MoE, 2013) for tertiary education providers to design new Master's level ITE programmes directed at raising the overall academic performance within the education system. This study focuses on how a particular set of course developers and teacher educators utilise the opportunity provided by the MoE's request for applications to construct different approaches to inclusion directed at enhancing the learning outcomes of all students in Aotearoa NZ. I investigate the social space enabled by government funding of a new postgraduate initial teacher education programme - a site regulated by dominant interests and agendas. I refer to the practices of these teacher educators as 'working the space' – that is, I explore how teaching practitioners negotiate the challenges and possibilities within this new ITE programme to transform the way inclusion is understood and practised by the next generation of emergent teachers.

I draw on critical discourse analysis (CDA) to dig beneath the problem or issue identified in this case, the ongoing disparity in academic outcomes. CDA is used to examine how issues relating to disparate educational

outcomes are shaped and maintained by the sociocultural, political, historical and institutional contexts in which they are located. Qualitative analysis of the design and implementation of this new ITE programme draws on document analysis, fieldnotes of classroom observations and interviews conducted with teacher educators who taught in the courses observed. Findings from this research suggest that efforts to make education inclusive require more than equipping student teachers with competencies to teach an increasingly diverse set of students. This thesis argues that teaching practitioners are continuously locating spaces – along with student teachers – where they can work to improve the learning outcome of all students in complex and shifting institutional and societal environments.

## Preface

Einstein said that the true sign of intelligence is not knowledge, but imagination. This is the very reason why I embarked on the PhD journey. When I was born, doctors told my mother that I would not live past four months. I was diagnosed with Osteogenesis Imperfecta, a.k.a. brittle bone disease. I was not only tagged with a label (or two) the second I was born, my whole life was tagged with labels by those in power, and those who think they have the knowledge, to assume the world and everything that happens in it are fixed. In my early years these people pronounced not only how long I would live, but also that I was not fit for schooling because I could not walk. And yet, I have not only lived past four months, I eventually got accepted into tertiary education and PhD study.

My thesis proposal was informed by disability studies and intersectionality. My worldview is influenced by a lifetime of having been made what Bauman (1995) refers to as “stranger.” The consequence of being banished from the orderly world of “formal” education was that I have felt like an outsider all my life in society (as the only person I know who had never been to “school”). These personal experiences have made me fully aware that everything in life is a social construction. How we are constructed is a consequence of our social environments and the dominant discourses in those environments. How we construct ourselves changes according to how we perceive and define “reality,” which again is not fixed but changes

according to what we have come to know. It is influenced by the social settings and cultural ideas, values and beliefs about others, as well as the world in which we are situated.

Burr (2015) explains that social constructionism not only requires us to “take a critical stance toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world and ourselves” (p. 1), but also necessitates us to problematise conventional claims and views that have been uncritically regarded as truths. Here Burr describes why I was drawn to disability studies and intersectionality and informed the lens through which I engaged in the 11-month period of classroom observations. For me, Burr’s words are a succinct description of why I was drawn to Disability Studies and Intersectionality as not only a personal position, but a theoretical framework for this thesis.

The work of Wodak and Meyer’s (2009) on critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides a coherent conceptual framework for the interpretation of data. Growing up as I have, I am drawn to how much it speaks to how I understand the world: that there is no meaning outside of discourses. The critical element in CDA fills in the transformational aspect which I have often found lacking in studies informed by discourse analysis and social constructionism. Wodak and Meyer argue that “social theory should be oriented towards critiquing and changing society, in contrast to traditional theory oriented solely to understand or explaining it” (p. 6). There is no lack

of research on disability and disabled people's experiences. As a disabled person, I sometimes wonder who benefits from these studies (or who these studies benefit). Fairclough's (2010) theorises that efforts directed at social transformation require social actors to not only critique, but to discern emergent spaces of resistance. This, too, is highly relevant to my thesis topic. This analysis not only speaks to my worldview of the purposes of research, but also aligns with the emerging findings from my analysis of the research material.

My personal experience has shown me that the world "does not arrive pre-labeled and pre-theorized" (Ybema, Yanow, Wels, & Kamsteeg, 2010, p. 9). If it did, I would not have lived past four months, and I would never have the opportunity to receive "schooling" (in the tertiary space). It is a constructivist perspective that underpins this study. Constructivism allowed me to further understand a multiplicity of ways in which "inclusion" was being constructed at different times by different people through different lenses. Therefore a case study approach not only aligns with my worldview that social realities are not fixed, it provides an important means to analyse data. Through a case study approach, I hope to convey to readers Stake's (1995) theory that the sample of one study cannot represent the population as a whole, yet it can illustrate important issues relating to the possibilities and challenges to achieving greater inclusion in education.

This study has sought to explore how inclusion is constructed in a new ITE programme. I began to observe the programme on the very first day of its pilot delivery in January 2015. One of the teacher educators has referred to my participation in the programme as “sitting on the plane while it is being built”. Indeed, it was an ongoing process that sought to deconstruct overriding ideas and practices about inclusion as it attempted to *reconstruct* alternative articulations. Through the process, teacher educators did not only have to ensure that student teachers were following them, but needed to make the programme engaging for student teachers so that they might join them in making schooling more “inclusive”, as they themselves tried to define and articulate the meaning of that word.

I do not often mention that I was homeschooled to any of my peers, friends, or academic staff. This is partly because in an Asian society, people equate “not going to school” as being uneducated or uneducable. However, through the insights I have gained from the study, I come to realise how schooling can be damaging to the emotional wellbeing of students, especially those identified or labelled as “different” from the dominant “able-bodied norm.” Because I was watching from outside the school walls, I always thought the grass is greener on the other side. It may sound paradoxical to say that the more I have come to know about schooling, the more relieved I became of not having been under its grasp. My own transformation through the four years of this study is that I can now confidently talk about my experiences of being excluded from schooling, rather than avoid the topic for fear of the

“stranger” gazes I would receive from society as someone who has once been banished from the walls of “education.”

My resolution to bring this thesis to light is fortified in this PhD journey as it reflects the different ways teacher educators are working collaboratively with student teachers to take a proactive and conscious role of intervening in the space of making more children strangers in the education system. This study is an illustration of teacher educators at work putting into practice the imagined possibilities of situating inclusion at the centre of teaching and learning.



# Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is a critical exploration of how a cohort of teaching practitioners responded to the opportunity to develop a Master's level initial teacher education (ITE) programme that had facilitating inclusive education as one of its core goals. The opportunity to develop this programme emerged as a request from the Aotearoa New Zealand Ministry of Education (MoE, 2013) to ITE providers to address persistent disparities in achievement outcomes and to raise the overall academic performances of all students in the education system. This study examines initial teacher education as a social site controlled by dominant interests that influence how particular knowledge and values come to be accepted as achievement and success in the education system. I refer to this exploration as 'working the space' – that is, I inquire into how course developers and teacher educators are working to reconstruct inclusive practices – with student teachers – in contexts that are responsive to the sociocultural background and academic interests of individual students in the education system. This thesis analyses the complexities and implications underlying efforts that aim to engage with and facilitate greater inclusivity within current educational environments.

Ongoing issues relating to inequitable outcomes in Aotearoa NZ education system have resulted in challenges to the education sector to introduce a “wide range of policies, strategies, and changes ... particular[ly] in teacher

education” (Ell & Grudnoff, 2013, p. 74), directed at closing the achievement gap between students identified as high-achievers, and those assessed to be under-achieving. The request by the MoE to address the ‘long-tail of underachievement’ (Gilbert, 2013) provided teaching practitioners with an opportunity to reconceptualise inclusive practices and how inclusivity can be pursued via an ITE programme. My interest is in how teaching practitioners utilise different approaches to inclusion in the creation and implementation of a new ITE programme committed to improving the learning outcomes of all students in Aotearoa NZ.

### **The research questions**

The key research questions which this study seeks to investigate are as follows:

- How is inclusive education for all students articulated, both across official documents from the MoE and in the programme proposal and published outputs by the course developers of this new MTchgLn programme?
- How do teacher educators make sense of past and current notions of inclusion in the context where they and student teachers are situated?
- How do teacher educators reconceptualise possible alternatives to what inclusive education might mean?

Subsequent questions emerged as my understanding of the complexities underlying the facilitation of ITE programmes deepened in the process of this research:

- How do teacher educators conceptualise their roles, and enact inclusive practices in their interactions with student teachers?
- What do teacher educators see as impediments to the realisation of inclusion? How does this shape their practice as teacher educators?

Kerr and Andreotti (2017) lament that, despite commitment and attention to inclusion from teaching practitioners and the education sector, disparities in student performance still persist. The overarching aim of this research was to explore how teaching practitioners are incessantly working the space to intervene in and challenge the maintenance of inequitable practices entrenched in the education system.

### **The inquiry process and limitations of this project**

The MTchgLn programme, offered for the first time in 2015 at the University of Canterbury, was chosen as the site of inquiry to generate information about the challenges entailed in the pursuit of inclusion through the formation and implementation of a new ITE programme. This study uses analysis of documents, interview material and observation to generate information relevant to the research questions. Documents analysed focused on the initiation and development of this new programme. They are, recommendations made by the Education Workforce Advisory Group (MoE, 2010) (henceforth referred to as the ‘Advisory Group’), the MoE

(2013) Request for Application (RFA) for Provision of Exemplary Post Graduate Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Programmes (2013), and the response (to the RFA from the University of Canterbury) and published works from the teaching practitioners involved in the development of this programme (CoE, 2013; Abbiss & Astall, 2014; Fickle & Abbiss, 2017; Fickle, Abbiss, Brown, & Astall, 2016; 2018). This analysis of documents was complemented by data generated through classroom observations, and interviews with the teacher educators of the classes observed, which provide insights into the complexities characterising the facilitation of this new programme.

The classroom observations were conducted in the first year of the programme's delivery in 2015, and very briefly again at the beginning of 2016 in the programme's second year. The programme would have undergone many adaptations since then. However, the core aim of this research is to investigate the implications and possibilities underlying the creation and facilitation of a new ITE programme channelled towards effecting change. The challenges involved in efforts that aim to challenge and reconceptualise accepted practices entrenched in existing institutional contexts, which this research attempts to record, would still persist over time despite new iterations of programmes directed at facilitating inclusive practices in the Aotearoa NZ's school system.

This study focuses on understanding how a community of teaching practitioners attempt to develop a new ITE programme (and its teaching)

that is directed at making education more inclusive in the Aotearoa NZ education system. I did not attempt to research the responses of student teachers to this new ITE programme, although classroom observations and teacher educator interviews sometimes included discussion of the way student teachers responded to components of the programme.

### **Exploring the complexities of a new ITE programme**

The MoE's RFA states that the education system in Aotearoa NZ is "considered to be one of the top performing systems in the world" (p. 2). However, the RFA, as well as recent data from international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), also state that the trend in student performances has not only become static, but is in decline, even among those who have previously done well in the above average group (Collins, 2018; Gilbert, 2013; MoE, 2013). In addition to exhibiting a 'long tail of underachievement' (Gilbert, 2013), Aotearoa NZ is also known to have the largest achievement gap in student performance between those identified as high-achievers and underachievers among OECD nations (Fickel, Henderson, & Price, 2017; Gilbert, 2013). This is a situation, Gilbert (2013) argues, that "we really must do something about" (p. 108).

This research focuses on the opportunities the RFA (2013) created for teaching practitioners to initiate other ways of putting inclusive education to work that aims to improve the overall academic performances of all students in the education system. Educationalists such as Biesta (2009) and

Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) state that initiatives that focus on ‘raising outcomes’ often called for increased attention from teachers – and ITE providers – to meet the needs of students directed at lifting academic performances. However, this study is conscious of the contested purposes that particular spaces, such as the development of this new ITE programme, are developed to serve. A focus of this study includes investigating whether the issues and solutions identified and proposed by the Advisory Group (MoE, 2010) and the MoE (2013) for ITE providers to undertake, are consistent with those articulated by course developers’ and teacher educators’ in this programme.

As stated in the Advisory Group’s (MoE, 2010) recommendations and the RFA (MoE, 2013), in order for new cohorts of teachers to successfully raise the overall academic achievement in the education system, ITE providers have to work towards increasing the effectiveness of these new teachers through enhancing the competencies necessary to achieve this aim. I investigate the tensions that may arise out of the differences in definitions between the MoE and teaching practitioners in this programme about the problems facing contemporary education system in Aotearoa NZ. This includes what is said about what student teachers need to know to refrain from perpetuating practices that continue to disadvantage, rather than generate, greater inclusivity in the education system. This research looks into the constraints and tensions involved in the creation of this new ITE programme and how course developers and teacher educators addressed these complexities.

Through the use of a variety of data sources, I analyse how those teaching in this space reflect on their goal of facilitating change through this new MTchgLn programme, and the impediments to effecting changes to existing ITE frameworks. At the same time, I explore through analysis of fieldnotes how teacher educators attempt to encourage student teachers to develop and strengthen their identity as inclusive teachers. Above all, I look at how a set of teaching practitioners endeavour to work along and against dominant discourses to develop alternative constructs of inclusion with the aim of enhancing the learning outcome of students that speaks to their needs and interests.

### **Enabling change through inclusive education**

Prominent scholars such as Apple (2011), Ballard (2013) and Florian (2009, 2012) have high ambitions for inclusive education to be a lever for a different way of thinking about inclusion from the way it is currently promoted. These scholars argue that the imperative underlying inclusive education is to ensure that all students in the education system are provided with equal opportunities to succeed in schooling. Secondly, they urge policymakers *to do something* – as in the form of creating a space for ITE providers – to address and intervene in the “long tail” of inequitable student outcomes (Apple, 2015, 2016; Ballard, 2013; Gilbert, 2010, 2013; Lingard & Mills, 2007; Wrigley, Lingard, & Thomson, 2012).

Attempts to reconceptualise inclusive education requires a different way of thinking about teaching and learning that is not about regurgitating the ‘how to include’ mantra prevalent in existing frameworks (Andreotti, 2016; Danforth & Narayan, 2015; Florian, Black-Hawkins, & Rouse, 2017; Freire, 2005; Graham & Slee, 2013; Slee, 2001, 2011). It directs teaching practitioners to keep complicating how education can better meet the needs of all students in a world that is rapidly changing and fast-moving (Allan, 2008; Biesta, 2010, 2015b; Ell, 2011; Gilbert, 2013). This study investigates how a set of teaching practitioners utilise the space provided by the MoE (2013) to braid different ways of thinking about inclusion to respond to the complex and shifting institutional and societal environment. At the same time, I look at course developers and teacher educators’ attempts to complicate past and present educational approaches and how teaching and learning can be more responsive to the diversity of all students in the schooling system.

Drawing on critical discourses analysis (CDA), this study is informed by the critical stance that issues underlying persistent disparity in academic outcomes are influenced and maintained by the sociocultural, political, historical and institutional contexts that frames educational practices (Fairclough, 2010, 2014; Fairclough, Graham, Lemke, & Wodak, 2004; Gee, 2001, 2014, 2015; van Dijk, 2008, 2012; van Leeuwen, 2012). Likewise, I investigate how course developers and teacher educators are working to establish critical foundations that aim to make learning more inclusive to students across cultures and communities. This study examines how teacher



educators encourage student teachers to think about what they can do to intervene in the perpetuation of the status quo. This research is interested in how a detailed analysis of a particular programme – its design and its implementation – provides an opportunity to explore the complexities and challenges underlying initiatives that aim to facilitate change to existing pedagogical frameworks.

The MTchgLn space not only provided course developers and teacher educators in this programme with an opportunity to construct different ways of thinking about and facilitating ITE programmes. The working of this space has also provided me, a non-teacher educator who is passionate about matters related to inclusion, the opportunity to document and explore the making and delivery of a new ITE programme underpinned by commitments to facilitating educational inclusion. In the following section, I discuss experiences, both personal and academic, that influence and direct my interests to this study.

### **Researcher's background**

My personal history of being excluded from schooling as a child, and the complex identities I negotiate every day in Aotearoa NZ, directed my curiosity about the contested interests that drove this research: interests that shape how inclusion is understood and practised in the wider schooling context. As Graham and Slee (2013) remind us, “To include is not necessarily to *be* inclusive” (p. 3, emphasis in original). Having been excluded from the gate of special and mainstream schooling as a child in

Malaysia and having found my identities ‘silo-ed’ to categories of difference in the space of the university in Aotearoa NZ, I am critically aware of the tension of being physically included, yet feeling socially and culturally ‘othered’ at the same time (Heng, in press). My main inquiry with regards to inclusion has always been that, if the purpose of schooling is not to include and meet the needs of ALL students, then what is education for? This thesis provides an opportunity for me to explore how a community of teaching practitioners are working to make education inclusive – physically, socially and culturally – to all students.

As a person who was home schooled, conformity to institutional structures or schooling practices – such as putting on a uniform that represents my gender, school or educational level – were quite unfamiliar to me. My interest in inclusion as a field for academic research started after I completed my honours degree in Human Services and Sociology. While studying I became acutely aware that the topic of disability was confined to the distribution of social welfare benefits (in Human Services courses), or to the deviant *other* (in Sociology courses). When I enrolled in a university school of education to do my doctoral study, I found disability to be not only the core focus of inclusive education, but also that it was heavily focused on the deficit discourse of assumed incompetence. As a non-teacher educator, the opportunity to observe and explore how a set of teacher educators are working to confront dominant assumptions to generate greater inclusivity in the education system is thus a godsend.

Nevertheless, experiences of exclusion, either physically in Malaysia or socially in Aotearoa NZ, made me aware that the pursuit of making schooling – and society – more inclusive, is a complex and complicated task. Shildrick (2009) calls for inclusive education to think beyond merely closing the achievement gap between students identified as high-achievers and underachievers to advancing the learning outcomes of all students in the education system. My perspective as I set out on this exploration was to sustain a critical inquiry into the challenges and possibilities of facilitating inclusive education and to keep prying into all manner of thinking, discourse and activity that aims at inclusion.

Wodak and Meyer (2009) state that the term “critical” in CDA permits researchers to be explicit and transparent about their own research interests and values. This also implies that researchers need to be constantly critical and aware of the ethical standards that a researcher needs to uphold in their work. Rogers et al. (2016) stress the importance for research in education that is:

... concerned with equality across gender, race, social class, and ability/disability lines ... to get serious about calling on the work of scholars that reflect these categories. There are too few women, scholars of color, and differently abled scholars being referenced with regard to CDA’s tenets (p. 1217).

The call of Rogers et al. (2016) above may not be the full justification for me to undertake this research using CDA as a woman, Chinese Malaysian, wheelchair-user with experiences of exclusion and marginalisation in the education system. Wodak and Meyer (2009) claims that CDA allows its

researchers to be both critical and explicit about the interests and values that have drawn them to the research. As a researcher in the field of education concerned with how marginalisation is produced and reproduced in the education system, I embarked on this research keen to contribute to existing CDA literature in exploring the creation of a new programme directed at making education more inclusive and equitable to all students.

### **Outline of the thesis**

This chapter has introduced the focus of this exploration and the research questions that this study seeks to address. I gave an overview of the context and the purposes of this research. This was followed by a discussion of the personal and academic interests in inclusion that have drawn me to this study and how it provides me with an insight into the complexities underlying pursuits that aim at making schooling inclusive.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the Advisory Group's (MoE, 2010) report and the MoE's (2013) Request for Applications (RFA) which identify key problems facing contemporary education systems and their requests to ITE providers to create a new Master's level ITE programme to address ongoing issues related to the widening achievement gap in student performance in Aotearoa NZ. The chapter explores the power of dominant discourses that have influenced and continue to influence how inclusion is articulated and practised in current and past educational approaches. I will also explore contemporary literature on how inclusive education can and does need to be

different if schooling is to effectively improve the learning outcomes of all students.

In Chapter 3, I analyse the theoretical underpinnings of CDA and how it provides this study with the critical lens needed to understand that ongoing societal issues are perpetuated by the various contexts which frame schooling and educational practices. I discuss how and why Gee's notion of *saying, doing, being* is used as the conceptual framework to connect what course developers and teacher educators are trying to achieve, through what they *say* and *do* in the space offered by this new ITE. This chapter also explores, briefly, the contexts in which discourse analysis emerged and is utilised as a theoretical framework in the academic world. In this chapter, I discuss ways in which CDA is and can be used to not only critique, but also locate possible spaces to advance and effect change and address existing issues or problems.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological framework that is used in this research and how it aligns with the theoretical approach adopted in this study and the notion of inclusion. I discuss how the combination of using both observation and face to face interviews within a case study has allowed me the opportunity to inquire into the complexities embedded in efforts directed at engaging with and facilitating different approaches to prevailing pedagogical frameworks. I outline the research design and the methods utilised to generate information necessary to address the questions this research seeks to answer. In this chapter, I also discuss ethical dilemmas,

relationships between myself and my participants, and the steps undertaken to make sense of and analyse data and insights gained through the inquiry process.

In Chapters 5, 6 and 7, I explore what a community of teaching practitioners say about their commitment to design a new ITE programme informed by multiple perspectives of knowing, how they encourage student teachers to rethink what they know about the purposes of schooling and what they can do to effect change as teachers, and the complexities involved in reconceptualising alternative understandings to socially accepted practices in teacher education. Slee (2011) argues that inclusive education is “not a project to be done on a discrete population of children, but rather (as) something we must do to ourselves” (p. 14). Instead of creating a new programme that continues to reproduce prevailing frameworks of finding the *right* technique to assimilate all students into the pursuit of attaining knowledge and values constructed as ideal, I examine how teacher educators who participated in this research worked to construct other ways of knowing with the student teachers. In the process, I explore how they ‘work the space’ to centre learning as a process that is not in isolation, but in relation to the varied interests and sociocultural knowledge individual students in the education system.

The three findings chapters are consistent with Gee’s (2014) argument that to fully understand efforts directed at effecting change, attention needs to be paid to the connections “among saying (informing), doing (action), and

being (identity)” (p. 2). Chapters 5, 6 and 7 use the distinctions between *saying*, *doing*, and *being* to investigate what a particular community of teacher practitioners said and did in their attempt at ‘working the space’ to reorder different ways of thinking about and operationalising inclusive education.

In Chapter 5, I analyse what course developers in this programme *say* about their attempt to co-design a new ITE programme that is inclusive of multiple perspectives and to create a space grounded on different worldviews. This chapter explores how programme developers attempt to establish broader intentions that critically examine the issues that are standing between all students achieving and succeeding in mainstream education. It also explores how inclusion is defined and promoted by both the RFA (MoE, 2013) and the course developers, and it discusses the implications emanating from contested interpretations of inclusion. It looks at how the teacher educators articulate the knowledge and values they need to equip student teachers with so that they might identify themselves as inclusive teachers.

Chapter 6 explores what teacher educators *do* to encourage student teachers to rethink different ways of thinking and doing inclusion. This is achieved through challenging them to critically examine ideologies and worldviews which they may have uncritically accepted as given. This chapter documents how teacher educators are working the space to address prevalent claims that it is teachers’ failures to meet the diverse needs and interest of their students that constitute both the problem and the solution to the ‘long tail’

of underachievement. Above all, this chapter explores how teacher educators ‘work the space’ to reorder inclusion as an ongoing effort underpinned by the pursuit of centring inclusive practices in the context of the school students’ interest and prior knowledge.

In Chapter 7, I explore how teacher educators ‘work the space’ to strengthen student teachers’ identity and confidence so that they can *be* the change they want to see happen in making education inclusive. This is achieved through exposing student teachers to the challenges entrenched in prevalent institutional contexts that may conflict with the inclusive values they have been equipped with in ITE programmes. Such new insights encourage student teachers to remain firm in their stance as inclusive teachers to hold out against being assimilated into reproducing inequitable practices prevalent in schooling arrangements. This also prompts student teachers to locate spaces where they can exercise their agency as teachers and to rethink how they can effect changes to their teaching practices that are inclusive to the individual needs of their students.

Chapter 8 will once again look at the key research questions this study has sought to address and the key themes that have emerged in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Using CDA, I discuss findings documented within this case study of a particular new postgraduate ITE programme. Recommendations for future research will also be explored directed at generating inclusivity in different educational settings based on insights that have emerged from this thesis research. Finally, I discuss how this study contributes to existing literature,



as well as my aspirations for educational research directed at efforts aimed at making education more inclusive.

## **Chapter 2: Setting the context**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the issues underlying persistent disparities in academic achievement among students in Aotearoa New Zealand schools, which led the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2013) to call on ITE providers to develop a new initial teacher education (ITE) programme. The core focus of this study is to explore how a set of teaching practitioners in one particular ITE programme attempt to confront dominant ideologies about inclusion prevalent in current and past educational approaches. The purpose is to gain insights as to the ways inclusive education can be reworked from how it is currently understood and operationalised. I refer to the actions of these teacher educators as ‘working the space’. I explore how course educators and teacher educators in this space design and implement a new programme that attempts to establish different approaches to thinking about and enacting inclusive practices.

I start this chapter with an overview of the educational context in Aotearoa NZ and the call for a new ITE programme from the Education Workforce Advisory Group’s (henceforth referred to as the ‘Advisory Group’) (MoE, 2010) report and the MoE’s Request for Applications (RFA) for Provision of Exemplary Post Graduate Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Programme (2013). The Advisory Group recommended a change in the skills and knowledge of student teachers and, consequently, a shift in what ITE

providers are expected to provide to students in ITE programmes. The goal was to train a new cohort of graduate teachers who would be able to effectively respond to the sociocultural contexts of students historically disadvantaged in schooling, and as a result, raise their academic performances.

I then discuss debates around the construction of knowledge that informs the way ITE programmes are currently understood and facilitated. I explore shifts in thinking about the acquisition of knowledge and how this impacts the design of new ITE programmes. This is followed by a focus on attempts to generate inclusivity and equity in current educational approaches, and consideration of what inclusive education might mean and can achieve. Next, I analyse how inclusion is understood and practised against the backdrop of neoliberal agendas that highlight the contested purposes in schooling. Finally, I explore what current literature on teaching and learning proposes for new ITE programmes to do differently, with the aims of not only to include, but also to be attentive to meeting the varied needs and interests of individual students.

### **Disparity in educational outcomes – challenges for ITE providers**

In 2010, the Advisory Group was established by the MoE in their attempt to do something about persistent disparities in student performances in Aotearoa NZ's education system (MoE, 2010; MoE, 2013). Members of the Advisory Group included four school principals, the Secretary for Education, two senior academics, the CEO of a private institute that provides research

and professional development, and a leadership consultant (Ell, 2011). The Advisory Group focused on how teacher education, in particular, ITE, could be used to address persistent disparities in Aotearoa NZ education. The Advisory Group advised the MoE that “shifts in the model of initial teacher education and induction, and ongoing teacher learning and development” (MoE, 2010, p. 2) are vital. The Advisory Group stated that existing ITE programmes did not always “reflect current research about effective teaching, behaviour management and teaching a diverse range of students, including Māori, Pasifika and those with special education needs” (MoE, 2010, p. 22). They argued that new ITE programmes were necessary that were informed by current research.

In June 2013, the MoE sought applications from ITE providers that responded to the recommendations made by the Advisory Group (MoE, 2010). In their response to the application, ITE providers were expected to demonstrate how they intended to support and equip new cohorts of graduating teachers entering the teaching profession to meet the needs of all students effectively. ITE providers were also expected to address the MoE’s (2013) broader goal of improving the achievement outcomes of all students across the education system. The RFA (MoE, 2013, p. 3) states:

We expect that all students will have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, competencies and values required to be successful in a world that is increasingly complex and uncertain ... The Government’s focus on strengthening the teaching profession is part of a larger strategy to lift overall education system performance.

The College of Education (CoE, 2013) at the University of Canterbury was successful in its application to provide the Master of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn) programme for graduates across a range of subjects in the primary and secondary sectors.<sup>1</sup> This study explores the complexities underlying the programme's attempt to generate the facilitation of a new ITE programme that responded to the MoE's (2013) requirements.

In its RFA, the MoE (2013) emphasised the extent to which the purpose of teacher education was changing. The Advisory Group (MoE, 2010) recommended that ITE courses needed to include a “good understanding of the theories of teaching, learning and development and the skills necessary to operate effectively within teaching environments” (p. 2). Based on a review of contemporary research, the Advisory Group concluded that “effective teaching is recognised as the most important in-school lever for improving educational outcomes for students” (MoE, 2010, p. 8). The Advisory Group argued that teachers should encourage and support their students to develop an interest in learning and acquiring the necessary knowledge that would enable them to “participate effectively and productively in New Zealand’s democratic society and in a competitive world economy” (MoE, 2013, p. 7). This indicates that, according to the RFA’s analysis, ITE programmes are responsible for producing new teachers with the teaching techniques necessary to support all their students

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<sup>1</sup> The programme later expanded to include the early childhood education sector in the programme’s second year of delivery.

in acquiring knowledge and skills that will be conducive to advancing the country's economy in the future (MoE, 2013).

Academic achievement demonstrated through national and international assessments is often a representation of students' success in having acquired the so-called ideal knowledge (Ell & Grudnoff, 2013). Students who have done well in academic tests are identified as high achievers. Students who fall behind are often labelled as underachievers in need of additional support to raise their academic scores (Ballard, 2013; Biesta, 2009, 2010). Great expectations are placed on teachers, as well as ITE providers, to ensure that all students – across diverse sociocultural backgrounds and interests – are given equal opportunities to succeed in pursuing this so-called *ideal* knowledge (Biesta, 2010; Ell & Grudnoff, 2013; Gilbert, 2010, 2013; Grudnoff et al., 2016).

Attention to education as a social and economic lever for social mobility is often associated with a narrow focus on specific indicators that signal the kind of knowledge students should acquire that would enhance their economic prospects (Andreotti, 2016; Biesta, 2010; Ell & Grudnoff, 2013). Consequently, among the purposes of schooling, what is expected of ITE providers and teachers is to ensure that all students are included in the pursuit of the same values and competencies, qualities that are assumed to be the means to advance students' social capital in later life (Ballard, 2012; Benade, Gardner, Teschers, & Gibbons, 2014; Ell & Grudnoff, 2013; Grudnoff et al., 2016; Openshaw, 2007).

One of the five recommendations made by the Advisory Group (MoE, 2010), which is reiterated in the RFA (MoE, 2013), is that it is important to ensure that students teachers are accepted into ITE programmes only “after being assessed as having a ‘disposition to teach’ through a formal selection process” (MoE, 2013, p. 4). The “disposition to teach” has been interpreted as meaning that teacher candidates need to “understand, uphold, and contribute to the ongoing development of its [the government’s] values, and the collective good” (Gilbert, 2013, p. 107). Such interpretations explicitly illustrate that the kinds of teacher candidates that the MoE (2013) seeks to increase are the ones that will be successful in supporting all students to gain skills and values that are consistent with the dominant culture and interests (Ballard, 1997; Benade et al., 2014; Bolstad et al., 2012; Grudnoff et al., 2016; Openshaw, 2007). ITE providers are, thus, expected to choose teacher candidates who demonstrate their capacity to support students in achieving what is conventionally valued in society, before they have been exposed to any courses related to teaching and learning.

### **Contested purposes of teacher education – implications for ITE programmes**

While educational scholars argue that teacher education needs to establish broader intentions in responding to what student teachers need to know in order for them to be inclusive teachers, the dominance of the concept of training continues to prevail in ITE courses, both in terminology and practice (Abbiss & Astall, 2014; Abbiss & Quinlivan, 2012; Benade et al., 2014; Fickel, Abbiss, & Astall, 2016; Gilbert, 2013). In considering what

constitutes good practice in teacher education, Biesta (2010) highlights that it is important to “acknowledge that this is a *composite question* ... [I]n order to answer this question, we need to acknowledge the different functions of education and the different potential purposes of education” (p. 21, emphasis in original). Recognising and critically analysing the complexity involved in the targets that schooling is purported to meet, is thus an important element in any teacher education research.

Nevertheless, as Grossman, Hammerness, and McDonald (2009) point out, the nature and purpose of teacher education historically has been “divided between foundation courses ... and methods courses” (p. 274). They situate the former – foundational courses – in the broader scheme of education. Foundation courses also include philosophical analyses relating to the purpose of schooling and education, incorporating social justice aims of inclusivity and equity, and the “goal of improving educational opportunities for historically under-served students” (Grossman et al., 2009, p. 274). They situate the latter – methods courses – in the context of teacher education as *training*: an approach that focuses on preparing students to teach particular disciplinary subjects and to equip them with strategies, tools, skills sufficient for classroom management and assessment.

Gilbert (2013) explains that today’s teachers need some of the knowledge and skills from the *training* model, for example content knowledge to support their students with fundamental literacy and numeracy skills. However, Gilbert states that teachers need to know how to be inclusive



teachers and this requires more than just merely *transmitting* these basic knowledge and skills to their students. They must also be attentive to how students learn in order to support their students to make sense of and connect this new knowledge to their prior background. In short, beginning teachers need the skills and knowledge of both methods and foundational courses.

The contrast between training and education approaches to ITE courses relates to assumptions about knowledge (McPhail & Rata, 2016). A training approach views knowledge as a set of truth claims developed by experts, and student teachers are then expected to acquire the skills and competencies to transmit this knowledge efficiently and accurately to their students (Ballard, 2013; Biesta, 2015c; Gilbert, 2013). Disciplinary knowledge in academia has often been critiqued as *fixed*, and therefore *accepted* as given (Abbiss, 2013; Bolstad et al., 2012; Gilbert, 2013; McPhail & Rata, 2016). Such reviews have prompted ITE providers to analyse the role of teacher education critically as they design new ITE course contents. Benade et al. (2014) claim that a one-size-fits-all ITE formula was designed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to equip student teachers with skills sufficient to support students to enter and contribute to the labour needs of an industrial society. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such skills and knowledge are considered to be inadequate to prepare student teachers to meet the needs of a student population in a society that is constantly shifting (Abbiss, 2013, 2015; Benade et al., 2014; Bolstad et al., 2012; Gilbert, 2013; McPhail & Rata, 2016).

Nevertheless, as Wrigley et al. (2012) claim, education reforms and initiatives that focus on *raising standards* often approach teaching and learning as a “technical matter disconnected from pleasure and purpose” (p. 98) to the students or society. This is despite substantial research conducted in the field of teaching and learning which reported that good educational practice involves active engagement of all those involved in the learning activity (Benade et al., 2014; Bolstad et al., 2012; Gilbert, 2013). This suggests that whether it is the ITE programmes or the schooling curriculum, both student teachers and classroom students learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process. This is very different from traditional teaching approaches that assume that students are the “passive recipients of pre-packaged, bite-sized pieces of knowledge delivered to them by experts” (Bolstad et al., 2012, p. 2). Educationalists thus challenged ITE providers to conceptualise teaching and learning as an active, constructive process whereby teachers and students participate as both givers and receivers of knowledge (Andreotti, 2016; Bolstad et al., 2012; Wrigley et al., 2012).

Bolstad et al. (2012), however, stress that rethinking about knowledge that has previously been taken for granted as given in the academic world “does *not* mean that knowledge no longer matters” (p. 2, emphasis in original). Having sufficient knowledge of disciplinary subjects is essential for student teachers to be able to better adapt and connect this so-called fixed knowledge to their students’ prior knowledge or interests (Wrigley et al., 2012). What critiques of *training* approaches to ITE facilitation are arguing

against is that “skills, critical thinking, adaptability, and creativity will be more important than knowledge per se” (McPhail & Rata, 2016, p. 53). This is especially so in an era where student diversity is rapidly growing. The funds of knowledge that students bring with them to their educational settings are becoming increasingly multifaceted. This requires teachers to be more creative in adjusting their teaching methods to meet the varied learning needs and prior knowledge of their students.

To develop a connectedness that is relevant to the students’ prior background, Wrigley et al. (2012) stress that it is essential to rethink knowledge that has previously been accepted as given. It is also crucial to constantly review questions, such as whose knowledge counts and what kinds of knowledge are accredited in national and international assessments. This is necessary to counter the reproduction of inequity in the education system, which has rendered, and continues to render, some knowledge as inferior and lacking. This applies particularly to the knowledge and experience of those who are marginal to the sociocultural context of the ideal and normative white, middle-class, heterosexual and able-bodied culture (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016; Baglieri, 2017; Collins & Ferri, 2016; Slee, 2011).

The critical approaches highlighted above align with Macmurray’s (2012) emphasis that education never was and never can be merely a technical matter of knowledge transmission. A focus of this study – in relation to the interest of inclusion – is thus to explore how teaching practitioners in this

programme attempt to reconceptualise ITE frameworks from training approaches to a more critical, inquiring process that aims to support the different pursuit and learning outcomes of all students.

### **Rethinking the purposes of schooling and the role of teachers**

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the education system in Aotearoa NZ is “considered to be one of the top performing systems in the world” (MoE, 2013, p. 3). One of the reasons the MoE (2013) offers for the static or declining academic performance of NZ students and the continual disparities in educational outcomes, is the “rapidly increasing diversity by ethnicity and multiple cultural heritages” (p. 3). The MoE projected that more than half of school populations in Aotearoa NZ will soon be made up of “multiple and non-European ethnic heritages (including Maori and Pasifika) within the next five years” (2013, p. 3).

The statement below from the Advisory Group (2010) acknowledges the need for a teaching workforce that reflects diversity in the student population (Ordway, 2017; Strauss, 2015). However, as the statement (below) also indicates, ITE providers are expected to produce student teachers who will be able to interact seamlessly as well as successfully raise the academic achievement of all their students across the students’ diverse backgrounds and funds of knowledge. The Advisory Group reported that:

We believe that having a teaching workforce that is better representative of New Zealand’s diverse population and gender mix is likely to have benefits for students and the teaching profession. However, what is most important is ensuring the adequate supply of high quality teachers, who

are able to establish and maintain effective relationships with all students, regardless of either the teachers' or the students' ethnic or cultural backgrounds or gender. (MoE, 2010, p. 3)

Yet as Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) stress, efforts to make education inclusive cannot be achieved merely through increasing the access of all students – marginalised or otherwise – to good teachers. Contemporary educational research has also suggested that an expansion of cultural knowledge, values and skills does not necessarily imply that teachers will be able to interact seamlessly across the diverse cultures of all students (Jani, Pierce, Ortiz, & Sowbel, 2011).

Furthermore, educationalists have argued that to acquire an adequate level of cultural competency requires new teachers to do more than merely understanding and valuing other cultures (Jani et al., 2011; Liasidou, 2011; Wrigley et al., 2012). New ITE programmes need more than the introduction of additional technical skills aimed at the successful inclusion of diverse student groups (Biesta, 2009, 2015b; Gilbert, 2013; Wrigley et al., 2012). Instead, what is required of ITE providers is to constantly encourage student teachers to reflect on the extent and limitation of what they know and have come to know through the values and knowledge informed by their own cultural positions (Gilbert, 2013; Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011; Sleeter, 2012). This is to challenge them to examine the power of discourses in constructing what kinds of knowledge and values get constructed as ideal, and how those identified as different from them have been unfairly labelled

as inferior or deficient (Andreotti, 2010; Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013; Biesta, 2015c; Ferri & Connor, 2014; Liasidou, 2011).

In addition, countries with a colonial history, such as Aotearoa NZ, tend to interpret inclusive and equitable practices as supporting and assimilating all students to adopt what is considered to be ideal ways of being and knowing, framed by the dominant (white, middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied) culture (Baglieri, 2017; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009; Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, & Baterman, 2008; Macfarlane, Macfarlane, Savage, & Glynn, 2012; Penetito, 2010). This is especially so for students who have been historically disadvantaged or marginalised in their education by ethnicity, social class, or physical/cognitive ability (Annamma et al., 2016; Choo & Ferree, 2010; Erevelles, 2014; Ferri & Connor, 2014; Gillborn, 2015). McIntosh (1990) explains how when she was *training* to be a teacher, people of European descent were taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, average and, also, ideal. Nonetheless, bell hooks (1994) has argued that having non-white teachers in the classroom does not mean that the classroom or the teachers will be inclusive. For centuries, teachers of all ethnicities have learned to teach in styles that reflect the notion of a “single norm of thought and experience” (bell hooks, 1994, p. 35), which is internalised by teachers, regardless of their ethnicity.

Ballard (2013) reminds us that if the quest for education is to make learning more inclusive and equitable to all students, then a profound change is

required in how “we think about the world and our place in it” in order to change “how we teach children, teachers and ourselves” (p. 762). This aligns with the arguments of Bolstad et al. (2012) for new ways of thinking about the role of teachers and change in schooling practices if the purposes of schooling and, consequently, teacher education, is no longer to be assumed as a matter of routinely *banking* the same curriculum into all students. This study explores how course developers and teacher educators attempt to resist creating another new programme that reinforces dominant ideologies entrenched in ITE frameworks. To achieve this, I explore how teacher educators attempt to complicate, rather than explicate, competencies that student teachers need to develop, that would fortify their identity as inclusive teachers. This is to encourage them to constantly keep in mind that they, as teachers, are capable and responsible for adapting their teaching practices to meet the changing needs of their students in a society that is continually shifting and increasingly diverse.

### **Past conceptualisations of inclusion**

Education researchers often argue that schooling, by default, is organised through practices that distinguish and segregate students into distinctive categories of difference from what has become established as the ideal norm (Bolstad et al., 2012; Doerr, 2009; Slee, 2011, 2013; Wrigley et al., 2012). As discussed above, in post-colonial countries such as Aotearoa NZ, what is considered as ideal knowledge and values was and continues to be influenced by Western perspectives (Bishop et al., 2009; Bolstad et al., 2012; Macfarlane et al., 2008; Macfarlane, 2015; Openshaw, 2007; Penetito,

2010). Ideologies that emerge from a singular worldview inadvertently produce prejudicial attitudes towards students whose race, ethnicity, gender, disabilities and social class are perceived as different (Andreotti, 2016; Annamma et al., 2016; Baglieri, 2017; Erevelles, 2012; Liasidou, 2011; Liasidou & Symeou, 2016; Slee, 2013, 2014; Sleeter, 2012).

Educationalists often highlight how the main challenge in reordering established ideas about inclusion is in the tendency of academics to explicate technicalities, such as how education can further include or assimilate more students into the ideal human values, rather than complicate why these dominant assumptions get accepted as more superior to others (Allan, 2008; Baglieri, 2017; Ballard, 2013; Lingard & Mills, 2007; Slee, 2011; Wrigley et al., 2012). Bolstad et al. (2012) state that educational policies and initiatives continually hold ITE providers accountable for meeting the specific groups of students whose “needs have not been well met by the education system in the past ... in order to raise overall achievement levels and reduce disparity” (p. 3). Florian (2009) claims that the number of ITE qualifications has grown along with the increased pressure on ITE providers to develop programmes to address the growing disparity in educational outcomes. However, she argues that little attention or systemic coordination has been given to the ITE programmes that have proliferated. This in turn reinforces the assumption that *specialist* qualifications are needed to meet the needs of particular groups of students instead of preparing student teachers with the skills and confidence to meet the various needs of the



students in their classrooms (Florian, 2009; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, 2012b).

Slee (2006) (citing Clark, Dyson & Millward, 1995) explains that the notion of inclusion in schooling practices can initially be understood as a concept of “extending the scope of ‘ordinary’ schools so that they can ‘include’ a greater diversity of children” (p. 109, emphasis in original). This usually involves shifting students with identified disabilities from special education into mainstream settings. The continuous and widening disparity in educational outcomes, especially among students who have been historically marginalised or disadvantaged, has led educationalists to question whether or not the mainstream settings are, in effect, inclusive of the greater diversity of all the students who are now under their roof (Baglieri, 2017; Danforth & Naraian, 2015; Florian et al., 2017; Graham & Slee, 2008; Slee, 2011, 2014; Slee & Allan, 2001).

Scholars in inclusive education have for the past two decades highlighted the need for a change in schooling and teaching practices to critically rethink the narrow definition of inclusion. They argue not only for physical inclusion, but also for the emotional and social inclusion of an increasingly diverse set of students who are now included (in the sense of being physically present) in classrooms (Allan, 2008; Baglieri, 2017; Ballard, 2013; Danforth & Naraian, 2015; Florian et al., 2017; Graham & Slee, 2013; Slee, 2011, 2014; Slee & Allan, 2001). Although ongoing disparity in student performance has led policymakers to call for ITE providers to pay

more attention to “otherness and difference” (Biesta, 2009, p. 107), students are still expected to “learn the same curriculum, taught in the same way – based on the language, worldview, and experiences of White English-speakers” (Sleeter, 2012, p. 565). Consequently, ITE providers are still assumed to be experts responsible for discovering the right tool that would effectively enable student teachers to assimilate all their students into this same curriculum, regardless of their sociocultural backgrounds and cognitive ability.

### **The purposes of teacher education within neoliberal agenda**

As discussed earlier, the Advisory Group (MoE, 2010) emphasised in their recommendations that the expectation they have of the role of teachers in the current era is to foster and develop an interest in learning and acquiring new knowledge. This is to ensure that all students in the education system are included in the pursuit that would allow them to “participate effectively and productively in New Zealand’s democratic society and in a competitive world economy” (MoE, 2010, p. 7). Teacher quality is frequently named as the problem contributing to the ongoing disparity in student performance (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Ell & Grudnoff, 2013; Liasidou & Symeou, 2016). Improving teacher quality is thus justifiably identified as the solution, or the key, that would not only improve the overall academic achievement of all students, but also reduce or eliminate the “long tail” of disparity in educational outcomes (Ell & Grudnoff, 2013; Gilbert, 2010, 2013; Grudnoff et al., 2016; Lingard & Mills, 2007).

Liasidou and Symeou (2016) state that in recent decades, there has been an increase in the ways neoliberal values have had an impact on educational reforms. Such reforms have, in a major way, “concentrated on the imperative to increase efficiency and accountability” (Liasidou & Symeou, 2016, p. 5) in how teacher education programmes should be facilitated. Likewise, in the Advisory Group’s (MoE, 2010) recommendations to the MoE, efficiency and accountability were named as the two key elements necessary to raising the quality and status of the teaching profession. Ball (as cited in Wrigley et al., 2012) stresses that the purposes of education have now been collapsed into a “single, overriding emphasis on policy making for economic competitiveness and an increasing neglect or side lining (other than in rhetoric) of the social purposes of education” (p. 96). This leads us back to the debates about the functions of schooling. On the one hand, there is a focus on the need for education to be more *holistic* and *meaningful* to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse set of students. On the other hand, teacher education is constrained by narrower outcomes directed at raising academic achievement and student performance in the name of enhancing students’ social mobility and success in later life.

Within the language of neoliberalism, all human beings are represented as having the *freedom* and *choice* to choose to be *included* in a democratic society (Biesta, 2010, 2011, 2015c; Brown, 2011). It also assumes that all students who are, as yet, not included *have* the freedom to choose to be included in the pursuit of academic and economic success (Biesta, 2009, 2010; Brown, 2011, 2015, 2016). Tyack and Cuban (2009) claim that

educational elites in the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw themselves as “expert social engineers who could perfect the nation by consciously directing the evolution of society” (Tyack & Cuban, 2009, p. 2) through the means of educational reforms and schooling practices. I discussed earlier how dispositions to teach has come to be established as a collective good which teachers and students are assumed to exhibit for the betterment of the country’s economy.

In neoliberal terms, education is positioned as an “investment and not as a human right” (Klees et al., as cited in Liasidou & Symeou, 2016, p. 12). As noted earlier, the Advisory Group (MoE, 2010) states that investment in *educating* student teachers represents good value for money if these student teachers are able to thrive within the competitive job market and, also, contribute to the advancement of the country by enabling the next generation of students to achieve and succeed in the global economy. Moreover, within neoliberal thinking, teachers are expected to be seen as effective and productive, to avoid being typecasted as incompetent (Ball & Omeldo, 2013; Liasidou & Symeou, 2016; Openshaw, 2007). Social actors in the wider schooling institutions, from students to teachers to the teachers’ teachers, are expected to strive towards achieving academic and economic success themselves and to enable the next generation to do so.

The increase in emphasis on teacher effectiveness necessarily involves discussion about improving the academic achievement of students, especially students who have, historically, been disadvantaged and

marginalised (Liasidou & Symeou, 2016). Teachers are often blamed for disparity in educational outcomes due to their failure to adapt to the needs of a diverse range of students (Openshaw, 2007). Although consideration is given to the possibility that it is “largely beyond the control of the profession” (MoE, 2010, p. 10) to improve on the wellbeing of students disadvantaged by poverty and social class, ITE providers nevertheless are expected to produce new cohorts of graduate teachers who will be able to successfully close the achievement gap among their students.

Lingard and Gale (2007) claim that, although society has witnessed the growth of inequality and inequity as a result of neoliberal policies, little research has been conducted that looks at how these inequalities affect educational opportunities and outcomes. Instead, educational inequalities are now “deemed to be *the* difference between student performances” (Lingard & Gale, 2007, p. 13). Lewis and Lingard (2015) argue that such prevalent assumptions only continue to constrain ITE providers to facilitate programmes that purports to raise student performances, rather than examine how disparities in academic outcomes are produced and reproduced.

Furthermore, the focus put on raising outcomes may potentially undermine attempts to get student teachers to examine the discourses underlying the contested purposes of schooling and how this impacts on the role of teachers. As a result, student teachers may not be aware of the importance of developing meaningful relationships with their students and understanding

their students' interests and needs, both in and out of school. This investigation therefore looks into how a new ITE programme is working to expose student teachers to develop a critical lens to complicate accepted notions of achievement and knowledge. This is to challenge student teachers to understand how they are all capable of talking back to and focus on situating academic outcomes that recognises their students' prior knowledge and abilities, rather than those framed by neoliberal discourses.

### **Effecting change through inclusion**

According to Biesta (2009), inclusion has become “one of the core values, if not *the* core value of democracy” (p. 101) and he links democracy to a one-size-fits-all ideal of human values (Biesta, 2009, 2011, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). Critiques have touted that inclusion has become an over-used term to represent democracy and diversity in institutional policies and schooling practices (Ahmed, 2007, 2012; Allan, 2008; Gilbert, 2013; Roberts, 2004). Allan (2008), however, clarifies that attempts to make schooling more inclusive and equitable are an “awesome task and it may take some time before evidence of change is seen” (p. 85). This may cause teaching practitioners to feel frustration and confusion over what has not been achieved, and “exhaustion from efforts which have seemed futile” (Allan, 2008, p. 153). The repetition of the term *inclusion*, coupled with changes that are slow to come by, can make people tire of hearing it.

Tyack and Cuban (2009) point out that the purposes of schooling have been debated in America for more than a century. I agree that the teaching

profession will always face a schooling context that is highly contested because society is ever-changing, so too are the needs and expectations of its people and, therefore, the purposes of schooling. Even so, discussions about the core purpose of schooling should always be directed at fostering student teachers to meet and respond to the diverse and shifting needs of all students (Wrigley et al., 2012).

Researchers in educational studies are hopeful that the pursuit of equity through inclusive education can become a multi-disciplinary and democratic means of responding to the two contemporary issues facing teacher education in an increasingly globalised world (Apple, 2015; Ballard, 2013; Florian et al., 2017; Heng & White, 2019). Firstly, to ensure that all students have equal educational opportunities; and secondly, to challenge the reproduction of inequitable practices underlying existing school-based discourses. Broderick et al. (2012) claim that inclusive education is often simplistically conceptualised as a pursuit of enabling all students to perform well academically. This study explores how this new ITE programme attempts to reconceptualise inclusive education as a lever that “seeks to resist and redress the many ways in which students experience marginalisation and exclusion in schools” (Broderick et al., 2012, p. 826). At the same time, the study explores teaching practitioners’ attempts to situate inclusive education as a process which aims to ensure all school students are provided with opportunities to pursue interests and knowledge that are relevant and useful to their sociocultural contexts and future undertakings.

Wrigley et al. (2012) state that “schooling is only one kind of education, but its role is highly significant” (p. 106). Also, teacher education can be said to be a power lever to influence and effect change through challenging student teachers to be critical of, rather than simply enact, practices taken-for-granted as normative in school-based discourses (Izadinia, 2014; Rice, Newberry, Whiting, Cutri, & Pinnegar, 2015; Swennen, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2008; Timmerman, 2009). In examining the agency teaching practitioners have to bring about changes to existing pedagogical frameworks, Wrigley et al. (2012) direct our attention to the opportunities ITE providers have to reorder prevailing structures. Such understanding is crucial for those committed to making education inclusive in spite of the constraints underlying efforts to facilitate change in prevailing agenda (Liasidou and Symeou 2016).

Chapter 1 noted how Kerr and Andreotti (2017) accentuate that many teaching practitioners working in ITE programmes “profess strong commitments to matters of social equity and justice, yet longstanding patterns of inequitable educational outcomes persist” (p. 1). In Chapter 5, 6 and 7, I explore what a community of teaching practitioners 1) *say* about their commitment to design a new ITE programme informed by multiple perspectives of knowing; 2) *do* to generate critical perspectives to challenge student teachers to examine the purposes of schooling and to locate spaces where they can bring about change; that would allow them to 3) *be* conscious of and negotiate the complexities involved in implementing



different inclusive approaches in the wider institutional environment that may not be conducive to change.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the context in which the new ITE programme, which is the focus of this thesis, was developed. In particular, it has examined the Advisory Group's (MoE, 2010) report and the RFA (MoE, 2013) that generated a response from the University of Canterbury's College of Education (CoE, 2013). Literature relating to issues associated with diversity among students and inequities in academic achievement has been used to analyse aspects of both the Advisory Group's report and the RFA. I have also examined issues relating to inclusion – a stated goal of contemporary schooling. How inclusion has been conceptualised and understood was reviewed as well as arguments about the need for it to be re-conceptualised in contemporary teacher education. I then discussed the challenges and implications underlying how educational policies grounded by measurement and accountability may hinder, rather than support, initiatives directed at generating greater inclusivity in schooling.

The literature that has been discussed in the first half of this chapter has largely focused on critiques and constraints of past and present ITE frameworks. In the latter half, I looked at what the related literature says about the need to introduce alternative ways of recognising and facilitating inclusive education for it to be inclusive of the different educational needs and interests of students. Engagement with this literature enhanced my

understanding of the ways in which the MTchgLn programme studied attempts to produce new cohorts of teachers who will be conscious and responsive to the aim of meeting the diverse academic interests and needs of all students in the education system.

In the next chapter, the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is explored in depth to understand the ways discourses operate to shape and establish what is considered as ideal knowledge and values in the academic world. CDA scholars advocate for the importance of connecting knowledge acquisition to students' sociocultural contexts in order to enhance their learning outcomes and to make learning relevant to their interests and prior knowledge. I also explore the ways discourses work to influence how new discourses (including discourses of inclusion) are to be worded and practiced, and the impacts of dominant discourses on efforts directed at developing new ways of thinking about and putting inclusive education to work.

## **Chapter 3: Critical discourse analysis and inclusive education**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss why and how I use critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the conceptual and theoretical framework for this study. CDA is a useful tool that enables me to investigate how particular discourses have been influential in framing ways of thinking about and enacting inclusion in ITE frameworks, both historically and in the present. As Rogers (2011b) states, “power is a central concept in critical discourse studies” (p. 3). This chapter investigates the power of dominant ideologies in naming the issues and solutions that ITE providers are expected to offer in the creation of this new ITE programme. At the same time, CDA alerted my attention to the ways course developers and teacher educators in this space are talking back to normative discourses and conceptualising alternative approaches to inclusion. In these respects, they are ‘working the space’ through their own saying, doing and being in the design and facilitation of this new ITE programme.

In the first section, I discuss how space is formulated and put to work through the lens of CDA. I discuss why I use Gee’s notion of *saying, doing, being* as the conceptual framework of this study as I explore the complexities embedded in the development, facilitation, and operation of inclusion in wider institutional contexts. In the second section, I enquire into

how and why CDA is a useful theoretical tool to examine how prevailing ideologies regulate what can be thought and said in the facilitation of ITE programmes and how it shapes the attempts of course developers and teacher educators to establish broader educational goals in this context.

In the third section, I discuss the relevance of CDA and its use in this study. I explore how course developers and teacher educators confront and transform established ideas about inclusion through interweaving multiple worldviews into the innovative yet constrained space of this new ITE programme. In the last section, I briefly discuss the broad agendas of discourse analysis as a theoretical framework. I then investigate critiques and limitations that have been noted about the use of discourse analysis and CDA as a research tool in the existing literature. Finally, I explain how the study addresses the issues noted as it attempts to put CDA to work in this research.

### **Investigating a new ITE programme through CDA**

This thesis explores how course developers and teacher educators responded to the MoE's (2013) request to create a new ITE programme that aims to improve the quality and competencies of new student teachers. The programme aims to develop teachers who can meet the needs of all students, especially those identified as underachievers, and use strategies to raise the overall academic performance in the education system. At the same time, I explore how these ITE teaching practitioners attempt to generate a critical

stance amongst their students in order that, as beginning teachers, they understand how prevailing schooling conditions can potentially impede them from enacting the inclusive practices that they have been prepared for in this programme.

As Lefebvre (as cited in Purcell, 2012) reminds us, “space is a social product controlled by dominant classes and interests” (p. 272) and “whoever controls space ... also controls what can and cannot happen” (p. 272). CDA is informed by the notion that the social world is a reflection of discourses controlled by those who have the power to name social phenomena and ensure which discourses get to be established as truth, and how they come to be accepted (Gee, 2014; Rogers, 2011a; Woodside-Jiron, 2011). It is thus a useful tool to analyse not only “what is said, but ... what is left out; not only what is present in the text, but what is absent” (Rogers, 2011b, p. 15). As a theoretical framework, CDA allows researchers to dig beneath the problem or issue identified in a given social space and to understand how these issues are shaped and established by the historical, social, cultural and institutional structures that frame it (Fairclough, 2010; Fairclough et al., 2004; van Dijk, 2008, 2012; van Leeuwen, 2012).

In Chapter 2, I discussed how prevailing discourses: 1) shaped and influenced the ways inclusive education is understood and practiced in past and present educational contexts, and 2) named and identified raising the quality and status of teachers – and consequently teacher education – as the

solution to ongoing disparity in educational outcomes. Using CDA, this study investigates how teaching practitioners are working to deconstruct prevailing discourses to reconstruct inclusion that focuses on improving learning outcomes that are relevant to their students. At the same time, the study enquires into teacher educators' attempts at highlighting to student teachers the ways discourses work to produce and reproduce inequalities in schooling, and how they can work to challenge the status quo through their teaching practices.

Critical discourse analysts often claim that language is never neutral and there are no meanings outside of discourses (Fairclough, 2010; Fairclough, Graham, Lemke, & Wodak, 2004; Gee, 2015; van Dijk, 2008, 2012; van Leeuwen). Gee (2014) argues that in language, "there are important connections among saying (informing), doing (action), and being (identity) ... to understand anything fully you need to know *who* is saying it and *what* the person saying it is trying to do" (p. 2). I will use these distinctions between *saying*, *doing*, and *being* through documentations, interviews and classroom observations to investigate the complexities underlying teaching practitioners' at work in this space to talk back to and reorder different ways of thinking about and putting inclusion to practice.

Simply put, this study seeks to explore what course developers and teacher educators *say* about their attempt to develop a new ITE programme that recognises, invites and centres inclusion in worldviews other than those

framed in dominant ideologies, and what they *do* to challenge student teachers to be critical of prevalent assumptions that have shaped how they see the world and their role as teachers. This is to encourage student teachers to *be* the change they want to see happen as they reconstruct achievement outcomes that are inclusive and equitable of their students' prior knowledge and skills.

### **CDA in education research**

Critical discourse analysts often attempt to deconstruct ideologies and power relationships through critically analysing the ways discourses work to maintain the domination of one group over others (Billig, 2003; Gee, 2014; Fairclough, 2010; Fairclough et al., 2004; van Dijk, 2012; Weiss & Wodak, 2003; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Rogers (2011b) highlights that CDA “holds the potential to intervene in educational debates by unravelling powerful discourses *of* education and *in* education” (p. 14). CDA therefore is a useful tool for researchers in education to investigate the ways discourses have the power to ensure that particular notions of inclusion become accepted as ideal teaching practice (Fairclough, 2015; Rogers, 2011b; Wodak & Meyer, 2009; Woodside-Jiron, 2011).

Nevertheless, Fairclough (2000) emphasises that attempts at transforming prevailing discourses require social actors not only to critique, but also to discern emergent spaces of resistance directed at challenging the status quo. This study inquires into how teaching practitioners in this new ITE

programme do not just analyse, but also disrupt overriding discourses about inclusive practices in order to situate inclusion as a core agenda within a new ITE programme (Fairclough, 2010, 2015; Rogers, 2011b; Rogers et al., 2016).

CDA, as a theoretical paradigm, situates academics as social actors committed to the task of effecting change, rather than as individuals who just happen to have radical views or see progressive work as something additional to their job (Billig, 2003). I explore how teacher educators reflect on and conceptualise their identities as individuals who are both conscious and staunch about intervening in and mitigating injustices embedded in the education system, rather than as academics who just happen to be teaching in this new ITE programme.

Fairclough et al. (2004) state that discourse is “now well established as a category in social theory and research” and that much “contemporary social research includes some form of discourse analysis” (p. 3). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) claim that over the decades, CDA has established itself internationally as a “field of cross-disciplinary teaching and research which has been widely drawn upon in the social sciences and the humanities” (p. 1). Nevertheless, there is more than one way of approaching CDA, and scholars in the field have often emphasised the importance of incorporating a diverse range of theoretical and methodological tools to explore the issue or problem under investigation (Rogers, 2011b; Rogers, Malancharuvil-



Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & Glynis O'Garro, 2005; Rogers et al., 2016; Weninger, 2012).

Citing Wodak and van Dijk, Cervera (2006) emphasises the importance for CDA to be interdisciplinary, because “problems in our society are too complex to be studied from a single point of view” (p. 20). This thesis looks into course developers’ and teacher educators’ attempts to interweave different worldviews informed by sociology, philosophy, developmental science, postcolonialism, and history, not only into the design of this ITE programme, but also into single courses and lectures, to address issues underlying the ‘long tail’ of underachievement in the education system.

A common assumption attached to research underpinned by CDA is that the issue or problem under investigation must be negative or critical (Billig, 2003; Fairclough et al. 2004; van Dijk, 2012). However, Wodak and Meyer (2009) argue that “any social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, to be challenged and not taken for granted” (p. 2). CDA is characterised by its problem- or issue-oriented approach, which is multidisciplinary (Fairclough et al., 2004; Kendall, 2007; van Dijk, 2012; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This aligns with the framework of the ‘space’ of this exploration, in which I investigate the complexities underlying a set of teaching practitioners’ attempts to rework inclusive education as a means to advance the aim of making education inclusive to all students. As Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) state, discourse can be a means to the

end of being perceived to be *doing* something, or responding to social issues, yet it is ideological in the way it helps to sustain inequitable processes within society. How course developers and teacher educators are ‘working the space’ to analyse and reconstruct stratifications in past and present educational approaches that continue to disadvantage, rather than benefit students who are historically marginalised, is of main interest to this research.

CDA scholars recognise that negotiating and working in the face of constraints is inevitable for academics committed to changing existing pedagogical frameworks (Fairclough, 2015; Fairclough et al., 2004; Rogers, 2011b). They are optimistic about the potential individuals have to confront the status quo (Fairclough, 2015; Fairclough et al., 2004; Rogers, 2011b). Nevertheless, curing all social ills in the world is not something that CDA scholars claim to be doing. As Fairclough et al. (2004) emphasise, CDA researchers consider that if aspects of ongoing social issues that caused injustices to individuals are assumed to be “products of human intervention,” they can “therefore be changed through human intervention” (p. 1).

In the same way, this study investigates how a community of teaching practitioners attempts to deconstruct and change long-held ideologies that have singularly established particular values and knowledge as ideal, over those negatively categorised as inferior. Such constructions unfairly portray some students whose sociocultural contexts and pursuits align with this so-

called ideal, as high achievers, while those whose sociocultural backgrounds and interests do not align with this ideal, are labelled as underachievers (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Ell & Grudnoff, 2013; Openshaw, 2007; Penetito, 2010). This thesis takes the stance that if the existing disparities in the education system are assumed to be the result of unfair human practices, created and maintained by past and present institutional contexts, then these disparities can also be changed through reordering how schooling is currently facilitated.

### **The relevance of CDA to this study**

Hyland (2015) points out that discourses are commonly assumed to be detached from or in contrast to their predecessors. However, what often remains unnoticed is where prior texts and practices have a key role to play in informing how each successive discourse improves on or advances from these previous frameworks. Unwittingly, prior discourses that have governed how prevalent frameworks come to be accepted as truth also shape the way new discourses are to be constructed and enacted (Hyland, 2015). Woodside-Jiron (2011) stresses that the term *new* in document analysis does not mean that what was proposed for the initiative has never before been discovered in the field of the particular research. What the term represents instead is how a proposed initiative or idea is *new* in relation to what it is trying to achieve in the present discourse, in consideration of previous frameworks. In this case, any approach can be defined as *new* as long as it provides a contrast to its predecessors (Woodside-Jiron, 2011).

Similarly, the goals for this new ITE programme were to respond to the MoE's (2013) call to ITE providers to address what was deemed lacking in existing ITE course content, which would enable new teachers to adapt their teaching to the needs of all students. Rather than being provided with the space to investigate and intervene in the persistent gap in student outcomes, the programme is required to demonstrate in its response (CoE, 2013) how it proposes to implement solutions recommended by the Advisory Group (MoE, 2010) and the MoE (2013) in the design and facilitation of this new programme.

Nevertheless, Hyland (2015) considers that “constraints are simultaneously the enabling conditions for originality” (p. 33). Through attention to the limitations that dictate how this new programme is to be facilitated, I explore how teaching practitioners locate instances where they can effect change to existing ITE frameworks. As Paugh and Dudley-Marling (2011) remind us, “all social spaces are ‘contested spaces’ that present opportunities and barriers for the making of specific meanings” (p. 820). Instead of developing a new programme that continues to reproduce inclusion as a pursuit that aims to improve the performance of all students as measured by their success in achieving normative educational standards, I look at how teaching practitioners – along with student teachers – are working to create a space that focuses on enabling students to succeed in academic outcomes that speak to their students’ local contexts and interests.

CDA advocates for multiplicity, rather than essentialism (Fairclough et al., 2004; Weiss & Wodak, 2003; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Fairclough (2000) states that practices of resistance in the new order are enacted through changing existing institutional arrangements, such as working in a more participatory framework rather than individualistic approaches. In education, this can refer to work that aims to situate knowledge acquisition in the local sociocultural contexts of students that are inclusive of diverse perspectives. This is to counter the supremacy underlying prevailing ITE frameworks singularly framed in the interests and values of the dominant culture. This study is interested in how a new ITE programme is working to transform existing educational approaches from one based on assumptions about the educational values of a particular worldview to one that recognises the varied sociocultural knowledge of students previously disregarded in the education system.

Freire (2000) stresses that there is “no *here* relative to a *there* that is not connected to a *now*, a *before*, and an *after*” (p. 43). He asserts that human beings do not only “make the history that makes them, but they also can recount the history of this mutual making” (p. 43). Williams (as cited in Gee, 2015) thus reminds those who seek to challenge overriding ideologies also to examine their own “participation in the creation of reality” (p. 26). Through the interviews conducted with the teacher educators, I examine how teacher educators articulate their role in a space in which dominant understandings of educational process and achievement are challenged. Teacher educators illustrate that they are not only as passive objects

conditioned and governed by the contexts they occupy, but also as individuals capable of making education more inclusive in this new programme.

### *How power works to generate inequities*

It is common to assume that dominance only operates through top-down power relations (Fairclough, 2015; van Leeuwen, 2012). Yet, van Dijk (1993) states quite the contrary: “power and even power abuse may seem ‘jointly produced’, e.g. when dominated groups are persuaded, by whatever means, that dominance is ‘natural’ or otherwise legitimate” (p. 242). In Chapter 2, I discussed how the construction of inclusion has evolved over time to serve different purposes. Burr (2015) emphasises that discourses not only have the power “to say what the object really is, that is, claims to be the truth [that governs] what we can think and say, but also what we can do or what can be done to us” (p. 73). This study explores how teacher educators challenge student teachers to rethink the ways they can potentially dominate their students in the name of inclusion. This is for them to examine where they, too, can impose power on their students through the very act of including them to pursue values and knowledge uncritically accepted as ideal or superior.

Fairclough (2000) claims that efforts to effect change, or to intervene in the reproduction of prevalent discourses, are a language struggle. Paugh and Dudley-Marling (2011) explain that this is because of the power of underlying “normative and deficit discourses that continue to predominate

within educational culture” (p. 819). Even terms that aim at advancing inclusivity may more often than not serve to reproduce the “‘boundaries’ of who is and is not normal (i.e. eligible to be ‘included’) and who is ‘different’” (Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011, p. 831). Deficit assumptions continue to preside over how students are perceived, and how teachers ought to help these students to succeed as well as their peers (Liasidou, 2011).

Discourses are representations of why individuals perform certain actions and where these actions are legitimate in particular contexts (van Leeuwen, 2012). Earlier in the chapter, I stated that CDA scholars have noted that there is no meaning outside of discourses. Rogers et al. (2005) state that “all discourses are social and thus ideological, and that some discourses are valued more than others” (p. 370). This study enquires into teaching practitioners’ attempt at deconstructing prevailing assumptions about teaching and learning narrowly framed within a neoliberal, postcolonial context. This is to expose student teachers to complicate “naturalised and unquestionable meanings about learners and learning” (Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011, p. 820) in school-based discourses and how these assumptions will impact on the way they think about and respond to students labelled as underachievers.

### ***Confronting prevailing assumptions***

Students labelled as underachievers are often identified to be either biologically or intellectually deficient (Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011).

These deficiencies are assumed to be inherent in the students. Teachers – and ITE providers – are often deemed to be the ones responsible for finding the right label, which is unquestionably accepted to represent issues related to students' failure to perform as well as their peers in schools. CDA, however, is critical of these presumptive labels that are used as justifications of why particular students fail to be assimilated or to perform tasks as set by the education system.

Gee (2010), in his theory of d/Discourse, emphasises the importance of teaching practitioners to situate knowledge acquisition in the prior contexts which students occupy. He refers to d/Discourse as the link between how new knowledge taught at schools (represented by the small 'd') needs to be connected to students' local (home and community) context (represented as the big 'D') in order for them to make sense of and better engage with what they are learning (Gee, 2010). CDA scholars thus call for teaching practitioners to pay more attention to the distinction between knowledge acquisition and meaning-making, rather than merely assuming teaching and learning to be a technical activity in which teachers bank a set curriculum unidirectionally into all their students. Teaching practitioners in this programme have not explicitly identified their theoretical orientation as one informed by critical theory. However, through the documents, fieldnotes and interviews reviewed, these teacher educators conveyed a critical orientation that aligns with Horkheimer's (1972) criteria of critical theory, that is, they are critiquing and working to change existing discourses.



The concept of the term 'critical' in CDA is rooted in the Frankfurt school of critical theory, which rejects existing constructions, as follows:

- Naturalism (that social practices and presumptive labels represent reality);
- Rationality (that what gets established as truth is a result of science and logic); and
- Individualism (that meaning is intrinsic in the individual).

(Rogers, 2004, p. 3)

This research enquires into how course developers and teacher educators attempt to establish a critical stance in this space to confront ideologies and practices that have come to be established as given. At the same time, I explore how they encourage student teachers to situate knowledge, not as something that students acquire in isolation, but as a process of meaning-making that is connected to and influenced by their prior knowledge.

In the next sections, I discuss the ways attention to discourses first emerged as a research tool in the academic world, and how CDA evolved from its linguistic predecessor into the theoretical perspective that is used in this thesis. I also investigate the limitations of using discourse analysis as a research tool, and how CDA can be put to work to facilitate a wider research agenda. I then discuss the literature that I have drawn on using CDA and how it informs this thesis. Finally, I discuss how I address the limitations of CDA and its potential as an analytic tool in current educational research.

## **Genealogy of CDA and its limitations**

According to Haase (n.d.), the origin of the term *discourse* can be traced from as far back as the “cultural background of Greek dialectical communication practice ... [which was] introduced as the formal discussion of the entities of the ‘universe of discourse’ according to logical principles we discuss” (p. 1). Haase says that the purpose of discourse is to confine the logical principles of discussion to specific fields of knowledge, such as the descriptions of humans according to their gender or age. Haase points out that variation in the meaning of the term has over time led to innumerable discussions on the changing definitions of the term *discourse* itself. Nevertheless, discourse analysis is frequently used to refer to the textual and social descriptions of particular sets of norms and the social, cultural, historical and political contexts which determine how discourses are to be understood in a given context (Haase, n.d.).

McCarthy (n.d.) affirms that the first published paper with the title 'Discourse analysis' was by Zellig Harris (1952). Harris's paper focused on his interest in the links between texts and their social situations, at a time when linguistics was largely concerned with the analysis of texts (McCarthy, n.d.). Rogers et al. (2005) add that the emergence of research interest in the study of discourse in the 1970s led linguists to become more aware of the need to analyse issues related to the social, cultural, political and historical contexts in which they occur.

Rogers (2011b) says that CDA is different from other discourse analysis methods as it includes not only a “description and interpretation of discourse in context, but also offers an explanation of why and how discourses work” (p. 2). CDA reflects the braids of rivers that have flowed from the transformation of its linguistic forefathers who advocated for the need to situate the links between the text and its social situation to post-structuralism and Foucauldian analysis which advocates for the contextual analysis of texts in relation to the power of the discourses which frame them.

### ***Disadvantages of CDA***

CDA as a theoretical framework is critiqued for its tendency to focus on linguistic perspectives over other means of information generation (Fairclough et al., 2004). Discourse is often assumed to be that of speech and texts alone, whereas data can come in the form of images and even vocal depictions (Fairclough et al., 2004; van Dijk, 2012). Furthermore, the term *discourse analysis* is frequently assumed to be a process in which researchers isolate text and speech from the issues and contexts which the research is purported to address (Fairclough et al., 2004). Fairclough et al. (2004), however, emphasise that as a “medium for the social construction of meaning, discourse is never solely linguistic” (p. 5). They further stress that a critical approach to discourse studies would ensure that “the analysis of text and talk are never an end in themselves” (Fairclough et al., 2004, p. 1), but are enablers for social actors to specify and reorder inequities that are prevalent in existing social practices.

In this research, I address the weaknesses noted above through using multiple sources of data to generate information, which I will discuss in detail in the next chapter. Inclusion, in this particular space for innovation provided by the MoE, is presented as a means to an end directed at raising the overall student performances across the education system. Yet this study does not assume that inclusion is a fixed phenomenon, but a discourse framed in particular contexts over time. I therefore explore how course developers and teacher educators in this space are working to deconstruct existing ideologies to reconstruct alternative approaches to inclusion.

### **Research underpinned by CDA**

In the two sets of literature reviews they investigated that have used CDA as their theoretical framework, Rogers et al. (2005) and Rogers et al. (2016) state that most of the studies reviewed have drawn heavily on Fairclough's three-dimensional model (see Fairclough, 2010). This can potentially lead to a homogenous approach in CDA research, which van Dijk (2012) cautions against, "because of the multi-disciplinary nature of CDA" (p. 386). Consistent with other CDA scholars, they suggest that future studies should incorporate multi-disciplinary perspectives or sets of approaches in order to develop CDA further as a research tool, and to bring newer and fresher insights to educational research (Kendall, 2007; Rogers et al., 2005; Rogers et al., 2016; van Dijk, 2012; Weiss & Wodak, 2003; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

CDA has often been criticised for its over-emphasis on how discourses constrain and govern discursive practices. Social actors are often constructed as passive objects powerlessly mimicking socially accepted practices (Breeze, 2011; Hyland, 2015; Luke, 1995; Rogers et al., 2005; Rogers et al., 2016). In the context of Gee's notion of *saying*, *doing* and *being*, this reflects an over-representation of the *saying* and an under-representation of *doing* and *being*. Rogers et al. (2005) thus remind researchers to use CDA not only as a tool for critique, but also to locate and turn present constraints into possible alternative structures. The next section, I discuss two studies in which the authors have used CDA and how it is consistent with the agenda of this thesis research.

#### ***A discussion of two studies' use of CDA and their contribution to this research***

In their investigation, Paugh and Dudley-Marling (2011) use CDA to explore how new teachers' use of language afforded or constrained their efforts at becoming inclusive teachers. The difficulty that emerged from the findings of this article is not about the complexities involved in teaching in diverse settings, but in convincing new teachers to focus on what students can do, rather than what they cannot do, based on prevailing discourses. Nevertheless, rather than focus on the limitations as to how deficit discourses are impeding students from becoming inclusive teachers, Paugh and Dudley-Marling (2011) turn their effort towards challenging these teachers to examine taken-for-granted ideas about normalcy, which they have accepted as truth.

Using Gee's notion of the d/Discourse, Paugh & Dudley-Marling (2011) draw teachers' attention to the various contexts in which learning occurs and develops – home, community, and educational settings – to make learning useful and relevant to the students' lives across these different environments. Their article skilfully uses CDA to frame their findings of how existing challenges which they have analysed would impede teachers from being more inclusive can be transformed through exposing them to the ways language, power and identity work to reproduce marginalisation in schooling. This aligns with the agenda of my study in which I investigate teaching practitioners' attempt at supporting student teachers to critically rethink the purposes of schooling and their role as teachers, as shaped by prevailing discourses, in order to examine what learning means and how they can support their students to achieve better academic outcomes that are relevant to their sociocultural context and prior knowledge.

In another study, Ashton (2016) analyses a new model of inclusive education that is becoming increasingly popular in the United States, that is, the pairing of teachers from general education and special education to co-teach in the same classroom. Such an attempt is designed to accommodate the educational needs of disabled students in mainstream school settings. CDA, in this case, provides a structure for him to analyse the interactions and practices in a classroom among co-teachers who come from different teacher education backgrounds in his study. The insights he gained from this research indicate the multiple realities underlying the construction of

inclusion, and how it was interpreted and put to work in different ways by different teachers.

For Ashton (2016), “CDA presents a framework to examine the discourses surrounding [the co-teachers’] interactions as they relate to power, identity and dominance” (p. 2). CDA thus offers valuable insights into ideologies and meanings generated through discourses framed by the context which informs and shapes how a particular text is to be understood and enacted in a given educational setting. By analysing how inclusion is framed and can be framed through different social texts and practices, Ashton brings to light discourses that have been accepted as truth and remained unchallenged. This is to remind teaching practitioners to be critical and reflective of the discourses that shape what they do, rather than simply enacting ideologies framed in their respective disciplines as given and ideal. This article is consistent with the critical stance that teaching practitioners attempt to develop in student teachers for them to be critical of, rather than simply uphold, dominant ideologies that are prevalent in the education system.

### *A CDA informed analysis*

Paugh and Dudley-Marling (2011) use CDA to analyse the difficulties underlying new teachers’ tendencies to revert to normative assumptions in their teaching practice. At the same time their research explores the enabling conditions that encourage new teachers to focus on what students can do, rather than what they cannot do. In the second work, Ashton (2016) utilised CDA to engage with multiple perspectives and realities underlying the same

phenomenon. Yet different disciplines and worldviews can influence teachers to think and act differently. In Chapters 6 and 7, I explore how teacher educators challenge deficit assumptions by prompting student teachers to examine the power of discourses in constructing and shaping their understandings about inclusion and what they can do to be inclusive teachers. This encourages student teachers to rethink learning outcomes from those of encouraging all students to pursue success as it is framed by neoliberal values, to what they can do to make learning and achievement outcomes more responsive to their students' needs and interests.

This study aims to explore how a set of teaching practitioners not only deconstruct taken-for-granted ideas about inclusive education, but also how they turn constraints into possibilities to transform existing ITE frameworks. I use CDA in this study to examine how teaching practitioners are working the space to accomplish these two goals in the creation and implementation of a new ITE programme. Rogers et al. (2005; 2016) note above the importance for CDA to be informed by multidisciplinary perspectives and to incorporate new sets of approaches into one's study. This has the potential to advance CDA as a research tool and to bring newer and fresher insights to educational research. Likewise, this research aims to utilise interdisciplinary perspectives from CDA scholars such as Fairclough, Gee, van Dijk and Wodak to generate new insights into how inclusion can be reordered.



## **Conclusion**

This chapter started with a discussion about how and why CDA is appropriate as a theoretical framework in a thesis that explores how a set of teaching practitioners use the space of a new ITE programme to create different ways of understanding about inclusion and inclusive practices. CDA provides a useful tool to deconstruct ideologies and assumptions underlying this space and the challenges this implies for teaching practitioners working to resist these established frameworks in the development of this new ITE programme.

In the latter half of this chapter, I discussed an overview of the term *discourse* and its relevance in this study. This is followed by an exploration of the critiques and limitations that have been made about how discourse analysis and CDA have been employed in existing research. Next, I explored through two studies how CDA has and can be used as an enabling condition to engage with different ways of thinking about and enacting inclusive practices. Lastly, I discussed how this study seeks to advance the use of CDA as a theoretical tool in education research.

In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology that underpins the inquiry of this study and the methods I have used to generate and make sense of the data gathered to inform this research. I analyse the use of a qualitative case study approach, which is informed by the methodological paradigm of qualitative studies, is consistent with the critical stance of this study in the ways it considers social phenomena as products of discourses, rather than as

fixed realities. Issues such as ethical dilemmas, researcher and participants relationships will also be discussed.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology and method**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology underpinning this research. Chapter 3 presented a discussion of the theoretical tools of critical discourse analysis (CDA) which I have drawn from to inform the methodology for this study. This chapter discusses why and how a qualitative case study is the appropriate research strategy to bring out the stories of this study. It also discusses the research methods that have been used to generate and or gather information to address the issues and research questions that are at the heart of this research. While the major focus for generating new research material for this thesis was a case study of a particular postgraduate ITE programme, the research also draws on review and analysis of data documentation that initiated the request for this new programme, along with the application and conceptual frameworks that detailed the conception and intent of this new programme.

I start this chapter with an analysis of the ways this study fits within the methodological framework of qualitative studies. From there, I explain the research design and process of obtaining ethics approval for this research. I then explore the ways I have used qualitative research strategies and the case study approach to inquire into the complexities underlying a set of teaching practitioners' attempts to promote different ways of facilitating inclusive

education and why I have chosen to observe four specific courses (among the eight courses offered in this programme).

Next, I discuss the research methods used for data collection and how these strategies were necessary to generate information to address the key research questions in this investigation. Potential limitations to the inquiry are explored. Lastly, I discuss the process and steps undertaken to proceed with analysing and making sense of the data generated through the inquiry process.

### **Qualitative approaches to educational research**

Creswell (2013) states that “all good research begins with an issue or problem that needs to be resolved” and that “qualitative studies begin with an introduction advancing the research or issue in a study” (p. 130). This aligns with the focus of this study, that is, to enquire into how a community of course developers and teacher educators responded to the Aotearoa New Zealand Ministry of Education’s (MoE, 2013) request to develop a new ITE programme directed at intervening in persistent issues regarding disparities in academic performance in the education system. In this study, I inquire into how a set of teaching practitioners worked to develop and facilitate a new ITE ‘space’ to construct alternative approaches to inclusion in school environments with the intent of improving the learning, rather than just the academic, outcome of all students in Aotearoa NZ.

Chapter 3 discussed how a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach advocates for issues or problems to be understood through multidisciplinary perspectives (Fairclough et al., 2004; van Dijk, 2012; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Correspondingly, the methodology of this research draws on a constructivist approach, which emphasises the importance of analysing particular phenomenon through multiple perspectives (Lincoln, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). As Ybema, Yanow, Wels, and Kamsteeg (2010) state, studies that draw on constructivist perspectives consider “social realities as collectively or intersubjectively constructed in an ongoing interplay between individual agency and social structure, in and through which individuals and structures mutually constitute each other” (p. 7). This is consistent with the study’s research agenda that looks into a set of teaching practitioners’ attempts at deconstructing and reconstructing prevailing notions of inclusive education using different perspectives informed by their academic background and knowledge.

Moreover, this study is conscious of how the relationship between the MoE and teaching practitioners involved in this programme constitute each other. Teaching practitioners were given the opportunity to construct a new programme through the space given by the MoE to effect change to existing ITE structures. However, the MoE’s aim for new cohorts of teachers who will be more focused on improving the learning outcome of all students need to be coordinated with the teaching practitioners’ commitment to intervene in the disparity in student outcomes in the education system.

Consistent with CDA's philosophy that there is no meaning outside of discourses, in adopting a constructivist paradigm, ontologically, I consider that inclusion is a process of socially constructed realities that are constantly shifting, negotiated and renegotiated in various contexts (sociocultural, historical, political), which influence what can be thought, said and done. Furthermore, growing up in a multicultural society in Malaysia, I have always known that there is more than one truth in the world and that different cultures have their own interpretations of the same phenomenon under discussion. Epistemologically, I consider that it is important to acknowledge and recognise the different contexts and realities that shape social actors' worldviews and their understandings of inclusion. My prior studies in human services and sociology have led me to understand the power of discourses in constructing and governing how certain values and knowledge come to be accepted as superior over others. The axiology of this study is to attend closely to the texts and expressions articulated by the course developers and teacher educators involved in the development and facilitation of this new programme.

Ybema et al. (2010) claim that "research knowledge (or truth claims) is situational, co-constructed through interactions with others in social settings, and reflective of researchers' and others' positionality with respect to subjects and settings" (p. 8). This study recognises that meanings are constructed between individuals and the sociocultural, political and institutional contexts in which problems or issues occur. The study thus argues that what constitutes inclusion, as with success in student outcomes,

is a process that is constantly shifting between the individual and their surrounding contexts.

### **Research design**

The opportunity to explore alongside individuals who were then preparing to deliver the MTchgLn programme for the first time as I was designing this doctoral thesis is a godsend. Not only does the MTchgLn programme align with the constructionist view that inclusion is a phenomenon that is mutually constituted between students and their environments, it also attempts to reconstruct inclusion through interweaving different worldviews and perspectives into the design and delivery of the programme. The MTchgLn was chosen as the site of interest in which to explore the complexities and aspirations underlying a community of teaching practitioners' commitment to facilitate a new ITE programme that has inclusion as one its core goals for my doctoral thesis.

Contact was made to the director of the MTchgLn programme for permission and approval for me to focus on the programme for my doctoral study. The director extended a warm welcome for me to do to doctoral research on the MTchgLn programme and had kindly emailed me relevant documents that included, the recommendation report from the Education Workforce Advisory Group (MoE, 2010), the request for application (RFA) from the MoE (2013), the University of Canterbury's response to the RFA (CoE, 2013), conceptual frameworks published by course developers of the

programme, as well as references and reports that have been used to inform the development of the MTchgLn programme in relation to inclusion.

An analysis of these documents allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the purpose and agenda of this programme as well as the areas that would be of interests, and importance, to direct this study to investigate. Upon discussions with the director of the MTchgLn programme, my academic supervisors and I, it was decided that the doctoral thesis will focus on the aspiration and complexities – relating to the development and facilitation of inclusion in this new ITE programme. This is because inclusion is not only one of the core focuses of this space, but also an aspect that is generated throughout the design and implementation of the various courses that made up this one-calendar year programme.

The following section detailed what I did next to gain ethics approval in order to conduct classroom observations and interviews with teacher educators as well as the implications involved in the process of obtaining consent from potential participants.

### *Ethics*

This research is conducted with the approval from the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC) granted on 10 December 2014. The initial proposal in the information sheet and consent form sent for approval



aimed for this research to be conducted using a participatory action research (PAR) approach in which the course designers and teacher educators in the programme and the researcher collaborate, design, and discuss the research questions and aims together. However, due to the pressured nature of educational programmes and a busy workload for the staff involved, my supervisors and I decided to modify the methodology from PAR to a more general qualitative research approach. This was to minimise the burden the study will impose on potential participants on top of their existing workload. Gladstone (2014) explains that a PAR approach requires time to build relationships with participants in order to develop “mutual trust, reciprocity and risk required for sustainable change in terms of setting and context” (p. 182). This was hard to achieve due to the haste in which I needed to start my fieldwork and the teacher educators were busy with the preparation and facilitation of this new programme. The modification in the approach to the research was sent to ERHEC and approval was granted on 11 March 2015.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state that at the heart of ethics are relationships and a study that is not ethical is not credible. Furthermore, in order to maintain the relationships with the participants who will be or are already collaborating with the researcher throughout the research, constant negotiation and renegotiation is essential. An example of such negotiation and renegotiation in this study entailed revising the original information sheet and consent form for some participants in response to the feedback and comments received from some of the teacher educators involved in this programme. They brought to my attention issues and concerns that I had not

anticipated when I submitted the human ethics application for this project in December 2014.

Researchers adopting a constructivist approach utilise qualitative research methods, such as ethnography, field research, grounded theory, case studies, and unstructured interviewing (Trochim, 2006) to generate information on the focus of their study. In the next section, I discuss the research methods used and why it was useful in helping to generate information necessary to address the research agenda.

### **Research methods**

Qualitative studies are exploratory in nature and suggest “an inductive and iterative approach whereby thick description leads to the development of research questions as the social phenomenon is being studied” (Reeves, Peller, Goldman, & Kitto, 2013, p. 1367). As noted in Chapter 1, the research questions identified before classroom observations started emerged as the inquiry process progressed through classroom observations and further analysis of relevant documents.

Adopting a constructivist approach is consistent with my understanding that the world “does not arrive pre-labeled and pre-theorized” (Ybema et al., 2010, p. 9) but that what is studied is continuously changing and evolving in accordance with the experiences and circumstances of the context that

frames it. Through asking participants questions to access their constructions of inclusion, why and how it relates to their identities as teacher educators, I was constantly reminded of what Ybema et al. (2010) refer to as the traits of a constructivist ethnographer: that is, I became increasingly aware that the participants, who are teacher educators in this programme, are co-generators of the knowledge produced, rather than a source of data that can be collected or even accessed.

Consistent with CDA, qualitative researchers who come from more critical stances are interested in investigating the links between knowledge and power (Ybema et al., 2010). The teacher educators in this new ITE programme were intent on establishing a critical stance to resist and restructure prevailing assumptions about inclusive practices. Researchers with this approach to critical investigation usually enter a given culture – in this case, an ITE programme – to immerse themselves in that environment and explore the “rich generation of meanings by social actors, as a consequence of various structures and decisions made by individuals”, and this approach involves “moving far beyond description to explanation” (Goodley et al., 2004, p. 56). Through observing the teacher educators as they lived through the complexities of ordinary, everyday life in particular settings, I was able to document and capture aspects of their lived experiences and their reflections on what they were doing as educators.

Doing this qualitative research has allowed me to *make the strange familiar* and *the familiar strange* (Foucault, 1972; Goodley et al., 2004; Ybema et al., 2009). Because I do not have much prior background in education courses, immersing myself in the field of my study (teacher education) helped me make the strange familiar. Yet as Goodley et al. (2004) point out, “ethnographic research can be embraced as a methodology that aims *to look at the cultures we may feel we already know so well...* it means turning social contexts into research contexts” (p. 57). Because my fieldwork location is in the same university in which I am doing my doctoral study, the corridors and classrooms that I have often passed by at the university as a doctoral student, and the staff and lecturers that I have often met at the university, have made the familiar strange. The social context I knew and was getting to know so well become the site of my fieldwork, an environment I had to look at with different eyes. My immersion in that context was now different. I did not go into the classroom as a student, but as a researcher, and the people I was observing, were both academic staff at the university in which I was enrolled, and also my participants.

### ***Case study***

This study enquires into the complexities and tensions involved in the attempt of a particular group of teaching practitioners to address the ongoing disparity in achievement outcomes in Aotearoa NZ schools. The power of the case study approach is in the way it explores phenomena pertaining to the *why* and *how* of research agendas (Timmons and Carins, 2010). This is

important in educational research, especially inclusive education, for researchers to gain deeper understandings of challenges underlying attempts directed at resisting the retention of the status quo. Consistent with CDA, a case study approach assumes that social issues or problems are products of human intervention, created through interactions between individuals and the contexts in which the issues occur over time and place. Case study approach seeks to “identify and describe before trying to analyse and theorise” (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011, p. 53). This is a useful approach to inquire into for this study in investigating what is unsaid and absent (Rogers, 2011b) in matters related to the ‘long tail of underachievement.’ The identification of inequitable discourses by teaching practitioners is necessary in order to understand their attempts at ‘working the space’ to direct student teachers to be conscious and to resist reinforcing teaching practices that disadvantage, rather than raise, the academic outcomes of school students.

The aim of this research is to provide an insight of value to future educators in teacher education and professional development programmes of the complexities and challenges of affecting change through confronting socially accepted practices. It is hoped that readers will find in this case study approaches that would be effective and supportive in their professional work. In his widely cited work on case study approaches, Stake (1995) highlights that good case studies appeal to readers for their naturalistic generalisation.<sup>2</sup> This is because case study research allows

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<sup>2</sup> Naturalistic generalisation is a process where readers gain insight by reflecting on the details and descriptions presented in case studies. As readers recognise similarities in case study details and find

readers to reflect on “aspects of their own experience in the case and intuitively generalise[s] from the case to their own situation, rather than the sample (of one) being statistically representative of the population as a whole” (Stake, 1995, p. 54). A case study approach aligns with the aim of this study which is directed at investigating how one ITE programme worked amid constraints to facilitate change. This is in contrast to research that focuses on best practices, which frequently aims to prove the validity of certain approaches and how these approaches can be generalised or replicated in other ITE programmes.

Chadderton and Torrance (2011) state that a case study approach aims to “capture the complexity of relationships, beliefs and attitudes within a bounded unit, using different forms of data collection” (p. 10). In the next section, I turn my attention to the research design and different methods of data collection utilised in the inquiry process to generate the information necessary to address the focus of this study.

### **Data collection**

The research design was set around classroom observations of courses conducted at the University of Canterbury in the first year the programme was delivered, and then very briefly again in the second year. The data collection and subsequent data analysis draw from multiple sources of

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descriptions that resonate with their own experiences, they consider whether their situations are similar enough to warrant generalisations. Naturalistic generalisation invites readers to apply ideas from the natural and in-depth depictions presented in case studies to personal contexts (Melrose, 2010, p. 3).

information which include: 50 sets of fieldnotes from classroom observations over a period of 11 months in 2015, and two more sets of fieldnotes collected at the start of 2016; transcripts from interviews conducted with seven teacher educators in the four courses observed – one focus group interview with two teacher educators and six individual interviews were conducted with some of the teacher educators upon completion of the courses observed. Their participation was dependent on their availability. In addition to the data documentation that was mentioned earlier in the chapter, I have also drawn on materials made available to student teachers relating to the course in the University of Canterbury website, as I proceeded with the qualitative investigative work during the 11-month period of classroom observation.

### *Secondary data sources*

Lincoln (2002) highlights that secondary data should come from some forms of publicly available sources. As discussed in this chapter, I have drawn on secondary sources such as the recommendations and RFA published by the MoE, as well as the response, conceptual frameworks before I proceed with the inquiry process for this study. The readings have helped to generate insights necessary to inform the focus of my inquiry that relate to the possibilities and challenges of transforming existing ITE programmes with the aim of making schooling more inclusive to all students. The documentation analysis then expanded to include websites and subsequent conference proceedings and articles published by the course developers continued through the process of observation, interviewing, analysis of

original research material and the writing up process. This gave me a deeper understanding of the purposes and aims course developers have in and through the development and facilitation of this new ITE programme, and how they interpreted the issues associated with attempting to effect change through the education of student teachers.

In the following section, I discuss the courses I have observed in this programme and the information generated from these observations and subsequent interviews organised with the teacher educators that helped me to address the research questions. Before I proceeded with the classroom observations, I would email the course coordinator and teaching educators in the particular courses to seek their permission – as in the signing of the consent form – for observing the course they teach, and to arrange for interviews after the completion of the course.

### *Classroom observations*

I started the first classroom observation with EDMT601: Teaching and Learning in Aotearoa New Zealand. This four-week introductory course aims to provide a foundation for student teachers to critically examine how inclusive education is currently understood and facilitated. This course was developed to lay the path for student teachers to critically analyse the purposes of schooling, and how this influences how inclusion is promoted and practised in past and present educational approaches. It was important



to observe this course to explore the ways that the programme attempted to establish the broad educational goals of critical inquiry at the very start of this one-year programme.

The second and third course observed were the two longest courses (9 months) offered in this programme. They are EDMT603: Creating Inclusive Learning Environments for Diverse Learners and EDMT602: Toward Maori success: Presence, Engagement and Achievement. EDMT603 and EDMT602 both shared the same lecturing time and class space. Both courses attempt to challenge and confront prevailing discourses through constructing different ways of thinking about inclusion. The two courses thus provided important insights that address the focus of this study.

The fourth course observed was EDMT604: Inquiry and Evidence-based Practice for Inclusive Learning Contexts 1, which is a one-semester course. The aim of observing this course was to explore how teacher educators turn the focus of inclusive education from efforts aimed at assimilating students into what is regarded as the norm to challenging student teachers to engage with differences. Insights gained from this course address teacher educators' attempts at prompting student teachers to rethink the role of being inclusive teachers.

In order to help deepen understanding of the programme's attempts at developing teacher identities to negotiate the complexities of the schooling

environment, I asked for permission to observe EDMT601 again in the programme's second year of delivery in 2016. These classroom observations generated further insights necessary for me to gain deeper understandings of teacher educators' attempts to develop student teachers' confidence to cope with the challenges of enacting inclusive practices in the wider institutional context governed by neoliberal values.

### *Fieldnotes*

Walford (2009) claims that "fieldnotes are central to ethnographic practice" (p. 117) as they allow researchers to powerfully engage with their research through documentation of what they perceived, as well as how their perceptions change during fieldwork. This changing understanding is reflected through the fieldnotes recorded. In the first year of the classroom observations, the focus was on how teacher educators were working to: 1) critique and challenge dominant discourses underlying how inclusion is promoted and practised in past and present educational approaches; and 2) prompt student teachers to rethink what they need to do to connect learning to the interests and sociocultural contexts of their students.

However, as my understanding of teacher education deepened through the process of the 11-month fieldwork experience, I realised efforts to make education inclusive involve more than exploring what course developers and teacher educators say and do to create a new ITE programme. In the second year when granted permission to observe EDMT601 again, I was

able to gain deeper insights into the implications embedded in the contested purposes of schooling that may conflict with the inclusive values that student teachers have been encouraged to develop in the programme. Such new understandings helped to strengthen and transform the analysis in Chapter 5, 6 and 7 from an exploration that focuses on what course developers and teacher educators say and do, to engage fully with the challenges of work that aims to effect change to prevailing practices.

### *Interviews*

I conducted seven individual interviews and one focus group interview with two participants. Interview questions were semi-structured and often organised after the courses I had observed were completed. Due to the heavy workload of the teacher educators, focus group interviews were not easy to arrange. I had originally planned to transcribe the interviews myself, but the workload of doing classroom observations, fieldnote writing, interviews, and keeping up with returning the transcripts to the participants in a reasonable amount of time, was too much for me. My supervisors and I thus decided to approach the Disability Resource Services' Alternative Format Centre for support for transcribing the interviews, where I received permission from the participants to send for external transcribing. Where participants gave me permission, I sent those interviews for external transcribing. I transcribed personally those interviews for which I did not receive permission to send for external transcribing. All the interviews were audio recorded, copies of interview transcripts were returned to the

participants and they have the right to edit and amend the transcription if needed.

As Biklen and Bogdan (2007) explain, “Qualitative interviews are, of course, supposed to be open-ended and flowing” (p.131). In the initial stage, I did not have any structured questions prepared before the interviews. As the interviews organised were with the teacher educators of the courses I had just observed, questions were based on reflections on the teaching pedagogy and what inclusive education means to the teacher educators. It was much later in the data collection stage that I started to have a set of semi-structured questions based on the teacher educators’ roles in the programme, if they thought they had achieved what they had intended with the strategy, and what they would like to change for the next year. I would go through the fieldnotes of the classroom observations and pick one or two instances of a particular teaching pedagogy modelled in the course as part of the semi-structured questions.

The semi-structured questions were designed to deepen understanding of the teacher educators’ constructions of inclusion, how they set about modelling these constructions in practice, and the *praxis*<sup>3</sup> involved in these processes. I was not rigid about keeping to the semi-structured questions during the interviews as, by the time the interviews were conducted, the teacher

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<sup>3</sup> Freire (1996) defines *praxis* (specific to teaching practice) as "reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed" (p. 126).

educators and I had known each other for a period of time and had shared many hours in the classrooms together. The sudden change in atmosphere at the start of our interviews from classroom interaction that focused on teacher educators at work to a closed door one-to-one interview was an adjustment in itself. The length of the interviews was between 30 and 60 minutes, and this was decided by the participants when we scheduled the interviews.

Having some forms of semi-structured interview questions helped keep to the timeframe of how much time we had to discuss each question. However, I was conscious of instances where the teacher educators would have liked to talk about other issues pertaining to inclusion and the pedagogies they had used. At times the interviews were like debriefing sessions as we reflected on *aha moments* in the classroom. Even though the participants and I were aware that the focus of the study was on the teacher educators, our discussions would at times reflect on how student teachers responded to a particular teaching strategy during the classes.

### ***Ethical dilemmas***

My main supervisor<sup>4</sup> was not only one of the educators in this programme, but was also a Head of School in the college at which this new ITE programme was being implemented. My supervisors and I were aware that

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<sup>4</sup> My main supervisor has since left the university in June 2017. Due to the complexity of this research and the unavailability of lecturing staff with the combined knowledge of inclusion and teacher education, my new main supervisor is also one of my participants and a teacher educator in this programme.

this could be of potential concern to the teacher educators. They might be cautious about what they discussed in interviews with regard to how they approach this programme, what their roles are in the programme, and their views about inclusive practice. Timmons and Carins (2010) highlight how, although maintaining the anonymity of the research participants is of utmost importance in the case study approach, it can be very difficult to accomplish. This is true in the case of this study. As one of the teacher educators later said at our interview, even if I have changed their names, gender, and age, their colleagues will still know who I am talking about as discussion of the subject area in which they are teaching will potentially identify them to others, including their head of department.

Even though anonymity is difficult to maintain as all the teacher educators know each other, I have always given the participants reassurances that what they have said during interviews is strictly confidential. Although the dilemma posed by anonymity will always be there, this project has been set up with the utmost care in that throughout the study, the main supervisor did not have access to my fieldnotes or interview transcripts. She was also not involved in the supervisory team during most of the 11 months of fieldwork observations. The only data my supervisors have had access to are findings I have already analysed and presented to them as memos and thesis chapters. I have used pseudonyms where appropriate in all these findings. All hardcopy data was locked in a filing cabinet at the university. All softcopy data was stored in my laptop and the university server, both of which are password protected. The participants were made aware that they had the

authority to withdraw their participation at any point during the study before the publication of the thesis. They also had the opportunity to read and edit the interview and focus group transcripts of the sessions in which they had participated.

### **Research participants**

This study is focused on how course developers and teacher educators attempt to envision and effect different ways of thinking about inclusion in this new ITE programme. Goodley et al. (2004) claim that “research in the social sciences will only find in its theatres of enquiry what it puts there” (p. 67), as the discipline considers that people do not come into a task or situation innocently. Instead, people wilfully situate tasks and events not only in the institutional meanings which their profession provides, but they also constitute them as an expression of themselves (Goodley et al., 2004). As discussed in Chapter 3, through CDA, this study considers teacher educators involved in this programme as individuals committed to making education more inclusive and equitable to all students (Billig, 2003). Through the classroom observation and interviews, the participants conveyed their commitments at effecting changes and making schooling more equitable to all students, and not simply as teacher educators assigned by the institution in which they work to develop this programme.

### ***Critical positioning of the researcher***

Megan Conway (2012), the managing editor of the *Review of Disability Studies* journal, has written about her experience as the only deaf-blind researcher in the faculty of Special Education at the Syracuse University:

When I went into education, I wanted to make a difference for others like me and blah, blah, blah. I thought it was weird that I was the only one with a disability in my doctoral cohort—no, make that my entire doctoral program (p. 3).

Similarly, although the faculty within which I conducted my doctoral study was committed to the goal of inclusive education, I have always felt out of place being the only person who was identifiable with a visible disability among my peers, throughout the entire period of my doctoral study. However, unlike Conway, when I first started my doctoral study, the first thing I knew about what I wanted to study was that I did not want to study *people like me* (Heng, in press).

What guided this study is a strong desire to stay away from yet another research study that proclaims itself to be the voice of the vulnerable or aimed to improve the lives of people like me (Goodley, 2017; Oliver & Barnes, 1997). As someone living with a rare genetic condition, and a very visible disability, I have participated in numerous medical and scientific research projects that aim to improve the lives of disabled people. These were, as Oliver called it, most definitely a “rape model of research” (Oliver, 1992, p. 109) for able-bodied researchers often *extorted* insights from the experiences and life stories shared by disabled participants to advance their



own status in the academy, while the lot of disabled people's lives still remained the same as before the research began.

Coming upon this research topic is thus a godsend to me in that I have the opportunity to explore alongside individuals whose experiences and status in life are very unlike mine, but who have in their hearts the commitment to make education inclusive for all children. CDA allows researchers to be explicit and transparent about their own research interest and values without feeling apologetic of the critical stances that underlie their work. However, this does not mean that CDA researchers do not have to keep reminding themselves of the ethical standards that a researcher needs to follow in their work.

### **Limitations of the research**

This case study explores the design and operation of one new ITE programme. My observations were limited to classroom observations in the university where the courses were conducted, and interviews with teacher educators were only possible according to their availability. The small number of participants, together with the fieldnotes taken from the classes observed, provided for an in-depth exploration of the teacher educators' commitment to inclusion through their statements and classroom practices. However, because observations noted in this exploration are limited to one case study, the insights generated should only be regarded as a window into the complexities underlying a particular set of teaching practitioners'

attempting to develop a new ITE programme underpinned by a more critical approach to teacher education. Nevertheless, as discussed at the start of this chapter, this study is based on the assumption that there are multiple socially constructed realities of inclusion and inclusive practices.

Observations and descriptions through the lens of one researcher are always partial and incomplete, because scenes change and even the same scene viewed from different angles, through different lenses, is different. This study does not claim to speak for or to represent the views of other ITE programmes or teacher educators. I did not follow the student teachers out into the schools in which they were based while completing this ITE programme. However, I was in classrooms engaged in observation when the student teachers sometimes made connections between issues discussed in their courses and their experience in school classrooms. Because this research focuses on the ways in which a set of teaching practitioners responded to the opportunity to design and teach a new ITE programme directed at inclusivity, it did not attempt to research the responses of student teachers enrolled in this programme.<sup>5</sup> Even though fieldnotes from classroom observations and interviews with teacher educators sometimes included discussion of the way students responded to components of the

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<sup>5</sup> In Chapter 8, I discuss ways in which future research can explore what student teachers who have completed the MTchgLn programme *say, do, to effect* the inclusive values and practices at different school settings.

programme, care has been taken that any particulars of the student teachers mentioned are not identified in any way.

The fieldwork was conducted in the first year the programme was offered. This study thus recognises that various transformations would have been made to the design and implementation of this ITE since then. However, this investigation sought to enquire into the aspirations and challenges of developing and facilitating an ITE programme that had achieving inclusive education as a central goal, rather than a description of best practice as modelled in this new ITE programme. Insights gained from the study, namely the complexities and implications involved in efforts directed at changing practices entrenched by prevailing ideologies, is still useful to educators involved in similar attempts at effecting change.

### **Data analysis**

CDA researchers are often reminded to reflect on how the focus of their research may be directed towards particular perspectives because of the theoretical or methodological frameworks they have utilised in their research (Rogers et al., 2016). At the same time, CDA researchers are also reminded to reflect on how the research that they are “conducting is, in fact, reshaping the framework itself” (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 384). This constantly analytical and reflexive approach allows CDA researchers to be “open to adjustments and adaptations, given the demands of the research questions, the contexts, and the theoretical frameworks that are brought into line with

it” (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 384). As discussed earlier, modifications were made in consideration of how the research could best adapt to the workload and participation of the teacher educators. Research questions and directions of the study to address those questions were the source of ongoing reflections on the data generated by document analysis and classroom observations.

Research intent on studying change may invariably direct its attention to the complexities underlying efforts to adapt, rather than create changes, to prevailing practices (Saldana, 2003; Silverman, 2015; Yin, 2017). Moreover, due to the limited timeframe needed to investigate fully how changes take place, researchers are often drawn to examine “why systems so seemingly dedicated to change usually manage to entrench the status quo” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 19). As discussed earlier, the process of undertaking 11-months of fieldwork experience provided me with the insights which both deepened and transformed my research agenda to look beyond the saying and doing of inclusive practices. I became more aware of the contested interests underneath how inclusion is represented in the wider, institutional system.

Through analysing relevant documents, fieldnotes and interview transcripts, I identified a number of themes in relation to the course developers’ and teacher educators’ attempts at critiquing and reconceptualising inclusive education. This is consistent with contemporary research on teaching and learning (as discussed in Chapter 2) that calls for ITE providers to develop

a critical stance to confront ideologies and assumptions accepted as ideal in existing ITE programmes. An explicit goal of this ITE programme is to prompt student teachers to examine the extent in which their thoughts and actions are shaped by dominant discourses which they took for granted as normative or superior. Such critical awareness not only stimulates them to rethink inclusive practices framed by traditional *training* approaches and neoliberal interests, but also to focus on knowledge that will expand the learning outcomes of their students.

In analysing the fieldnotes and interview transcripts, my focus was on the content of “what was said, not the form with which it was said, or the actual structures of speech or social processes that were used to say it” (Surtees, 2017, p. 90). In short, I attended to what the teacher educators had to say about their commitment to make education inclusive and how they went about modelling these commitments to the students in class. My approach in analysing the interview transcripts was to explore how teacher educators constructed their personal and professional identities as social actors critical of existing injustices in the education system and how they actively take a lead to do something about it.

The processes that underpin qualitative studies often reflect the image of a spiral, rather than a fixed linear approach, and that researchers often learn by doing. Documentations that I have perused before and during the observation stages were revisited together with interview transcripts and classroom fieldnotes. I then developed my analysis through memo writing.

Lincoln (2002) stresses that interpreting the data involves making sense of the data which includes connecting raw data with existing research literature to support their argument. As Creswell (2013) asserts, memo writing allows researchers to make sense of the data as they start the process of reading through their interview transcripts and fieldnotes.

Various themes emerged from the ongoing documentary and qualitative analysis. The various themes were then consolidated into five broad research questions to be addressed in this thesis as enunciated in Chapter 1. As I was considering how to further consolidate the five research questions into the writing up of the thesis, I came upon Gee's *saying, doing and being*. This discovery was found to be consistent with the themes in Chapter 5 that look at what course developers articulate – the *saying*. Chapter 6 explores teacher educators at work through fieldnotes – the *doing*. Chapter 7 enquires into teacher educators' experiences and commitment to social justice and equity in education – the *being*.

## **Conclusion**

I started this chapter with a discussion of the umbrella network of qualitative studies, and why and how I have interwoven a range of qualitative research strategies and a case study approach informed by a methodological approach that values information about individuals' understandings of their actions and interactions. These strategies are informed by a social constructionist and discourse analytic methodology/set of ideas about what counts as

knowledge and what will be useful evidence for the agenda of this research that seeks to understand how teaching educators are talking back and reconceptualising different approaches to dominant ideologies underlying existing school-based practices. I then explored the research design, ethical process and dilemma, the research methods, as well as discuss how the courses I have chosen to observe address the research questions that directed this exploration. Potential limitations that may affect this study was discussed before I concluded the chapter with a discussion of the steps and procedures that were undertaken to make sense of the data generated through the process of this research.

Looking ahead, Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the research findings, using the conceptual framework of *saying, doing and being*. Chapter 5 discusses what a set of course developers and teacher educators *say* about their efforts at reordering alternatives ways of understanding about inclusion in ITE programmes. In Chapter 6, I explore what teacher educators *do* to prompt student teachers to construct different approaches to inclusive practices. Chapter 7 enquires into how teacher educators are working towards reconceptualising inclusive education – with student teachers – to *be* in a space that constantly recognises and strives to meet the shifting needs and interests of all students in the education system.

## **Chapter 5: Creating a new initial teacher education (ITE) programme**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the key features of a new postgraduate initial teacher education (ITE) programme developed by teaching practitioners from the College of Education (CoE, 2013) in response to the call from the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2013) to address persistent disparities in student outcomes in New Zealand schools. It analyses documents written by course developers – particularly in relation to inclusion – and their commitment to innovation in ITE frameworks with respect to student diversity. I argue that the design of this programme and its implementation demonstrates how these teacher educators are ‘working the space’ to pursue forms of educational practice that are shifting and attentive to the sociocultural, historical and political contexts in which learning occurs.

I present this chapter in three sections. The first section starts with a brief overview of the developers’ aspirations to develop a new ITE programme which incorporates a more critical approach to existing ITE pedagogical frameworks. Through the lens of critical discourse analysis (CDA), I explore how those designing this programme attempt to clarify good teaching practices as competencies that involve understanding and connecting learning to the prior knowledge of students and their communities.



In the second section, I discuss the constraints embedded in the space provided by the MoE (2013) to initiate a new ITE programme directed at facilitating inclusive education. I analyse the power of prevailing discourses in shaping how inclusion is articulated and consequently, how students are constructed. In the third section, I explore the programme's visions for educational practice that recognises the importance of situating knowledge acquisition within the local (sociocultural) contexts of students, particularly attending to Māori epistemologies. This involves the design of a synthesising framework – consisting of four core values interwoven and represented in a visual metaphor of the *poutama*.<sup>6</sup>

In the final section, I explore how course developers work to interweave the *poutama* through the four courses (EDMT601, EMDT602, EDMT603 and EDMT604) I observed in this new ITE programme, and how the observation of these four courses provided insights relevant to the research questions in this study.

### **Conceptualising a critical approach in a new ITE programme**

According to the programme overview, this new 180-credit, Master's level programme was designed as an “intensive professional preparation programme comprised of an extended academic year of coursework completed in a calendar year” (CoE, 2015c, p. 13). As discussed in Chapter 2, the opportunity to develop and facilitate a new programme is the outcome

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<sup>6</sup> The *poutama* is a visual often featured in *tukutuku* (lattice work) panels. In a meeting house, *tukutuku* are panels on the walls between the carvings.

of the MoE's (2013) request for applications (RFA). The goal of the RFA is for ITE providers to offer programmes that would enable and support student teachers to uphold and contribute to the MoE's wider aim of closing the achievement gap between students identified as high-achievers and underachievers in the education system.

The programme's intent is consistent with current literature that calls on ITE providers to encourage student teachers to develop more critical perspectives on the purposes of schooling. This is so that student teachers do not simply replicate prevailing schooling practices that may further escalate, rather than mitigate, inequalities of achievement in the education system. Such critical awareness is crucial if student teachers are to resist and confront socially accepted discourses about knowledge and inclusion (Gilbert, 2013; Wrigley et al., 2012).

These aspirations are articulated in the following section from the response by the designers of this programme to the RFA (MoE, 2013). It highlights the need for the programme to encourage critical approaches among students doing this professional programme, and the necessity of their ongoing innovation and adaptability as they pursue their work as teachers. Skills in developing partnerships with the families and communities of their students were identified as a core capacity to be developed through the new ITE programme:

The aim of the proposed Master of Teaching [and Learning] is to prepare teacher graduates who are critical pedagogues, action competent and culturally responsive. They will have

advanced research-based knowledge, and integrated understandings and experiences of contemporary educational theory and professional practice. This will enable them to be highly knowledgeable and skilled teachers who are innovative, adaptable, and resilient in supporting and enhancing the diverse learning strengths of each of their students in ways that result in positive educational outcomes. They will be committed to, and skilful in, developing and sustaining partnerships with family, whānau, hapū, iwi,<sup>7</sup> aiga,<sup>8</sup> and community (CoE, 2013, p. 15).

The focus course developers adopted in the development of this programme aligns with Gee's (2010) theory of the d/Discourse. As discussed in Chapter 3, Gee's approach to d/Discourse stresses that, for students to make sense of and engage with the knowledge they acquire in educational settings, teachers need to be able to understand how the knowledge will be relevant and meaningful to the students' prior knowledge acquired in their homes and communities. This is proposed in their response to the RFP in which course developers highlighted the importance of student teachers connecting new knowledge with their students' local settings.

At the same time, the proposed programme was also directed at equipping student teachers with knowledge that would allow them to acknowledge, and critically examine the purposes of schooling. Consistent with relevant literature, such new knowledge is important in enabling student teachers to examine how they understand and expand their role as teachers. This is crucial to challenge them to be critical of whose construction of achievement

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<sup>7</sup> In Māori, *whānau* – extended family; *hapū* – clans or descent groups; *iwi* – tribe.

<sup>8</sup> In Samoan – extended family. Similar to what Māori refers to as whānau.

and success they are encouraging all their students to pursue (Allan, 2008; Biesta, 2015c; Graham & Slee, 2013).

In the next section, I turn my attention to the challenges and implications the developers face in working against the backdrop of prevalent discourses that persistently dictate what can and cannot happen in the facilitation of ITE programmes.

### **Recognising the constraints**

New discourses often emerge as a consequence of previous frameworks (Hyland, 2015). These discourses are frequently defined in contrast to their predecessors. As discussed in Chapter 3, discourses regularly appear as *solutions* introduced to solve issues or problems identified in previous frameworks. What often remains unquestioned is how new discourses not only have a task to fulfil in righting the wrongs in a given context, but are also expected to perform this new task alongside socially accepted practices entrenched in existing frameworks (Hyland, 2015).

The call for this new ITE programme emerged similarly as an attempted solution in response to issues identified in previous and current ITE programmes that led to persistent disparities in academic outcomes. Instead of having the complete flexibility to develop a programme to address the issues identified, as Hyland (2015) indicates, this programme is shaped by previous discourses which dictate how and what this space should be

designed to serve. This is demonstrated in the programme overview (CoE, 2015c), which stated that *new* content directed at inclusive and equitable educational practices also has to take into account accepted practices in existing ITE structures.

For example, in order to be successfully contracted by the MoE to offer a new ITE programme, the designers of this programme first had to ensure that it met the requirements to be granted approval from the Education Council. Secondly, the programme had to demonstrate how they would enable their student teachers to meet the measurable outcomes and assessments as defined by the Graduate Teacher Standards (GTS) of the Teachers Council for the successful completion of the programme. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, how ITE programmes need to address the ongoing disparities in education outcomes is not by *adding* new theories and skills to existing educational approaches (Gilbert, 2013; Wrigley et al., 2012). What student teachers need instead from ITE programmes is course content that encourages them to critically analyse and explore how the disparity in educational outcomes may be “*produced by* – and [is] necessary to – [the] current approach to education” (Gilbert, 2013, p. 66). Such analyses are necessary to expose student teachers to the issues underlying the contested purposes of schooling. This is crucial if they are to actively challenge processes that continue to dominate what becomes established as ideal learning and educational achievement.

As discussed in Chapter 2, reforms and initiatives that seem to focus on responding to and meeting the diverse needs of all students are often represented only through the teachers' ability to efficiently raise the academic achievement of their students, rather than how they can make knowledge acquisition relevant and inclusive to the students' local context and funds of knowledge. Likewise, the opportunity provided by the MoE to develop this new ITE programme is underpinned by the Ministry's interest in providing more measurable criteria and accountability in teacher education programmes.

Much current literature on disparities in education has called for ITE course content to focus on establishing broader intentions for student teachers to embody inclusivity and equity in their teaching (Abbiss & Quinlivan, 2012; Benade et al., 2014; Fickel, Abbiss, & Astall, 2016; Gilbert, 2013). However, the debates that surround the purposes of schooling and, consequently, what ITE providers expect from a new cohort of student teachers, continue (Biesta, 2015c; Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Ell & Grudnoff, 2013; Grudnoff et al., 2016). Such tensions and competing interests are echoed by the course developers of this programme in the following statement:

Defining what is 'good practice' for pre-service teachers has been shown to be problematic ... these tensions are evident in the articulation of broad goals and establishment of standards that support teaching, represented in more open and aspirational statements, which are in contrast to more particular, measurable criteria for assessment of pre-service teacher competence that serve accountability purposes (Abbiss & Astall, 2014, p. 5).

The statement (above) illustrates the ongoing tensions the programme developers confronted between the need 1) to generate student teachers who will be critical of inequitable practices that have come to be established as norms in school-based discourses; and, 2) to meet the MoE's (2013) request to produce graduate teachers who will be successful in imparting specific skills and knowledge to their students for them to thrive in a global world.

In Chapter 2, I explored what current literature on teaching and learning says about good teaching practice and the importance for ITE providers to highlight to student teachers the different functions and purposes that schooling, and teachers, are expected to address in particular contexts. These contexts, however, are not fixed, but shift in response to the sociocultural, political and historical environments which frame them. The response (CoE, 2013) to the RFA (MoE, 2013) (below) sets out how course developers in this programme articulated the functions or purposes that this programme is expected to serve in response to the issues that are facing Aotearoa New Zealand.

1) Mitigating the inequities in educational and health and wellbeing outcomes for Māori, Pasifika and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, particularly in literacy; 2) ensuring that students who experience special educational needs reach their potential and can contribute fully within our society; and 3) raising science, maths, and technology knowledge and skills among our youth in support of the innovative and creative solutions we will need them to create to support improved health, education, social and economic outcomes for our nation's long-term success (College of Education, 2013, p. 7).

The statements (above) reflect the tension and contested purposes of ITE programmes discussed earlier in the chapter. It also indicates the complexities the designers encountered as they attempted to interweave both functions into this programme: firstly, to intervene in and potentially address the situation of historically disadvantaged or marginalised student groups; and secondly, to ensure that future generations of students, through the *right* techniques of new teachers, will succeed in gaining the skills needed to lay the basis for collective economic achievement. Chapter 2 noted that the more emphasis has been put on education as a lever to enhance students' and the country's economic prosperity, the narrower the learning outcomes in ITE programmes become (Bolstad et al., 2012; Ell & Grudnoff, 2013). Consequently, the greater the focus on achieving national economic goals, the narrower the purposes of schooling becomes, and the greater the imperative to produce students with skills and knowledge that will contribute to the national economic interest.

Nevertheless, I have also argued in Chapter 2 that the purposes of schooling will always be contested because the needs and expectations of society and its people are constantly shifting. The flexibility provided by the MoE (2013) RFP for ITE providers to design and facilitate a new ITE programme, as indicated from the analysis above, will always shift in accordance to the changing interpretation of what is good teaching practice in the contested area of schooling. However, this does not mean that the social actors involved in this programme could only step "into a pre-packaged self"



(Hyland, 2015, p. 33) or powerlessly enact policies and practices endorsed in the RFA (MoE, 2013).

Gilbert (2013) stresses that ITE programmes need to “actively *encourage* (not assimilate or tolerate) multiplicity, diversity and difference, a model that can educate people for diversity” (p. 112, emphasis in original). It requires the participation of all social actors – student teachers and teacher educators alike – to constantly contribute, listen to, clarify and negotiate with different ways of thinking about knowledge production. The course developers have argued that this programme was “framed within a teacher education, as opposed to a teacher training, paradigm” (Abbiss & Astall, 2014, p. 6). This represents the programme’s aspiration to *walk the talk* of designing a programme using a participatory framework that is informed by multidisciplinary research on how to address the “long-tail” of inequitable outcomes in the education system. What student teachers needed to know to be inclusive teachers posed challenges to the course developers.

Consistent with Grossman, Hammerness, and McDonald’s (2009)<sup>9</sup> notion of foundational courses (as discussed in Chapter 2), are the course developers’ reflections on how the programme needed to be underpinned by continual critical examination of the purpose of schooling and its relevance to the students’ interests and prior knowledge. Such approaches contradict traditional ITE course content that emphasised student teachers acquiring

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<sup>9</sup> This article was also used by the course developers to inform the development of the response (CoE, 2013) to the RFA (2013) in relation to the different interests and imperatives underlying the two approaches that distinguish teaching as “training” from teaching as “education.”

classroom management skills and competencies sufficient for them to transmit knowledge regarded as fixed across all student groups (Abbiss & Astall, 2014; Grossman et al., 2009). Furthermore, the proposed programme aligned with the attempts of foundational courses to interweave interdisciplinary worldviews and conceptual tools to explore aspects of knowledge about learners and learning and how schools and classrooms are structured and operationalised (Abbiss & Astall, 2014; Grossman et al., 2009). In the next section, I explore the ways course developers attempted to interweave multiple worldviews at the very beginning of the design of the programme, rather than as an after-thought.

### **Braiding different ways of knowing**

As Hyland (2015) has stated, previous discourses can be understood as constraints that “are simultaneously the enabling conditions for originality” (p. 33). The RFA (2013) created the opportunity for ITE providers to confront and reorder practices accepted as ideal in ITE frameworks. The RFA also presents course developers in this programme with the chance to construct other ways of understanding and thinking about what is *good practice* – with regard to inclusivity – in ITE facilitation.

The development of a synthesising framework is one example of the enabling conditions the programme provides for the developers to reconstruct good practice in a context that recognises other ways of knowing. In their response to the Advisory Group’s (MoE, 2010) recommendation to ITE providers that they consult with local community advisory groups about

the development of the application relating to this programme, the designers sought feedback from a range of advisory groups including the Ngāi Tahu Rūnanga Advisory Group (Abbiss & Astall, 2014; Fickel at al., 2018).<sup>10</sup>

The course developers state that the synthesising framework for this ITE programme was their attempt to respond to “the challenge to clarify what it is that pre-service [student] teachers need to know and learn in [the] local context” (Abbiss & Astall, 2014, p. 13). Fickel at al. (2018) write that teacher education in Aotearoa NZ is informed by the sociocultural context of biculturalism. Citing Dr. Ranginui Walker, Fickel et al. define the concept of biculturalism as “understanding the values and norms of the other (Treaty of Waitangi) partner, being comfortable in either Māori or Pākehā culture, and ensuring that there is power sharing in decision making processes at all political and organisational levels” (para. 6).

As discussed in Chapter 2, the need to rethink ITE course content goes beyond simply transmitting knowledge (this includes knowledge about the Treaty of Waitangi) to student teachers or expanding their knowledge of various cultures. It involves supporting student teachers as they connect and interweave this knowledge and these skills to make learning meaningful and relevant for their students. It conveys to student teachers the importance of partnerships and the knowledge resources available from multidisciplinary

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<sup>10</sup> The role of the Ngāi Tahu Rūnanga Education Advisory Group was to “provide cultural expertise, constructive advice and guidance in the design of new programmes and courses in relation to pedagogical frameworks, content, and resources” and “to act as a critical friend and guide” (L. Brown, personal communication).

perspectives. This is especially important in a post-colonial society, such as Aotearoa New Zealand, whose values and ways of being and knowing have been influenced by colonial history and ideologies (Baglieri, 2017; Slee, 2011; Wrigley et al., 2012). This is highlighted in the work of Bishop et al. (2009) and Macfarlane et al. (2008),<sup>11</sup> who claim that policies and practices in Aotearoa New Zealand were, and continue to be, steadfastly grounded and centred in the sociocultural context of the dominant (white, middle-class, able-bodied) discourse.

The synthesising framework developed for this ITE programme exemplifies its commitment to enter into a participatory relationship with local *iwi*. The incorporation of the *poutama* indicates the programme's desire to address aspirations for partnership in the Treaty, as well as their attempt to recognise and identify the College of Education as a partner in pursuit of inclusivity and equity in the education system (Fickel, Abbiss, Brown, & Astall, 2018). However, the developers emphasise that they do not attempt to be experts in *Kaupapa Māori*<sup>12</sup> or to define Māori ways of being and knowing. Instead, the teacher educators stress that the synthesising framework, consolidated in the visual metaphor of the *poutama*, represents their attempt to put the philosophy of the partnership system to work (Fickel et al., 2018).

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<sup>11</sup> These articles were also used by the developers to inform the conceptualisation of “priority learners” in the application of this programme. (More about ‘priority learners’ will be discussed on page 119).

<sup>12</sup> Māori approach, Māori topic, Māori customary practice, Māori institution, Māori agenda, Māori principles, Māori ideology - a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society (Maori Dictionary, 2018).

The synthesising framework developed for this ITE programme incorporates four core values that are interwoven and represented throughout the *poutama*. Abbiss & Astall (2014) present them as follows:

- Intellectual rigour and scholarship – relates to disciplinary scholarship and engagement with research and the evidence-base for teaching and learning, having the ability to engage in teacher inquiry, to think critically and take the perspective of others;
  - Leadership of learning – relates to having a sense of moral purpose for teaching, agency and willingness to take responsibility for students’ learning, and skill in dealing with complexity;
  - Commitment to inclusiveness and equity – relates to viewing diversity as a strength rather than a problem to be managed, having sensitivity and compassion, and being tolerant, respectful and fair;
  - Collaboration and partnership – relates to having positive attitudes towards children, families and colleagues, being willing to seek out and support collaborative relationships with students, families, whānau, hapū, iwi, aiga, and community, as well as pre-service teacher peers, university and school teachers and other education professionals.
- (p. 8)

These four core values represent the programme’s attempt to respond to the Advisory Group’s (MoE, 2010) recommendations, which considers “strong, effective teacher education programmes share a set of common characteristics, including cohesion around a set of centralising principles, frameworks, and shared visions of effective teaching” (CoE, 2015c, p. 24). Gilbert (2013) points out how knowledge is created “*in a collaborative space, not in individual heads*” (p. 109, emphasis in original). The developers consider the centralising framework of the *poutama* not only symbolises the shared vision of effective teaching in this new ITE programme, but also

illustrates the collaborative effort that has been put into conceptualising the framework (Fickel & Abbiss, 2017, p. 7).

At the same time, the core values represent the programme's commitment to the four key principles that underpin the establishment of the Ngāi Tahu Rūnanga Advisory Group. These principles were stated as follows:

“Nothing about us without us”

We want to be there at the conceptual stage not as an add on at the end - a tick box exercise

We want to see us reflected in everything = the sign of a true partnership

That means vision and values, curriculum, buildings, environment and the professional development

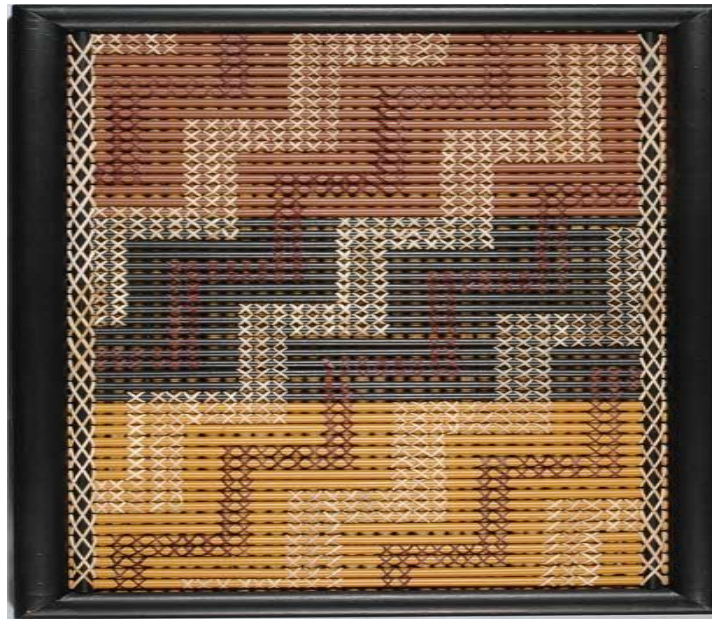
(Fickel, Abbiss, Brown, & Astall, 2016, p. 8)

The *poutama* was gifted by the Ngāi Tahu Advisory Group as an emblem that symbolises the stages of growth as student teachers attempt to take in each learning step and “consolidate it, before moving to the next stage” (L. Brown, personal communication)<sup>13</sup> or the next learning step in this programme. This is illustrated in the figure below in which the values and knowledge, even though they taught in small and linear units, are interweaved and connected as a whole in this programme:

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<sup>13</sup> For more details about the *poutama*, see Fickel et al. (2018).

Figure 1: A visual metaphor of the *poutama*



SOURCE: CHRISTCHURCH CITY LIBRARIES

The developers highlight that the *poutama* “constitutes a culturally encompassing framework and scaffold” (Fickel et al., 2018, para. 19) the learning and development of what student teachers need to know in relation to good practices that are inclusive to the local contexts of their future students. This is a challenge to the tendency in most education reforms and policies directed at addressing disparity in educational outcomes, which often argue that ITE providers must raise the effectiveness of student teachers to meet the needs of their students. Such assumptions continue to ignore the importance of enabling student teachers to understand that learning is a process that is constantly negotiated and relational to the students’ local contexts, as represented by the *poutama*.

In the next section, I explore the developers’ intent to interweave the core values through the design of each course and how the four courses observed

in the first year of programme delivery generate the necessary insights that are helpful to address the research questions introduced in Chapter 1.

### Setting up the space

According to the programme overview, this 180-credit, Master’s level programme consists of eight courses and was designed as an “intensive professional preparation programme comprised of an extended academic year of coursework completed in a calendar year” (CoE, 2015c). Below is a summary of the course structure of the programme (Abbiss & Astall, 2014, p. 12):

Figure 2: University of Canterbury MTchgLn programme course structure

Summer - Jan	Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer - Dec
EDMT601 Teaching and Learning in Aotearoa New Zealand	EDMT604 Inquiry and Evidence-based Practice for Inclusive Learning Contexts 1	EDMT605 Inquiry and Evidence-based Practice for Inclusive Learning Contexts 2	EDMT606 Developing a Teacher-researcher Stance
	EDMT611 Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment in Primary Contexts 1: Engaging Diverse Learners in NZC  OR EDMT621 Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment in Secondary Contexts 1: Engaging Diverse Learners in NZC	EDMT612 Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment in Primary Contexts 2: Engaging Diverse Learners in NZC  OR EDMT622 Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment in Secondary Contexts 2: Engaging Diverse Learners in NZC and NCEA	
	EDMT602 Towards Māori Success: Presence, Engagement and Achievement		
	EDMT603 Creating Inclusive Learning Environments for Diverse Learners		

As discussed earlier, the programme’s design aligns with current research literature that calls on ITE providers to encourage student teachers to



examine past and present educational approaches critically. In the interests of inclusive education, this is directed at getting them to reflect on how disparity in educational outcomes emerges and operates (Biesta, 2010; Bolstad et al., 2012; Gilbert, 2013; Wrigley et al., 2012).

I now explore how the designers' attempts to do this – interweaving the core values of the *poutama* – through an analysis of course information from the four courses I observed in this programme:

- EDMT601: Teaching and Learning in Aotearoa New Zealand
- EDMT602: Toward Maori Success: Presence, Engagement and Achievement
- EDMT603: Creating Inclusive Learning Environments for Diverse Learners
- EDMT604: Inquiry and Evidence-based Practice for Inclusive Learning Contexts 1

As discussed in Chapter 4, the selection of these four courses for observation in this study was primarily based on their focus on reconceptualising inclusive education through encouraging student teachers to be both critical of prevailing discourses and attentive to the local contexts of all students. EDMT601: Teaching and Learning in Aotearoa New Zealand, a four-week introductory course, was chosen for its foundational aspect in preparing student teachers with knowledge and consciousness of inequality in prevailing school-based practices. EDMT602: Toward Maori success: Presence, Engagement and Achievement and EDMT603: Creating Inclusive Learning Environments for Diverse Learners were selected because they focused on confronting and reordering different ways of thinking about and modelling inclusive practices that are attentive to needs of all students in the

education system. EDMT604: Inquiry and Evidence-based Practice for Inclusive Learning Contexts 1 was chosen for its focus on encouraging student teachers to recognise and explore perspectives and worldviews that are different from their own. Fieldnotes taken from the classroom observation of these four courses were focused on how the objectives of each of these courses were developed to generate greater inclusivity and resist the retention of the status quo.

***How is inclusion situated in past and present educational approaches, and how can it be different?***

The calendar-year programme started with EDMT601: Teaching and Learning in Aotearoa New Zealand, a four-week introductory course. The statement below signalled the programme's commitment to establish broader educational goals as it seeks to undertake a critical analysis of the purpose of schooling at the start of this ITE programme. The course information provided by the College of Education indicates its attempt to encourage student teachers to complicate the contexts that are informing and governing current and past educational practices in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The purpose is to encourage student teachers to rethink how they have perceived the world and their role in it as teachers, and what they need to change given the new knowledge they have acquired through this course. Such critical awareness is crucial in encouraging student teachers to examine what skills and knowledge they need to develop in order to better

connect the learning outcomes to their students' interests and sociocultural contexts. These aspirations are articulated in the statement below in the College of Education's response to the MoE's RFA:

This course provides the foundational constructs and principles for teaching and learning within the socio-political, cultural and historical context of the New Zealand education system. Students will systematically and critically engage with developmental, philosophical, ethical, professional and policy frameworks related to current educational issues that support inclusive and culturally responsive educational settings for diverse learners, while critically examining their own values, beliefs, attitudes and knowledge (CoE, 2015d).

Instead of addressing how to include particular sets of students, EDMT601: Teaching and Learning in Aotearoa New Zealand was designed to get student teachers to examine whether or not current understandings of inclusion are, in fact, inclusive. This is to prepare them to develop the critical lens needed to develop alternative ways of thinking about inclusion informed by multiple worldviews and values which they will be exposed to in later courses.

Citing Ballard, Broderick et al. (2012) argue that the “challenge for teacher education is to ensure that student teachers have experience in the critical analysis of dominant discourses and the theoretical knowledge to examine the implications these discourses have for policy and practice” (p. 838). This course addresses this challenge through stressing to the student teachers the importance of being analytic as they enact school policies into teaching practice (Ball & Omeldo, 2013). This is directed at encouraging them to be critical of their own practices and assumptions about what is inclusive to

their students, and also to avoid reinforcing inequitable practices that are embedded in these policies.

In Chapter 2, I mentioned that the term *inclusion* has been repeated so often that people get tired of hearing it. Rather than expecting teaching *experts* to model the right techniques to them in the hope that these techniques will allow them to raise the academic outcomes of their students, this course exposes student teachers to a critical analysis of present inequities in the education system. This is to prompt student teachers to think of ways in which they can restore justice to students who have been historically marginalised in the education system through engaging with different sociocultural knowledge and values. The course encourages student teachers to envision what the term *inclusion* might mean and how they can make a difference, as teachers, towards making those changes.

### ***How is inclusion interpreted and articulated in this programme?***

The literature (Bishop et al., 2009; Macfarlane et al., 2008; Morton, McMenamin, Moore, & Molloy, 2012) used by the developers to inform the conceptualisation of “priority learners”<sup>14</sup> in its response (CoE, 2013) to the RFA (MoE, 2013) was consistent with the literature discussed in Chapter 2. That is, firstly, these initiatives often emerged in response to the government’s request to ITE providers to address ongoing disparity in academic performance or, what Openshaw (2007) cynically refers to as the “rhetoric of crisis” (p. 47). Secondly, those endorsing these requests – such

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<sup>14</sup> More will be discussed on page 119.

as education policymakers from the government – often name ITE providers as experts accountable for discovering and training student teachers with the techniques to allow all their students to succeed in a one-size-fits-all curriculum, regardless of whether or not what is taught is engaging or relevant to these students. These assumptions persist in spite of the considerable research (local and international) that has – in the last thirty years – highlighted that, raising the overall academic performance of all students, requires more than merely changing teachers’ attitudes towards students identified as different from themselves. Nevertheless, the RFA (MoE, 2013) continues to name teachers’, and consequently ITE providers’ inability to understand and recognise otherness and difference as the default rationale for the ongoing disparity in educational outcomes (Biesta, 2009; Openshaw, 2007; Sleeter, 2012).

However, what is *new* in the RFA is that instead of expecting ITE providers to find the prescribed right technique to teach specific groups of marginalised students, the initiative calls for ITE providers to focus on responding to the learning needs of all “priority student groups” (MoE, 2013, p. 4). As the programme overview indicates (CoE, 2015, p. 5):

A feature of this initiative is a focus on diverse learners, including Māori and Pasifika youth, students for whom English is a second language, those from low-socioeconomic [sic] backgrounds and those who experience special learning needs (MOE defined ‘priority learners’).

This statement indicates that the programme is not completely detached from the socially recognised discourses of its previous practices, which

assign students who do not belong to the implicit norm into discrete categories of difference. However, course developers deliberately highlight in the statement above how the MoE shifted its definition of students previously identified as specific groups of underachievers into a generic category of “priority learners.” In accentuating that the shift in terminology is made by the MoE, the course developers alerted readers how the MoE (2013) is aware that doing something about students historically marginalised as underachievers has escalated to become a priority concern.

Nevertheless, the programme is cautious about importing a new term into institutional practices that will “simply be mobilised to serve ‘old’ purposes” (Gilbert, 2010, p. 73). For instance, it is careful that the programme does not simply reinforce dominant ideologies by encouraging student teachers to focus solely on ensuring all their students obtain skills and knowledge framed by dominant values. As the developers indicate in the statement below:

We wish to note here that in our work we seek to trouble this notion so as not to essentialise students from such backgrounds in ways that implicitly reinforce deficit theorising. Nevertheless, given the issues of inequity, we agree it is important to turn explicit attention to the disparity in order to change practice toward effecting different outcomes (Fickel et al., 2018, para. 7).

As discussed in Chapter 2, as long as education is grounded in the sociocultural context of the dominant culture, any differences perceived in the students are likely to be seen as deficits (Gilbert, 2010). The above statement illustrates how the developers are aware of and are explicitly

resisting attempts to reproduce these deficit assumptions in this space provided by the MoE (2013) that was intended to intervene and challenge them.

The development of EDMT602: Toward Maori Success: Presence, Engagement and Achievement and EDMT603: Creating Inclusive Learning Environments for Diverse Learners represents the programme's commitment not only to challenge, but also to conceptualise different ways of understanding about inclusion that are inclusive of the diverse sets of students in the education system. These two courses continue from the stance of EDM601 in its attempt to encourage student teachers to develop a critical lens as they respond to contemporary theories about teaching and learning that have been highlighted to them in the programme.

According to the conceptual frameworks of this programme, the two core values that underpin these two courses are as follows: 1) Commitment to inclusiveness and equity; and 2) Collaboration and partnership. Both values reflect the statement in the course information documents below, where taken-for-granted assumptions about inclusion are challenged in order to prompt student teachers to acknowledge and recognise various funds of knowledge, rather than assimilate all students into a narrowly-defined normative sphere of what counts as success and achievement. It also encourages student teachers to “seek out and support collaborative relationships with students, families, [and] whānau” (Abbiss & Astall, 2014, p. 8) in order for the student teachers to understand that the development of

good practice constantly needs to be negotiated and mediated within the students' local sociocultural background.

The two courses, which spanned two semesters (nine months) and which shared the same classroom space and time, were conducted consecutively and were also the two longest courses in this programme. These two courses were conceived to expose student teachers to the innumerable funds of knowledge that their students embody, and which student teachers may not be aware of, in order to prompt them to constantly rethink whose knowledge counts and what knowledge is accorded status in national and international assessments. This is important in a post-colonial society such as Aotearoa New Zealand whose ways of being and knowing have been, and continue to be, grounded in dominant Western schooling practices (Bishop & Glynn, 2003; Macfarlane et al., 2012). EDMT602 is described as follows in the information provided for student teachers by the College of Education:

The course explores theoretical notions specific to identity, culture, knowledge, evidence and pedagogy, providing a critical approach to understanding the enablers of educational success for Māori learners in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. Pre-service [student] teachers will be encouraged to critically reflect on the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi principles in the broader education sense. Kaupapa Maori worldview perspectives will be drawn on by way of a series of frameworks to inform the threads of culturally responsive principles and strategies for action (CoE, 2015e).

As the student teachers develop knowledge about *Kaupapa Māori* and reflexively connect this knowledge to how they can make teaching and learning inclusive of the Māori worldview in EDMT602, they are further challenged to be critical about norms and practices that they may have



accepted as superior to other ways of behaving. A description of EDMT603 below from the course information provided by College of Education includes the following statement:

This course establishes the theoretical framework and research base for inclusive practices in classrooms and schools. Pre-service [student] teachers will critically examine, apply and evaluate models and practices that enable the development of engaging, inclusive environments for all students and that build meaningful partnerships with families and whānau, and with other professionals (CoE, 2015a).

At the same time that this course ‘works the space’ to encourage student teachers to be analytical about values and knowledge established as ideal, it also exposes them to an understanding and recognition of values and knowledge in worldviews that have previously been rendered invisible, or deemed to be inferior in the Aotearoa NZ education system. This illustrates the attempt in both these courses to reorder dominant ideologies through encouraging student teachers to understand that recognition of students’ local knowledge and values is integral to efforts directed at improving student outcomes.

***Identifying and embodying the role of inclusive teachers: what student teachers need to know?***

In their response to the RFA (2013), the course developers indicate that the purpose of this programme is to “translate current theory and research in ITE into a programme of study that is responsive to its local context” (CoE, 2013, p. 39). EDMT604: Inquiry and Evidence-based Practice for Inclusive Learning Contexts 1 is a one-semester course (four months) designed to

prompt student teachers to critically rethink the connections between what contemporary research says about teaching and learning and the norms and practices that they may have always accepted as given or normative. This course is underpinned by the core value of ‘intellectual rigour and scholarship’ which encourages student teachers to engage “in teacher inquiry, [as well as] to think critically and take the perspective of others” (Abbiss & Astall, 2014, p. 7). The aim is to provide a space for student teachers to reflect critically on whose ways of being and knowing are socially accepted and maintained as neutral and ideal. The student teachers are also encouraged to consider the ways in which such ideologies impact on their perception and response to their students’ behaviours in class. According to the course information (CoE, 2015b),

This course supports students with the development of an evidence-based approach to teacher inquiry through iterative cycles of self-reflection on and refinement of their own professional and pedagogical understandings and practices. Students continue their systematic engagement in critical reflection on their beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and practices through linking theory with embedded professional [practice] experiences, in order to deepen their awareness of the way the two interact to shape the teaching and learning processes.

In EDMT601, the developers ‘work the space’ to prompt student teachers to examine the power of discourses and how this influences the construction of inclusion and good teacher practice. Developers of EDMT604, in turn, challenge student teachers to be critical of the ways discourses impact on their thoughts and practices as teachers. This course offers a space for student teachers to locate barriers that stand between efforts to make schooling inclusive and the realisation of such efforts. These barriers may

include the student teachers' own taken-for-granted assumptions about inclusion that can potentially produce inequitable schooling practices rather than effect inclusivity (Allan, 2008; Bolstad et al., 2012; Florian, 2009; Florian et al., 2017; Forlin, 2012a; Gilbert, 2013; Slee, 2011). By prompting student teachers to examine the discourses that have shaped how they perceive students, the course provides them with an opportunity to rethink the purposes of learning and what they need to do to enhance their students' learning outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter started with a brief overview of the context in which the developers were requested by the MoE to develop a new ITE programme directed at raising the quality and status of the teaching profession. This was directed at resulting in new cohorts of teachers who would effectively meet the needs of all students and enhance the overall performance outcomes of diverse students in Aotearoa New Zealand. I then explored how course developers articulated their intentions for the development of this new programme, and what they hope to achieve. Lastly, I investigated how course developers interweave the *poutama* in the four courses I observed and what each course was developed to achieve – with particular focus on matters related to inclusion.

In Chapter 6 – drawing on fieldnotes taken from classroom observations – I will explore teacher educators at work as they put the programme's planning and aspirations into classroom practice. This study is aware of the

challenges underlying teacher educators' attempt to generate reflexivity among student teachers within the time-frame of 11-month programme. Nevertheless, in the next chapter, I enquire into how teacher educators encourage student teachers to develop the critical consciousness necessary for them to locate and reconceptualise ideas and practices about inclusion, including their own cultural assumptions. This is directed at facilitating emerging teachers' efforts at making schooling more inclusive for all students.

## Chapter 6: Towards making education inclusive – teacher educators at work

### Introduction

This chapter explores how teacher educators in this programme are working to facilitate inclusive education and improve the learning outcomes of individual students in the education system. Such attempts illustrate teacher educators' commitment to challenging dominant discourses that identify teachers' failure to adapt their teaching practices to meet the needs of all students as the key reason behind the long-tail of underachievement (Gilbert, 2013). In Chapter 5, I discussed what the designs of the four courses I observed *say* of its goals to support student teachers with skills and knowledge that would enable them to be critical of their own and existing schooling practices. Using critical discourse analysis, I now turn my attention to explore<sup>15</sup> what teacher educators *do* – along with student teachers – to reconstruct teaching and learning as a process that is continually shifting in accordance to the needs and interests of each school students.

This chapter begins with an examination of the four-week introductory course – EDMT601: Teaching and Learning in Aotearoa New Zealand – with particular focus on how teacher educators are working to expose student teachers to the dominant ideologies underlying how inclusion has

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<sup>15</sup> This is done through analysing fieldnotes taken from class observations.

been understood in the past, and current educational approaches that may continue to marginalise, rather than include, students identified as “priority learners.” Through encouraging student teachers to understand the ways discourses shape their thoughts and actions, they can become more critical of practices and values that have come to be accepted as given or ideal in schooling, and consequently, they can reflect on how they put these practices to work as teachers.<sup>16</sup>

Next, EDMT603: Creating Inclusive Learning Environments for Diverse Learners and EDMT602: Toward Māori Success: Presence, Engagement and Achievement will be explored. In these two courses, I enquire into how teacher educators work to generate a critical awareness in emergent teachers so that they will not only confront existing school-based discourses, but also pursue learning outcomes in ways that meet the varied knowledge and interests of their students.

Finally, I discuss the ways in which teacher educators in EDMT604: Inquiry and Evidence-based Practice for Inclusive Learning Contexts 1 incorporated different classroom activities to prompt student teachers to understand how prevailing school-based discourses can impact on their thoughts and teaching practices. This is directed at encouraging emergent teachers to

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<sup>16</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1 and 4, the focus of this study is on what teaching practitioners *do* and *say*, in their attempt to develop and facilitate a new ITE programme underpinned by inclusion. The study did not include data that reflects emergent teachers’ experiences and response to the inclusive practices which the programme attempts to enable them with. The study is aware that discrepancies may exist between teacher educators’ and student teachers’ interpretations of what inclusive education might mean in practise.

examine their own cultural locatedness and recognise and engage with ideas and beliefs that are different from their own.

### **Reconceptualising inclusion in teacher education**

The literature on contemporary teaching and learning has often argued that teaching student teachers how to teach is simply *training* them with technical skills to perform their role as classroom teachers (Florian et al., 2017; Forlin, 2012b; Macmurray, 2012). In order for teachers to embody their role as inclusive teachers, teacher educators need to support student teachers to consciously identify themselves as inclusive teachers (Lingard & Mills, 2007; Martin & Strom, 2016; Strom & Martin, 2017). This requires new ways of thinking about inclusive practices that goes beyond *training* approaches (as discussed in Chapter 5). The goal of teacher educators in this programme is to develop the social consciousness needed for student teachers to reflect on what skills and knowledge they need to develop, rather than merely perform existing teaching practices, that would allow them to adequately respond to and meet the needs of all their students (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Ell, 2011; Grudnoff et al., 2016).

In Chapter 5, I discussed the design of EDMT601: Teaching and Learning in Aotearoa New Zealand, which was developed as an intensive four-week introductory course to start off this one-year programme.<sup>17</sup> Student teachers are accepted into this programme after they have been assessed for their

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<sup>17</sup> Thirteen sets of fieldnotes were taken from classroom observations during this course. This was followed by one focus group interview and one individual interview with the teacher educators who facilitated the course.

aptitude to teach and respond to diverse cultural settings. The purpose is to understand how new teacher candidates respond to the increasing diversity in the schooling population in Aotearoa NZ.

The challenge for the teacher educators in this course is to highlight to the student teachers how educational practices are “saturated and influenced by relations of power” (Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011, p. 820) in a short time frame. Within the space of four weeks, the course is directed at laying the necessary foundations for student teachers to understand how inequitable practices are reinforced through prevailing school-based discourses. This is directed at them developing the critical thinking needed to examine the dominant functions that schooling is often set up to serve, and how teachers are expected to perform their roles in response to meeting these contested purposes.

On the first day of the course, teacher educators started the class by prompting student teachers to reflect on their own schooling experiences, and to learn about those of others. This was to encourage them to think about the influences that have shaped how they have come to think about the world, and consequently, how they perceive their role as teachers. Student teachers were asked to bring items that describe their identities and experiences. Seated in a circle, everyone in the class, including the teacher educators,<sup>18</sup> explained why they had selected the item to represent what they consider valuable. The aim of this task was to encourage student teachers to

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<sup>18</sup> There were three teacher educators – Brigid, Hilary and Margaret – co-teaching in this course.



use narratives and metaphors to reflect and give meaning to their experiences. The goal was to encourage student teachers to reflect on their past experience and what they can learn from it (Izadinia, 2014). Through encouraging student teacher to constructing identities through stories about their own experiences, the teacher educators and student teachers were not only reflecting on the new knowledge they had come to know through past experiences, but also what they had learned in the process (Izadinia, 2014; Milner, 2007; Rice et al., 2015; Swennen et al., 2008; Timmerman, 2009).

Hilary's statement below is an example of how she reflected on what she had learned from her experiences teaching in a small community in northwest Canada. Hilary, one of the co-teachers in this course, explained to the class why she had chosen a pair of fur boots to symbolise her experiences:

Life is about being in other people's shoes. People are often judgmental when they see products made from animal skin. But furs are valuable to the people there for keeping warm. Giving someone fur boots showed how much they appreciated a person. This is about learning to see the world differently from a South-Eastern American upbringing (Fieldnotes, 20 January 2015).

In the narrative above, Hilary used a pair of fur boots to express to the student teachers what she came to know through the process of being a teacher and the importance of understanding the local (sociocultural) contexts in which she was teaching. She exemplified how our perceptions of what is appropriate or inappropriate are often shaped by the assumptions we have uncritically accepted as given or ideal. She highlighted to the

student teachers the need to dig beneath the surface to understand the local context of the people, what forms their values and how it shapes their habits, beliefs and practices. Consistent with CDA scholars' argument, Hilary directed student teachers to be critical of how the social world is a reflection of truth claims dominantly controlled by those who have the power to name what gets to be accepted as superior, at the expense of other ways of being and knowing (Gee, 2014; Liasidou, 2011; Rogers, 2011a; Woodside-Jiron, 2011).

Hilary attempted to convey to student teachers the importance of examining their own cultural assumptions, and how this impacts on the way people see and think about others. The statements illustrate Hilary's attempt at encouraging student teachers to think beyond their own cultural understandings when they are faced with thoughts and actions that they consider as different from their own. Above all, Hilary problematised for the student teachers the tendency for people who come from more privileged backgrounds to judge the value and knowledge of others unfavourably.

Ball and Omeldo (2013) state that "our understanding of ourselves is linked to the ways in which we are governed" (p. 87). This activity was directed at making student teachers more conscious of the ways their own cultural values and beliefs have shaped how they perceive the purposes of schooling and how they see themselves as teachers. This activity illustrates teacher educators' attempts at encouraging student teachers to understand that everyone has values and beliefs which influence how they see the world.

Teacher educators wanted student teachers to see that their students will also have their own perceptions of how knowledge is influenced by their sociocultural contexts. Aligning with Gee's (2014) and Kress's (2011) emphasis, teacher educators illustrated how they are 'working the space' to highlight to student teachers the importance of situating learning outcomes that acknowledges and is relevant to their students' prior knowledge and interests.

Hilary's story about the gift of the fur boots and her response to them was also directed at encouraging students to engage with the worldviews of others. She and other teacher educators consider that this is fundamental not only to meeting the needs of students who come from different parts of the world, but also for the student teachers themselves who may find themselves teaching in a context that is different from what they have known. At the end of this activity, student teachers indicated that it not only provided them with an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned through their experiences, but it also brought to their awareness how learning is a process that is constantly negotiated and related to the context in which they are situated. The activity was aimed at encouraging student teachers to be critical of their own assumptions, so that they do not instinctively label values and beliefs different from them as inferior. The activity also led them to understand that they cannot simply assume that they are familiar with the experiences and stories of those who seem to share similar sociocultural backgrounds.

### *Resisting inequitable practices through discomforting dialogues*

The four-week introductory course included a two-day Treaty of Waitangi workshop facilitated by Robin,<sup>19</sup> a Treaty of Waitangi researcher and teacher educator. In the two-day workshop, Robin prompted student teachers to develop a critical stance on showing how discourses focused on achieving inclusivity may continue to perpetuate inequitable practices among student groups identified as underachievers (or “priority learners” as discussed in Chapter 5). This illustrates Robin’s attempts at moving beyond teacher *training* to teacher education and away from an accountability approach based on regurgitating the do’s and don’ts in relation to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

In the two-day workshop, Robin challenged assumptions underlying the role of teachers in relation to the principles of the Treaty, and critically analysed how past and present discourses have and can continue to disadvantage students through practices that student teachers might not be aware of or may have even assumed to be inclusive and ethical. How he did this is recorded in the fieldnotes dated 21 January 2015:

Robin started the class by asking: Has anyone intentionally wanted to be a teacher to harm a child? This is a very provocative question that silenced all the student teachers. We need questions like this once in a while to wake the whole class up, where they don’t have to think what the right answer is, because everyone will automatically say no. But the silence in the room shows that the student teachers are critically and silently asking themselves, "Would anyone want to be a teacher to harm a child?"

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<sup>19</sup> A teacher educator and a facilitator of Treaty of Waitangi courses.

When I checked with Robin at our interview after the completion of the two-day workshop about whether the *harm* he meant was psychological or physical, he said psychological. Robin explained that, in Aotearoa NZ, the avoidance of physical harm is very clear under the law for teachers. However, in asking student teachers the provocative question above, Robin challenged student teachers to examine what has often remained unsaid about the psychological harm that students have sustained through schooling, even in the name of practices that were meant to be not only inclusive, but also ethical. Aspects which CDA scholars have called teaching practitioners to attention in efforts directed at stimulating student teachers to examine how discourses work to reinforce, rather than alleviate, inequitable schooling practices (Ashton, 2016; Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011; Rogers, 2011).

In addition to the question he asked of the class, Robin put a picture of a shark on the screen as he asked student teachers to imagine “what it would be like to be swallowed by a great white shark?” Robin went on to say that:

Teachers often see themselves as having a moral responsibility to help – to civilize, what is seen as the ‘other’ and as deficit. What students need is not for you to rescue or nurture them. What we have seen in movies: the myth of teachers coming to the rescue. We need to deconstruct those myths (Fieldnotes, 21 January 2015).

Robin’s two statements above challenged the student teachers to examine how they do can potentially cause *harm* to their students. Such awareness may cause discomfort to the student teachers as they reflect on how practices

they may have assumed to be inclusive and ethical may have contrary effects. Zembylas (2015) stresses that if the purpose of inclusive education is to unsettle taken-for-granted beliefs uncritically accepted as normative, then generating in student teachers the courage to face such discomfort is not only unavoidable but also necessary. As discussed in Chapter 3, Robin's statements illustrate his attempts at transforming prevailing practices through not only critiquing, but also locating and confronting inequitable schooling practices that student teachers may not have thought about before coming into the ITE programme (Fairclough, 2000, 2010, 2015).

Citing Butler and Adorno, Zembylas (2015) discusses the "notion of 'ethical violence' ... the idea that sometimes in the name of ethics violence is done against those who do not conform to the dominant norms" (p. 167). The two fieldnotes above relating to Robin's practice as a teacher educator illustrate how he interacted with the student teachers to highlight how teachers may have problematic impacts on their students, even if they want to be inclusive teachers. Furthermore, in exposing student teachers to the idea that *harm* can occur through practices legitimately named as ethical, Robin sought to make them aware of the need to be critical even of rhetoric and ideologies that profess to be inclusive. Gilbert (2013) claims that resistance is also a form of action. The two examples of Robin's practice indicate how he attempted to effect change through encouraging student teachers to refrain from reproducing practices that may inadvertently cause injustice to marginalised student groups.

The fieldnotes I have chosen to analyse in this section briefly illustrate the attempts of teacher educators in EDMT601 to get student teachers to examine how their own cultural assumptions impact on how they see themselves as teachers. Teacher educators tried to equip student teachers with knowledge and skills necessary to allow them to rethink possible alternatives to the ways inclusive education is currently understood and practised. Such attempts represent the concept of the *poutama* (as discussed in Chapter 5) in the way each course attempts to prepare, interweave and scaffold student teachers with what they need to know, before they move on to the next learning step. However, as Brigid stresses, this is challenging pedagogical work to undertake in a very short four-week time frame within a one-year course:

Even though we can establish and do this work on this block at the beginning, really it is something that we need to know it is going to be looped up back and picked up with all the way through. I think that's a challenge of a really condensed programme to be able to do that (Interview, 3 March 2015).

In the next sections, I explore how the other three courses I observed, despite these constraints, attempted to interweave critical perspectives by constructing different approaches to inclusion that aim to situate learning in the sociocultural contexts and interests of the students.

### **Problematising normalising discourses**

The second course I observed in this programme was EDMT603: Creating Inclusive Learning Environments for Diverse Learners. Dolores, one of the four teacher educators responsible for this course, often prompted student

teachers to analyse taken-for-granted assumptions through the theoretical framework of social constructionism.<sup>20</sup> Problematizing normalcy can be used to describe how Dolores' attempt at prompting student teachers to complicate, rather than explicate, ideas and practices accepted as neutral or ideal. This is achieved through challenging student teachers to examine the power of discourses in naming and maintaining what students should accomplish at school, and how teachers ought to *help* their students to achieve this.

On the first day of the course, Dolores used a photo<sup>21</sup> to challenge student teachers to examine accepted notions of normalcy as she asked what they thought the object in the photo was. The discussion that followed illustrates social constructionism at work in the ways student teachers instinctively identified the object as *wrong* because it did not align with anything they have known or can identify as familiar. The guesses that the student teachers proceeded to make indicated how realities are not fixed but change according to the perspectives and persons who express them. This activity aimed to develop in student teachers an awareness of how the same object can be perceived differently by different persons. Moreover, even the same person may understand and describe the same object differently as they consolidate their thoughts and take into account the views of other people around them. Towards the end of the activity, Dolores connected this activity to how classroom students, like the object in the photo, can be

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<sup>20</sup> Seventeen sets of fieldnotes were taken from classroom observations during this nine-month course. In addition, there were three interviews with the individual teacher educators teaching in the course

<sup>21</sup> The object that was in the photo was a misshapen strawberry coated with small black seeds.



subjects of discourses that not only govern what can be thought and said about them, but also justify what can be done to them. Dolores looked at these different ways of looking as:

... interpretations of what is normal, what it should be, and what is the norm. The ones that do not look good or normal then gets thrown out (Fieldnotes, 18 February 2015).

In her statements above, Dolores prompts student teachers to scrutinise, or “catch themselves in the act,” when they uncritically conclude something or someone as *wrong* just because it appears to deviate from what they have known or seen before. In her efforts to get student teachers to understand that all interpretations are socially constructed, Dolores illustrates attempts by teacher educators in this ITE programme to prompt student teachers to be critical of the ways they perceive their students, and of the ways their students are perceived in the education system, the impacts such constructions can generate for their students and their effect on learning outcomes.

As discussed in Chapter 3, discourses do not only have the power to name what gets to be established as truths, but also dictates what is permissible for individuals to think of and do onto others (Burr, 2015). Dolores’ practices as a teacher educator are directed at making student teachers aware of how assumptions about them can harm students. As Robin highlighted in the previous section, these discourses may validate how those identified as different (from the dominant norm) ought to be treated. Critiques in education have pointed out that deficit assumptions continue to preside over

how students are perceived (Danforth, Taff, & Ferguson, 2006; Liasidou, 2011; Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011). Numerous scholars in education have stated that it is foolish to assume all problems can be solved by using particular teaching strategies with students labelled as underachievers or “priority learners” (Ballard, 2013; Freire, 2005; MacMurray, 2012). Nevertheless, teachers and teacher educators are still assigned the responsibility to find magic solutions to individual student problems within the education system (Eil & Grudnoff, 2013; Openshaw, 2007). As Fairclough (2000) claims, the struggle to effect change is a language struggle because of the ways school-based discourses continued to be dominated by normative and deficit assumptions.

However, in her classes, Lucy,<sup>22</sup> illustrated how she attempts to overturn prevailing assumptions by enabling student teachers to understand how labels such as high-achievers, underachievers, and “priority learners” are all products of socially constructed understandings, as I recorded in the fieldnotes dated 13 July 2015:

Some teachers say students have no language because they can't speak English, even though the students may speak a few languages back home. Spin deficits around what you can build on. Look at students as glasses half full, at things they have that we don't, not things we have that they don't.

In the statements above, Lucy directed student teachers to the awareness that what is considered as knowledge is often formed through one particular

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<sup>22</sup> Another teacher educator in EDMT603.

worldview at the expense of others. In prompting them to be critical of how some knowledge gets accepted as ideal and superior, Lucy encouraged student teachers to resist overriding discourses that all students to have the skills (in this case knowledge of a particular language) that are defined as ideal or normal, and to recognise the skills and knowledge that their students possess which may be areas of ignorance or deficit for their teachers or others in the classroom (Heng, Quinlivan, & Du Plessis, 2018).

Furthermore, Paugh and Dudley-Marling (2011) argue that by prompting student teachers to focus on what students can do, rather than what they cannot do, “negative labels had no active value” (p. 821). Through her statements above, Lucy models attempts at stimulating student teachers to examine the ways prevalent notions of what is knowledge limit, rather than extend, the wide-ranging abilities that students bring with them to educational settings. Above all, in prompting student teachers to connect classroom learning to their students’ prior knowledge, Lucy encouraged emergent teachers to examine what they can do to raise learning outcomes via attention to their students’ strengths, interests and prior knowledge (Gee, 2014; Kress, 2011). Through encouraging student teachers to explore what their students can do, rather than what they cannot do, Lucy also illustrated how she ‘worked the space’ to challenge prevailing discourses that continue to claim values and knowledge privileged by dominant interest as achievement and success (Gee, 2014; Liasidou, 2011; Rogers, 2011a; Woodside-Jiron, 2011).

In her classes, Lucy frequently articulated to student teachers that Aotearoa NZ has become much more diverse in a very short time and therefore the need for teachers to be inclusive is not just aspirational, but imperative. Student teachers will soon be facing a diverse set of students where not only language, but also funds of knowledge (CoE, 2013), ways of being, thinking and knowing, may all be unfamiliar to them (the student teachers). In her statements below, Lucy communicates to student teachers how their own cultural positioning can potentially impede, rather than enhance, their students' learning outcomes. This shows how Lucy confronts assumptions that may construct teachers not only as the givers of knowledge, but also as the possessors of ideal ways of being, which their students ought to adopt (Biesta, 2010; McIntosh, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). In the statements below, I recorded Lucy's reminder to student teachers of the current teacher-student ratio in relation to current population demographics:

Eighty-two point two per cent of teachers are old, white, middle-class teachers. Pakeha is the only group where there are more teachers than students. All other ethnicities have more students than teachers. Research shows that students respond better when there's a teacher that they can identify with from the same ethnicity (Fieldnotes, 13 July 2015).

After Lucy made the statement above, she generated a discussion to prompt student teachers to think of possible barriers, that may inhibit students from being and feeling fully included in schools. In the previous section, I analysed Robin's attempts to direct student teachers to examine discourses that have remained uncontested – that is, how schooling processes may *harm*, rather than benefit school students. The purpose was to bring to student teachers' consciousness of the ways teachers have the power to

perpetuate inequitable practices in schooling. Simultaneously, Robin signalled them to reflect on how they also have the power to intervene in, and refrain from reproducing processes that disadvantage, rather than *help*, their students.

Similarly, Lucy's challenge to student teachers directed them to complicate assumptions that are rarely discussed, that is, how teachers' presence can inhibit, rather than support, students from feeling included in the schooling environment. As with Robin's practices, Lucy's prompts directed student teachers to complicate taken-for-granted notions of teaching and learning often uncritically assumed as neutral or given. This is consistent to CDA scholars' call for teaching practitioners to direct emergent teachers to discern and reconstruct existing constraints into possibilities for change (Hyland, 2015; Fairclough, 2010, 2015; Paugh & Dudley-Marling, 2011; Rogers, 2011).

In EDMT601, student teachers were explicitly challenged to reflect on their own cultural backgrounds and how this could impact on how they perceived their roles as teachers. Through EDMT603, teacher educators further encouraged student teachers to understand that discourses not only govern how they see the world and their role in it, but they also how they might think about students and validate what could be achieved with these students. The findings selected for analysis above illustrated EDMT603's attempts to establish the theoretical framework of social constructionism as a pedagogy

to resist the normalising forces that impact on how students are constructed and what can be done to them. The course combined this critical awareness with two core values of the *poutama*: – commitment to inclusion and equity, and collaboration and partnership (Abbiss & Astall, 2014, p. 8). The purpose was to generate social consciousness in student teachers of the injustices underlying practices imposed by dominant interests and values.

In the next section, I explore how the two core values – commitment to inclusivity and equity, and collaboration and partnership (Abbiss & Astall, 2014, p. 8) – are integral to teaching practices in EDMT602: Toward Māori Success: Presence, Engagement and Achievement.

### **Reconceptualising different ways of being and knowing**

The third course I observed in this programme was EDMT602: Toward Maori Success: Presence, Engagement and Achievement.<sup>23</sup> As with EDMT603, this course attempted to establish a critical approach to deconstructing negative assumptions embedded in prevailing discourses about Māori students influenced by post-colonial, neoliberal contexts (CoE, 2015e). In his classes, Danny<sup>24</sup> constantly highlighted to student teachers that Māori students who resist or fail to adopt values considered as ideal are often labelled as underachievers in the education system. His goal was to encourage them to examine pejorative discourses about Māori students,

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<sup>23</sup> Nine sets of fieldnotes from classroom observations were taken during the nine-month course.

<sup>24</sup> A teacher educator in this course.

which they may have accepted as truth as a result of their own cultural positioning or from the media.

Danny frequently reminded student teachers of the principles of Kaupapa Māori<sup>25</sup> for them to better understand and engage with the philosophy and worldviews of indigenous knowledge. Smith, Hoskins, and Jones (2012) point out how “Kaupapa Māori theory provides a space for thinking and researching differently, to centre Māori interests and desire, and to speak back to the dominant existing theories in education” (p. 11). Dominant school-based discourses have not only been unhelpful to the teaching and learning of Māori students, they have also negatively positioned Māori knowledge as inferior, lacking and problematic (Bishop & Glynn, 2003; Macfarlane, 2015; Openshaw, 2007; Smith et al., 2012). Through Robin’s statement (on page 134), I discussed how violence can potentially occur through schooling practices, even in the name of ethical teaching practices. Danny’s statements (below), recorded during classroom observations, articulated how schooling can cause further *harm* for some students by not only obliging them to adopt values and beliefs that are foreign to them, but also by punishing them for not subjecting themselves to assimilation. This is recorded in the fieldnote dated 25 March 2015:

Lots of *whānau* only remembers the bad times in school. Some may be angry that they were or had been punished when they were young.

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<sup>25</sup> *Kaupapa Māori* refers to a whole system of thought that is in accordance with the Māori’s philosophy of life.

Danny's statements (above) align with what Andreotti (2009) (citing Spivak, 1990, 1999) refers to as 'epistemic violence,' that is, violence that incurred through ordering those who refused to be assimilated to either subject themselves to being *fixed*, or risk being isolated and thrown out. Such epistemic violence was highlighted in EDMT603 as Dolores and Lucy encouraged student teachers to examine how discourses have the power to direct what can be done to humans or objects constructed as different (from the norm). Danny's statements (above) communicated to student teachers that the task of being inclusive teachers entails more than just confronting dominant assumptions: it also restores trust and rebuilds reciprocal relationships with *whānau* who have previously been hurt by unfair schooling practices.

EDMT602 is underpinned by the two core values of inclusivity and equity, as well as collaboration and partnership. Danny's statements (above) highlighted to the student teachers that it may be a challenging experience as they attempt to build trusting collaborative partnership with their students' *whānau*. Yet, he was telling student teachers that these challenges are not due to parents' lack of interest in their children's education, as dominant theories often suggest (Smith et al. (2012), but the hurt that they have sustained when they were students. This can lead *whānau* to feel distrustful about the schooling system, making it hard for student teachers to interact and develop trusting relationships with them. This shows that the core value of inclusivity and equity entail attempts to build trusting partnerships. Through examining the ways dominant ideologies may have unjustly



disadvantaged and impacted on the *whānau* of the students that they will be teaching, student teachers were encouraged to understand why it is necessary for them to resist schooling practices that may continue to cause harm to their students.

In EDMT602, Danny exemplifies the principle of the Ngāi Tahu Rūnanga Advisory Group: ‘Nothing about us without us’ (Fickel et al., 2016, p. 8). Smith et al. (2012) argue that “the idea of Kaupapa Māori contains the necessity of political action ... Kaupapa Māori is in real danger of being assimilated when it is seen as a set of words rather than a set of actions as well” (p. 12 & p. 13). Danny responded to the concern of Smith et al by putting words into actions. Rather than pedantically reciting Kaupapa Māori principles – such as *whanaungatanga*, *ako*, *manaakitanga* and *tangata whenuatanga*<sup>26</sup> – with examples of what those terms look like in classroom practice, Danny modelled Kaupapa Māori through sharing real-life stories about himself and his marae. Through actions directed generating student teachers to embody the values and philosophies of different cultures, Danny responded to criticisms that claim Kaupapa Māori to have become a set of teaching pedagogies in which student teachers memorise and regurgitate in their ITE *trainings* (see Andreotti, 2009; Openshaw, 2007; Rata, 2006).

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<sup>26</sup> In Māori: *whanaungatanga* refers to developing relationships with students through shared experiences and working together; *ako* refers to the two-way relationship in which teachers are also learning from students, *ako* also means recognising that students and their whānau cannot be separated; *manaakitanga* refers to the idea of caring and recognising the identify of each student in open and trusting relationship; *tangata whenuatanga* refers to providing the context in which Māori students can learn about their own language, identity and culture.

As indicated above, Lucy reminded student teachers of the importance of understanding the cultural differences between themselves and their students, as they consider their students' local contexts. Through making student teachers aware of the richness of cultures and practices that may be new to them, Danny conveys to them that Kaupapa Māori is not just a set of technical terms and activities to be enacted later in their classrooms. The fieldnote of 29 April 2015 indicates how Danny achieved this by showing the student teachers a video of an event he had attended the day before:

Danny showed a video of a Māori *tangi*<sup>27</sup> he attended yesterday of a well-respected acquaintance in his *whānau*. He explained about the *haka*<sup>28</sup>, what it means. Also, the dress code for his *iwi*.

Through the video, Danny not only communicated to the student teachers the cultural rites of a Māori *tangi*, he also conveyed that these rites are not fixed but that they are modified according to the status, age, and the *whakapapa*<sup>29</sup> of the deceased. As the person who passed away was elderly, the *tangi* was more of a celebration of their life. What Danny conveyed may not be what is considered as knowledge student teachers needed to demonstrate when assessed by the Graduating Teacher Standards (GTS). However, such information illustrates different ways of knowing and being for student teachers who may have grown up assuming that funerals should be solemn occasions. This is consistent with the philosophy of CDA which calls for teaching practitioners to be inclusive of the diverse perspectives of

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<sup>27</sup> Māori funeral ceremony.

<sup>28</sup> Traditional sets of chants and war-dances that Maori people would perform at particular occasions according to their tribes.

<sup>29</sup> Māori for ancestry.

cultures that are different from one's own, or what is claimed to be neutral or appropriate by dominant interests (Fairclough et al., 2004; Rogers, 2011b; Weiss & Wodak, 2003; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Danny's story illustrated to the student teachers the multiple realities embedded in how rites are performed and practiced in different cultures. This is to remind student teachers of the multiplicities in which people react to particular events according to the social script of their cultures and beliefs so that they do not simply impose on their students to behave in ways dominantly assumed as *appropriate* under any given circumstances.

In his classes, Danny not only challenged student teachers to be critical of prevailing assumptions about Māori students that have been constructed in the past, but he also highlighted to them how teaching and learning can be differently carried out. This responds to Macmurray's (2012) claim that teaching and learning should never be a technical activity in which student teachers are turned into engineers who are expected to put what was written in a teaching manual into operation in the classroom. The fieldnote of 21 October 2015 records how Danny started the class with an approach that was completely different from anything that I had observed in any of the courses in the previous nine months. This is what Danny said to the student teachers after he greeted the class:

We're going to catch the energy in the room. We're not going to do any boring reading and writing. We're going to do

action *waiata*<sup>30</sup>. Teaching body parts in *Te Reo Māori*<sup>31</sup> using a *waiata*.

Danny then got the student teachers to revise in Te Reo Māori body parts – such as hand, foot, head, etc. (vocabulary that they should have acquired by then through this course) – along with a *waiata* and body actions. Danny said to the student teachers that this is an activity that the student teachers can use in class for all students, not just in Te Reo Māori classes. Through this activity, Danny illustrates that Māori language can be incorporated in any class activities, rather than only in Te Reo Māori classes.

Furthermore, in prompting student teachers to connect what is taught in ways that allow students to feel and engage with what they are learning, Danny confronts overriding assumptions that ground teaching and learning as a mere interaction in which teachers mechanically transmit knowledge onto their students (Freire, 2005; Gee, 2015). Through encouraging student teachers to be attentive to the body language and the “energy in the room,” Danny also challenged the dominance of traditional teaching approaches that emphasised on *training* emergent teachers with skills necessary to manage their students, rather than approaches that are responsive to the needs and interests of learners.

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<sup>30</sup> Traditional Maori songs with words.

<sup>31</sup> Māori language.

Through the fieldnotes (above) chosen for analysis, Danny illustrates that the two core values of inclusivity and participation are interconnected to each other. For as long as inclusion and teaching practices continue to be grounded in dominant ideologies that govern how people and things are to be organised, any effort to include (whether it is in the form of education policies or teacher initiatives) will never be truly inclusive, and will never create mutual partnership among the people the effort is designed to serve.

In the next section, I explore how teacher educators further generate the critical awareness that student teachers are beginning to develop through the programme. Such competencies are crucial, as student teachers proceed into their professional practice, in order to prepare them to negotiate and thrive in a schooling environment that is rapidly changing and becoming more diverse.

### **Relating and negotiating through different social relations**

EDMT604: Inquiry and Evidence-based Practice for Inclusive Learning Contexts 1 was the fourth course I observed during the delivery of this programme in its first year.<sup>32</sup> This course is underpinned by the core value of ‘intellectual rigour and scholarship’. In it, the teacher educators<sup>33</sup> integrated structured activities and inquiry approaches with vignettes and

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<sup>32</sup> Due to a delay in receiving consent to observe this course, I was only able to observe six classes in the four-month course that took place in the first half of the one-calendar-year programme.

<sup>33</sup> Hilary, Craig and Ebenezer.

short stories about student behaviours and classroom practices to challenge student teachers to analyse the basis of their responses.

In EDMT601, student teachers were prompted to reflect on how they perceive the world and themselves and in what ways these perceptions are shaped by their own cultural assumptions. I have analysed how Lucy prompted student teachers to think of possible impediments that students may face in school which may impact on their learning experiences. As discussed earlier, efforts at making education inclusive is futile as long as inclusion continues to be perceived as work that seeks to benefit students to think and behave in ways that conform with what the teachers consider as normative or ideal. Likewise, teacher educators in EDMT604 regularly conveyed to student teachers how ideas which they uncritically took for granted as given or superior can impede their efforts to cast themselves as inclusive teachers.

Through the use of vignettes, teacher educators prompt student teachers to examine their responses towards students' actions and behaviours, as depicted in the case scenarios, and to examine why they think that way. This aligns with CDA scholars' call (Fairclough, 2010; Fairclough et al., 2004; Gee, 2015; van Dijk, 2008, 2012; van Leeuwen) for teaching practitioners to encourage student teachers to reflect, critically, on the ways that discourses govern how they perceive and react to students' behaviours. For example, the fieldnote dated 24 April 2015 documented the complexities underlying the task of getting student teachers to examine their own cultural

assumptions before they judge particular actions and behaviours as inappropriate. In the fieldnotes, I observed Craig's tone and demeanour as he went around the classroom checking on the student teachers' reactions to the activity:

I could hear him trying very hard to suppress his tone – sometimes unsuccessfully: That is why I could hear him though we were at different ends of the room. I could hear student teachers say, “This is common sense!” And Craig would ask them to reflect on what they mean by ‘common sense’ or ‘given’? And, can they assume their classroom students think the same way? I could also hear him repeating to the student teachers: “Go back to the LEARN site and look at the task uploaded.”

After the class, I looked at the task Craig had uploaded on LEARN.<sup>34</sup> The task asked the student teachers to make a case study of themselves, not their classroom students. The student teachers' repeated response, “This is common sense,” indicates how work that critically challenges student teachers to resist the system that has framed their “thinking at the deepest levels” (Gilbert, 2013, p. 74), is not an easy task.

As Gilbert (2013) stresses, it is impossible to expect student teachers simply to reject or dismiss ideas or knowledge that have framed how they understand the world. The fieldnotes above indicated that challenging assumptions that have been entrenched in the student teachers' belief systems was difficult, despite the fact that the student teachers had been encouraged to do so since the start of the programme in January, three

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<sup>34</sup> The university's electronic management webportal for students and staff.

months before the activity recorded in the fieldnote above. Yet, as Gilbert (2010) also emphasises, by bringing what remains unchallenged into the open and critically analysing discourses that have come to be accepted as ideal can, in themselves, be sufficient to generate change. The fieldnote above illustrated how this course attempted to achieve this goal. Firstly, it challenged student teachers to be critical of their own cultural assumptions and dominant ideologies, which they may have accepted as normative. Thereafter, student teachers were encouraged to examine how they could actively inhibit the reproduction of these normative assumptions.

In the fieldnotes, I documented the positive aspects of the student teachers' responses to the teacher educators' attempts to interweave the core value of encouraging student teachers to "take the perspective of others" (Abbiss & Astal, 2014, p. 7). This aligns with what Gilbert (2013) has noted is an important aspect of ITE programmes, namely, to actively encourage individuals involved in the task of teaching and learning to constantly recognise and acknowledge the perspectives of others. This relates closely to what I recorded in the fieldnotes (dated 12 June 2015),

Today's class is to reflect on the experience from student teachers' professional experience. The student teachers were asked to read through the 16 attributes and then pick 10 that resonate with them, and justify why they picked those 10 and not the other six attributes. In the midst of the activity, Craig asked the student teachers to come over to one of the groups to see how they did their work. Craig said they had done the activity in a very different way from what he had planned. But he liked the way the group did it and he said he was impressed that a lot of thought was put into the way the attributes were chosen, grouped and interwoven as attributes that are inseparable from each other rather than in isolation.



The activity (noted above) articulated the core value underpinning EDMT604, that is, to encourage student teachers to recognise and acknowledge the perspective and participation of others, rather than on focus on how they, individually, wanted to accomplish the given task. Furthermore, consistent with Fairclough's (2000) argument, Craig's activity illustrated how he 'worked the space' to effect changes to existing institutional arrangements through encouraging student teachers to work in a more participatory framework rather than individualistic approaches.

The development of teacher identity requires both an understanding of content knowledge that would allow student teachers to confidently engage and share knowledge about teaching and learning through group works and discussions (Ell, Hill, & Grudnoff, 2012). In EDMT603, student teachers demonstrated a recognition of their own cultural positions and how they might impact on their teaching practices and the learning outcome of their students. In the fieldnotes above, I recorded how student teachers were starting to recognise the perspectives of others. Earlier in this chapter I discussed how Danny encouraged the student teachers to be adaptive in class and think about how to make learning activities engaging and relevant to the needs of students. Similarly, in the statements above, Craig illustrated his attempts at highlighting to the student teachers the importance of recognising how students learn and accomplish particular learning outcomes, instead of expecting all their students to perform what they have been asked to do through predetermined methods.

## Conclusion

I began this chapter with an exploration of the ways teacher educators are working to establish different approaches to inclusion by prompting student teachers to examine the power of discourses in framing how the world should be organised. I then discussed how student teachers were challenged to examine how *harm* can potentially occur through existing schooling practices. In the second and third sections, I analysed teacher educators' attempts at prompting student teachers to engage actively with the two core values of the *poutama* – inclusivity and participation – as they reconceptualise learning via consideration of the backgrounds of their students. In the final section, I explored how teacher educators are working to encourage student teachers to engage with and acknowledge perspectives that may be different from their own.

In Chapter 7, I turn my attention to how teacher educators are working to equip and strengthen student teachers with the knowledge and confidence to talk back to and enact inclusive practices in the wider, complex schooling environments in which they will be teaching. Through reference to fieldnotes and interview transcripts, I analyse the complexities underlying prevailing educational practices and the efforts of teacher educators to develop and facilitate an ITE structure directed at achieving inclusive education.

## Chapter 7: Facilitating inclusivity – negotiating complexities

### Introduction

This chapter explores how teacher educators in a new postgraduate ITE programme are working to equip student teachers with the knowledge and confidence to implement inclusive practices at the schools where they will be working. They attempt to do this through exposing student teachers to instances where they may be faced with values and responses to inclusion that may conflict with what they have been encouraged to do in this programme (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Ell et al., 2017). The aim is to prompt student teachers to locate and intervene in the reproduction of schooling practices that may continue to marginalise and disregard the diverse academic needs and interests of schooling students in the education system. Previous chapters have explored what teacher educators have *said* about the goals of this ITE programme and what they have *done* to facilitate teachers who will contribute to more inclusive education in Aotearoa NZ. This chapter focuses on what it means to *be* a teacher educator and a new teacher in the current education system.

Using critical discourse analysis, I start this chapter by exploring how teacher educators attempt to confront the challenges of facilitating a new programme as well as encouraging student teachers to locate spaces of resistance within a rigid system shaped by neoliberal ideas and values

(Fairclough, 2000, 2010; Hyland, 2015). I then investigate how teacher educators ‘work the space’ as they attend to the complexities of exposing student teachers to the challenges of schooling environments in ways that do not discourage them from wanting to become teachers.

In the final section, I look at how teacher educators generate reflexivity through encouraging student teachers to identify and envision changes they can bring about in the future as teachers. They encourage them to understand how inclusion is a state of *being*, or an ongoing mission, rather than a destination. The purpose of such attempts is to challenge the rigidity embedded in existing ITE frameworks which often constrain ITE providers to design course content that would allow emergent teachers to demonstrate themselves as competent teachers at the point of completion of the programmes in which they have been enrolled.<sup>35</sup>

### **Facilitating inclusive education**

Teacher educators can be said to be “at the core of good teacher education [whose] work significantly impacts on the quality of future teachers” (Izadinia, 2014, p. 426). Their role involves not only teaching teachers how to teach, but also contributing to up to date research on teaching and learning,

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<sup>35</sup> This chapter incorporates the two sets of fieldnotes I recorded in 2016 and five interview transcripts conducted with the teacher educators. The fieldnotes analysed in Chapter 6 were recorded in the first year the programme was offered. As discussed in Chapter 4, the fieldnotes of two classes I recorded in EDMT601 in the second year the programme was offered allowed me to deepen my understanding of the teacher educators’ attempts at preparing student teachers to negotiate the complexities of the schooling environment in relation to inclusion.

preparing student teachers to negotiate tasks in the school environment for their professional practice, and later as newly graduated teachers, just to name a few (Izadinia, 2014; Rice et al., 2015; Swennen, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2008; Timmerman, 2009). Given the huge responsibilities that have been placed on teacher educators, it is important to understand how they perceive their roles as agents of change. Consequently, this chapter explores how they encourage their students (who will soon be teachers with their own sets of students) to be agents of change by making education more inclusive in the schools where they will be located (Ell et al., 2017; Loughran, 2014; Swennen et al., 2008).

Efforts directed at making education inclusive cannot be achieved “solely by increasing the access of marginalised students to good teachers” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016, p. 70). As discussed in Chapter 3, the complexities teacher educators are faced with involve understanding and negotiating the potential and limitations they are provided with by the Ministry of Education (2013) to effect change through this programme (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Hyland, 2015; Fairclough, 2015). Such implications are reflected in Hilary’s statements (below) as she discussed the challenges of establishing a new ITE programme in which inclusivity can be discussed, examined critically and linked to practices in classrooms. Her reflections illustrate the challenges of facilitating a new ITE programme directed at prompting student teachers to examine the functions of schooling while also responding to the requirements of dominant interests that regulate how this programme is to be delivered. As Hilary reflects (below):

You're always in that place of trying to help them [student teachers] understand the broader scheme of education which is just hugely challenging. Unfortunately, we are in a society – neoliberal – that just really only sees the content part of it, and not the larger sociological component. So, we're sort of bumping up against policy. Trying to do the best we can in our practice (Interview, 3 March 2015).

Hilary's reflections indicate that facilitating an ITE programme directed at inclusivity entails more than teaching student teachers *how to teach* the particular sets of knowledge privileged in the academic institution. Her reflections indicate the tensions teacher educators face in their effort to generate new teachers who understand the wider purposes of schooling, including social justice goals (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009). As Fairclough (2010) reminds us, such knowledge is crucial in order to encourage student teachers to identify emergent practices that have the potential to mitigate and confront inequalities embedded in existing schooling practices.

Hilary's reflections (above) are consistent with concerns raised by educationalists (as discussed in Chapter 2) about the ways in which policies that focus on raising outcomes often disregard the importance of foundational disciplines such as sociology and philosophy in education. These forms of knowledge are important in enabling student teachers to understand what assumptions and conventions influences schooling practices in particular school settings (Hayes & Doherty, 2017; Liasidou & Symeou, 2016; Lingard & Mills, 2007; Wrigley, Lingard, & Thomson, 2012).

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 5, schooling has become a lever for preparing students to succeed in knowledge and skills channelled towards contributing to the country's economy, rather than a place that seeks to prepare students with an array of skills and knowledge that would be useful to their future undertakings (Benade et al., 2014; Ell & Grudnoff, 2013; Grudnoff et al., 2016). CDA scholars stress that efforts to bring about changes to the status quo require a collaborative analysis informed by interdisciplinary perspectives (Fairclough, 2000; Fairclough et al., 2004; Weiss & Wodak, 2003; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Hilary's reflections indicated how difficult it is to develop a new ITE programme that aims to intervene in the 'long tail of underachievement,' yet at the same time needs to meet prevailing ITE requirements that often focus on narrow, educational outcomes influenced by neoliberal values (Brown, 2011; Lingard and Mills, 2007; Wrigley et al. 2012; Liasidou & Symeou, 2016).

Similarly, just as teacher educators are discussing with student teachers the constraints and possibilities of implementing different approaches to inclusion, the reflections of Hilary and Brigid below indicate that they (the teacher educators) are constantly negotiating these tensions. This is illustrated in Brigid's and Hilary's reflections as they discuss efforts aimed at reconstructing practices entrenched in existing ITE structures.

Brigid: We have to work neoliberalism just like they have to ... in terms of the structure of the course and we have to work that because that's the context we are situated in.

Hilary: Same way they have to work those issues in schools.  
We have to work them as well.

(Interview, 3 March 2015)

Hilary's and Brigid's reflections (above) suggest that teacher educators are constantly locating possibilities to effect change while at the same time they are conscious of the limitations and the complex purposes schooling is designed to serve. At the same time, teacher educators are preparing student teachers to understand that these challenges are something which they need to be conscious of as they negotiate the complexities of working in an environment that may conflict with, rather than welcome, the inclusive values which the programme has encouraged them to develop. Nevertheless, consistent with Hyland's (2015) argument, Hilary's and Brigid's statements show that, while they recognise the constraints on teacher educators and student teachers, this does not mean that they see themselves as social actors who can only replicate existing frameworks. Their statements articulate their commitment to bring about changes, and to locate spaces where they can do so, while knowing that effecting change in schooling is not an easy task.

During the first year of the delivery of this programme, Brigid and Margaret expressed their concerns about the discrepancies for emergent teachers between talking about commitment to inclusivity in the ITE programme and the reality of schools actually acting on these commitments. However, as Fairclough (2010) argues, to reconceptualise existing frameworks, academic critique is not enough. In the second year when I had the chance



to observe the delivery of two classes in EDMT601, I was able to deepen my understanding of how teacher educators are working to highlight to student teachers the importance of *being* conscious of, and to resist from, reproducing practices embedded their working environment which may not be inclusive.

In my fieldnotes dated 11 February 2016, I recorded how Brigid articulated at the start of the class that “the aim of the programme is to let the student teachers know how to be inclusive teachers.” Rather than reproduce dominant assumptions about inclusion, Brigid turned the discourse around and prompted student teachers to think about what they need to do to work towards inclusion. Brigid said to the student teachers:

If you know how power works you can ‘jam’ them to some extent. We’re not talking about blowing up something, but small strategic acts. It’s about looking at the little things that people have power to change. Taking the responsibility to teach all children within your sphere of influence (Fieldnotes, 11 February 2016).

Brigid’s statement indicates a recognition of the tension embedded in the schooling structure that is not intrinsically inclusive. This counters overriding discourses that name teachers, rather than prevailing schooling practices, as the problem and the solution to ongoing inequitable outcomes in student performances (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Ell & Grudnoff, 2013; Openshaw, 2007). Brigid’s statements express the possibility that as “human agents, [the student teachers] have the opportunity and responsibility to enact practice that generates positive outcomes ... [and] to challenge inequities” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016, p. 71). Brigid’s

statements suggest to student teachers that they, too, have the power to change things – even if this power is minimal – and prompt them to constantly locate opportunities to make teaching more inclusive, while at the same time recognising the forces that reinforce difference and inequality.

The fieldnotes recorded in 2015, record Brigid discussing with student teachers the impact movies and media representation have on teachers. This may suggest why she told the student teachers in her statement (above) that effecting change does not mean that they have to be “blowing up something.” In Chapter 2, I discussed how, because evidence of change in response to making education inclusive is slow and painstaking, it can easily make teachers tire of hearing it. Instead of passively waiting for changes to happen, Brigid’s statements (above) suggest that she prompts student teachers to rethink what Cochran-Smith et al (2016) refer to as “the moral purpose of teaching” and “the possibility of human agency in creating change” (p. 70). Brigid’s statements indicate her commitment to encouraging student teachers to confront dominant ideologies and examine what their roles are as teachers (Woodside-Jiron, 2011).

In the fieldnotes recorded on 1 February 2016, I noted how Hilary asked student teachers if they had read their course readings on Maori and Pasifika perspectives given to them to read before the class. Hilary explained to student teachers that the multiple perspective discussed in this class will be braided together with Brigid’s and Margaret’s critical theories and developmental science. Hilary explained that the course readings are for

them to examine and challenge overriding ideas and practices which may have led them to regard the values and knowledge of others as inferior or lacking. As my notes indicate:

Understanding cultures helps us understand our own and as teachers they will be teaching students that come from cultures different from their own. Hilary said that it is important to see how this diversity enriches our lives rather than as a deficit and different (Fieldnotes, 1 February 2016).

In braiding worldviews that have been taught earlier in the course that emphasise recognising differences, Hilary's statements (above) connect with Brigid's attempts at directing student teachers to be critical of how power works to maintain what gets accepted as ideal in the academic world. This encourages student teachers to think about focusing on learning outcomes that are relevant to their students' interests and prior backgrounds, rather than merely ensuring that all their students achieve in the learning goals that are privileged by dominant interests (Gee, 2014; Kress, 2011). Through prompting student teachers to locate ways spaces where they can effect changes in their classrooms, Hilary and Brigid encouraged them to think that they are all capable of potentially making schooling more inclusive to their students.

Nevertheless, at her interview, Hilary spoke about circumstances that she cannot change as a teacher – as she reflected on her experiences of her context as a teacher educator. These experiences strengthen her confidence that student teachers are capable of creating the conditions for their students to negotiate the complex systems in which they – the classroom students – are located. As Hilary said regarding her experience as a teacher:

What is their sphere of influence, how can they do something? When I was a middle school teacher, I could not control the experiences that my kids had in their neighbourhoods, in their families or any place else. All I could do was in the sphere of influence that I had, which was to help them make sense of it, understand it, unpack it, find some new skills to deal with it, and move through it (Interview, 3 March 2015).

Hilary's statements (above) are consistent with the Advisory Group's (MoE, 2010) acknowledgement that raising academic outcomes involved issues related to the students' socioeconomic contexts that were beyond the control of teachers. However, Hilary does not use these external factors as justifications of why inequitable outcomes exist despite persistent effort to address such inequities in the education system, as certain education policies have often done (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Lingard & Mills, 2007; Openshaw, 2007; Wrigley et al., 2012). Neither does Hilary portray her students as victims of their social context and herself as the saviour with the responsibility to rescue them.

Hilary's reflections indicate her recognition that, in addition to the teachers' efforts, other factors impact on students' learning outcomes. As Gee (2010) argues in his d/Discourse theory, teaching practitioners need to be conscious of the different local contexts of their students in order to help their students better connect and make sense of the new knowledge they learn at schools to their local contexts and prior knowledge. Furthermore, her construction of what she needs to do as a teacher educator confronts dominant discourses that assume good practice in terms of a teacher's ability to *fix* their students following from the diagnosis with which they have been labelled (as

discussed in Chapter 6). Instead, Hilary's statements reconceptualise good practice as teachers' ability to identify with their students skills and knowledge that will be useful and relevant to their students' sociocultural contexts and later lives.

In the next section, I discuss the complexities underlying the process of preparing student teachers to become inclusive teachers and the challenge of being sensitive to the different levels of progress and understanding that student teachers bring with them to this programme. I also explore the challenges and implications of work that attempts to resist and negotiate the prevailing structures that have entrenched how educational approaches are organised and its impact on ITE programmes.

### **Facilitating inclusive teacher identities**

The facilitation of ITE programmes is a complex learning system which requires teacher educators to simultaneously observe and respond to the student teachers' growth and change in the development of their teacher identity, which Ell et al. (2017) describe as "emergence" (p. 329). These emergences do not materialise as fixed outcomes that can be evidenced in the process of an ITE programme, but they vary according to the student teachers' sociocultural backgrounds, their personal and professional experiences related to teaching and learning, and how these influences shape how they perceive their roles as teachers (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Ell et al., 2017; Strangeways, 2015; Timmerman, 2009). Student teachers in this

programme are accepted only after they have been assessed to have the *dispositions* that would enable them to respond positively to cultures and practices that are different from their own. However, I have discussed in Chapter 6 that this does not mean that each student teacher will emerge from the programme with similar understandings about teaching and learning or that they will develop their teacher identity in the same way as their peers in the course of this one-year programme.

Throughout Chapter 6, I explored how teacher educators prompted student teachers to be critical of what they *do* and to constantly reflect on spaces where they can make learning more engaging and connected to their students' needs and sociocultural knowledges. Likewise, Margaret<sup>36</sup>, discusses (below) how teacher educators need to be mindful of what they are exposing student teachers to and how they are responding to the strategies directed at producing inclusive practices. Just as the teacher educators constantly reminded student teachers of the need to avoid imposing harm on their students in their attempts at *helping* them to learn (as discussed in Chapter 6), the teacher educators, also try not to disrupt student teachers' self-assurance in these confrontations. As Margaret cautions below:

It's not a one-size-fits-all and you can't be the same. They will all be experiencing this [programme] quite differently and depending on their previous experiences. They will be having more or less of a challenge because they have just adopted the ideas of other people – often their parents and so on and they've never questioned it. The risk is that they can

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<sup>36</sup> A teacher educator in EDMT601

close down, because some people might need a much gentler challenging, and developing the skills to even challenge (Interview, 12 March 2015).

Margaret's comments (above) suggest the complexities underlying attempts to encourage student teachers to confront and resist dominant frameworks that have shaped what they can do and think, and how schooling is to be organised. In Chapter 6, I explored how teacher educators encouraged student teachers to examine their cultural locatedness on the first day of the programme through identifying metaphors that represent their values and beliefs. Margaret's reflections illustrate how important it is for teacher educators to be attentive to these prior backgrounds as they expose student teachers to new knowledge and critical approaches which may conflict with how they have understood the world.

Ell, Hill, and Grudnoff (2012) point out how ITE programmes often operate under the assumption that student teachers enter the programme with little or no prior understanding about teaching and learning. However, they argue that this is not necessarily the case. Margaret's reflections (above) articulate the implications of adapting their teaching approaches that challenge student teachers to extend their thinking about teaching and learning, yet also be sensitive of their cultural locatedness. Margaret's comments also indicate that teacher educators are always confronted with concerns that student teachers will reject the knowledge and values which teacher educators are endeavouring to equip them with as they prepare them to be teachers.

According to the evaluation report commissioned by the MoE to investigate the purposes and outcomes of the eight pilot Master's level ITE programmes facilitated across Aotearoa New Zealand, “the completion rate for the Masters programmes is (85%) below the rate for other ITE (94-98%), indicating that selection processes are not entirely successful” (Martin Jenkins, 2017, p. 36). One of the reasons given by ITE providers for the lower rate of completion of Master’s programmes was student teachers “having realised that the qualification was not appropriate for them” (Martin Jenkins, 2017, p. 36). The statements from the evaluation report (Martin Jenkins, 2017) illustrate the power of dominant assumptions in naming teacher quality as both the cause and the solution underlying the ‘long tail of underachievement.’

However, as Biesta (2010) argues, disposition to teach is a co-construction that student teachers and teacher educators create together during the ITE programme rather than something that is inherent in a person. What remains unsaid is that, it is impractical to expect ITE providers to evaluate accurately whether or not student teacher candidates possess the necessary dispositions based on the documents they produce at the time of their application and a short interview process. Secondly, as discussed above, ITE programmes are complex, resulting in different responses as student teachers encounter the stimuli that teacher educators pose to them in this programme. Expecting all student teachers will successfully complete the programme before both teacher educators and student teachers have the opportunity to encounter the



intricacies of teaching and learning together in the programme is therefore unrealistic.

The responsibilities that education reformists and the media have placed on teachers and ITE providers are to 1) meet the needs of all students, 2) to close the achievement gap, and 3) to address inequitable outcomes in the education system (Fairclough, 2003; Liasidou & Symeou, 2016; Openshaw, 2007). Student teachers may find the task of learning to be inclusive teachers much more challenging than they had imagined. The evaluation report (Martin Jenkins, 2017) (as mentioned above) is indicative of how teacher educators are made accountable for recruiting, retaining and resulting student teachers who will be the solution to the ongoing disparity in educational outcomes. However, through the analysis of articulations and reflections from teacher educators, this thesis argues that challenging the status quo entails more than attempts to result in emergent teachers who will be responsive to the various needs and interests of students. Effecting long-term changes aimed at making schooling more inclusive requires student teachers to *be* conscious and critical of the ways existing school-based discourses have worked and are working to disadvantage students historically identified as “priority learners” in the education system.

In my fieldnotes dated 1 Feb 2016, I recorded the tensions that come from student teachers’ passion to be a teacher, yet at the same time, trying to understand the complex purposes of a teacher’s role in the wider, schooling

environment. In one of her classes, Hilary prompted student teachers to examine and discuss, in small groups with their course mates, the purposes of education and schooling, what knowledge is and what counts as knowledge. At the end of the activity, Hilary asked the student teachers if they had any burning questions they wanted to ask. Two student teachers both raised the question: “What is education?” The first student teacher sounded exasperated and overwhelmed when she said she was still confused about what education is. The second student, however, sounded uncertain before she asked in a wavering tone if it is to teach, facilitate or coordinate? Even though the student teachers’ tones seemed to contrast with each other – one passionate, the other subdued – both of them seemed desperate for an answer. Furthermore, instead of being challenged to examine on the purposes of education, the student teachers may have expected that an ITE programme is where they get *trained* about how to teach, informed by accepted notions in the academy of what knowledge is. This indicates the implications of teacher educators’ efforts to complicate, rather than explicate, the systems behind how schooling operates in this programme.

However, Hilary’s response (below) indicates that the exasperation and uncertainty that emerged from the student teachers is part and parcel of the process of learning to be teachers. Instead of responding to the student teachers’ confusion with the suggestion that they will find the answer eventually through this programme, Hilary further complicates the student teachers’ queries as she indicates that there is no one right answer or approach to their questions about education, and that the multiple realities

embedded in how people perceive their role as teachers are influenced by their conception of their students. As Hilary stated below:

Education is a transition. What do we think about children? Are children blank slates? – very different proposition. You will meet colleagues who will not think like you, but be firm and hold on to the knowledge you have gained in this programme (Fieldnotes, 1 February 2016).

Hilary's statements (above) illustrate that, although there is no quick answer to questions about the role of teachers in the facilitation of learning, what she was certain of was these perceptions can generate conflicts between student teachers and other teachers in the schools where they are going to teach. This aligns with Ashton's (2016) study, which used CDA to investigate how teachers who underwent different ITE programmes have different understanding and responses in relation to how they perceive school students and their own roles as teachers. Hilary's statements (above) highlight for student teachers that discourses are products of social interpretation. This is to remind them of the importance of helping their students to connect the new knowledge which they will be learning at schools to their prior understandings, rather than assume all their students will vacantly absorb what is taught to them in a fixed manner.

In the fieldnotes recorded in 2015, Hilary would often prompt student teachers in her classes – in both EDMT601 and EDMT604 – to reflect on questions such as “what is a human” and how they want to “help their students become human” during similar class discussion in relation to the

purposes of education. Asking these fundamental questions, as Macmurray (2012) highlights, is crucial both for student teachers to gain an understanding of how they view what is important amongst the (contested) purposes of schooling, and what they see themselves doing to address these purposes.

Hilary's response (above) suggests to the student teachers that the critical stance and inclusive values that they have been encouraged to develop as student teachers are what the programme considers as important and informed by contemporary literature on teaching and learning. It is not the only value to be thinking about. In her statements, Hilary indicated to the student teachers that what education is, such as how they see their students, is always shaped by the context of the students they are teaching. However, what Hilary sounded certain of (in her response above) was that student teachers will be confronted with different perspectives in their workplace which can be in tension with what they have been exposed to through the MTchgLn programme.

At her interview, Margaret talked about the implications for teacher educators of their involvement in ITE programmes like the one studied. Besides thinking about student teachers' reactions to prompts used in class, Margaret said she is often concerned about the struggles she imagines student teachers will face as they go out to teach in a structure dominated by discourses that they have been encouraged to resist and challenge in this

programme. Margaret recognised (below) that, as much as they try to prepare student teachers to understand the complexities underlying how schools are organised, they cannot prepare them for all school environments:

The reality of schools ... it's a different reality to actually talking about it [in university classes] Interview, 12 March 2015).

Margaret's reflections (above) indicate the discrepancies between critiquing and constructing different approaches to inclusion in the university classrooms, and putting those critiques and new approaches to work in particular school settings. Earlier in the chapter, I analysed how Hilary prepares student teachers for the challenges which they may encounter in their workplaces, given what this programme has encouraged them to do as teachers.

Timmerman (2009) states that new teachers tend to revert to preconceived frameworks about teaching and learning when they enter the schooling culture. Margaret's statements (below) expressed the importance for ITE programmes to set up a strong foundation to encourage student teachers to develop the confidence to see themselves as capable of resisting and reconceptualising how things are as an important part of their philosophy as teachers going forward. This is to prepare the student teachers to negotiate and work within a schooling context that may be hostile towards the possibilities of identifying students other than through normative discourses. As Margaret emphasises in her point below,

That's where it's important – all of this is about their own individual development, developing their own strengths and their own resilience and all of those things (Interview, 12 March 2015).

I analysed in Chapter 6 how Robin prodded student teachers to examine, discomforting as it might be, discourses that have remained unchallenged and how it can potentially reinforce inequitable processes in the schooling environment. Margaret's reflections (above) illustrate how challenging student teachers to *overcome* their discomfort as they examine their own values and beliefs about teaching and learning is crucial to help strengthen student teachers' professional identity. In this way, student teachers are driven not only to recognise their own agency in co-constructing a safe environment with their students to enhance their learning, but also to make their students' needs central in their teaching practice, rather than revert to dominant institutional routines. As I have argued in this thesis using CDA, Margaret's reflections align with efforts that aim to transform existing disparities in the education system through generating critical reflections in student teachers, in order to discern how and where they can intervene and construct different approaches to teaching and learning.

In the next section, I explore how teacher educators attempt to confront prevailing discourses which have grounded teacher education for centuries. This is crucial in addressing the widening cultural differences between student-teacher ratio and in allowing student teachers to meet the needs of all students. I investigate teacher educators' attempts at encouraging student teachers to develop the social consciousness needed to examine what they

can do as teachers and what would enhance the learning outcomes of their students.

### **Attempts at facilitating inclusion are always emergent**

The evaluation report on the new ITE programmes (Martin Jenkins, 2017) states that “Low diversity in the cohort is seen as a weakness. The demographics of the student teachers are seen as not well matched to the priority learners they are intended to make a difference for over the long term” (p. 12). However, at her interview, Lucy stated that race- or ethnicity-matched teaching between students and teachers was currently not realistic in New Zealand. The majority of school teachers, and student teachers in ITE programmes, will not be as diverse as the students in the schools where they teach or are going to teach.

In Chapter 6, I discussed how Lucy showed student teachers a graph that illustrated how *pakeha* is the only ethnic group in which they are more teachers than students who identify themselves as *pakeha* Aotearoa NZ schools. This indicates that the student population in the country is becoming rapidly more diverse than that of the current teachers or those being recruited into ITE programmes. At her interview, Lucy explained that her intention when showing the graph was to prompt student teachers to think about how they can better connect teaching and learning to the needs of their students, as they reflect on the findings of current research on the

cultural backgrounds of students and their teachers. Lucy articulated her reflections about the class activity (which I considered in Chapter 6):

[They need to] think of the strategies and agency they have, not just within their classroom but in the school as a whole, what resources can they borrow and share across the school that can make students from diverse cultural backgrounds feel more comfortable (Interview, 16 December 2015).

Lucy's statements above, address in her own way, aspects of the MoE's concern about the lack of cultural diversity among student teachers. As discussed in Chapter 6, Lucy's attempts were directed at challenging student teachers to examine assumptions that have often been neglected, that is, how cultural differences between students and teachers affect students' learning in the educational settings. Lucy's reflections signalled her recognition of the increasing diversity in the student population, and the need for ITE programmes to prepare emergent teachers to better meet and respond to the complex and shifting context in the schooling environment.

In stimulating student teachers to investigate and to learn about how they can be more responsive to the diversity and academic interests and progresses of their students, Lucy illustrates how she was working to confront the constraints of responding to a narrow, educational measurements grounded in neoliberal values. Lucy was prompting student teachers to learn new strategies that would make them better teachers. Lucy's reflections (above) directed student teachers to understand that to be inclusive teachers, they needed to make an effort to understand their students' sociocultural backgrounds and values. This requires teacher



educators to focus not only on improving student teachers with content knowledge in ITE programmes (as Hilary has pointed out on page 159).

Moreover, Lucy's reflections (above) illustrate how she confronts prevailing ideologies that construct inclusion as a pursuit in which teachers are expected to *help* all their students to adopt knowledge and values based on Western perspectives. For centuries tertiary education institutions have *trained* teachers of all ethnicities to teach in styles that reflect the notion of a "single norm of thought and experience" (hooks, 1994, p. 35) grounded on the sociocultural context of the dominant (white, middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied) culture. Such a teaching style has often been inculcated into all student teachers as given and universal. Having teachers of diverse ethnicities in the classroom does not necessarily mean that the classroom or the teachers will necessarily be inclusive (hooks, 1994; McIntosh, 1990).

Brigid was the only teacher educator who I could interview again in 2016 upon the completion of EDMT601. At her interview, Brigid said, "Teaching is such a stressful profession now. A lot of people actually think, 'Do I need this?'" However, Brigid spoke about how people enter the teaching profession "because they think it's an important place to create social change." Brigid explained that her intention of using Foucault's Ethics of Care of the Self<sup>37</sup> as a pedagogy was, firstly, to counter the responsibilities

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<sup>37</sup> See Fernet-Betancourt, Becker, Gomez-Müller, and Gauthier (1987).

that have been placed on teachers of the outcomes they need to demonstrate as student teachers in this programme and as teachers in the schooling environment. Secondly, it was to encourage student teachers to understand that teacher identity is a process that is always emerging, rather than a fixed goal that can be attained. Brigid spoke to the student teachers about how she hopes the Ethics of Care of the Self can be a resource for them:

Foucault's ideas challenge the notion of outcome, measure, achievement. If you're thinking under the strict frame of neoliberalism, then you will be living under the strict frame of measure. But as teachers, the ethics of care of the self is important in thinking about what you want to become (Fieldnotes, 11 February 2016).

Brigid spoke about teachers locating the spaces or opportunities in which to bring about change within the larger institutional context. In incorporating the notions of *becoming* into her teaching, Brigid illustrates how she is challenging frameworks that have shaped teaching practices around the assessment of measurable outcomes. At the same time, she encourages student teachers to reconstruct prevailing teaching practices through examining the purposes of their role as teachers. In prompting student teachers to envision the kind of teacher identity they want to see themselves develop, Brigid's statement potentially enhances what student teachers see themselves as capable of achieving. They are encouraged to see themselves change agents - as those who can "bring about change, not only in terms of their classroom teaching but also in terms of the school" (Williams & Grudnoff, 2011, p. 288). As one of the student teachers summarised towards the end of the class discussion, reflecting on Foucault's notion of becoming

requires them to examine why they want to become a teacher, and what skills and knowledge they need to develop to realise those purposes. This aligns with CDA's claim that social actors who are committed to effect change are conscious of the aims of intervening in and challenging existing inequities in the social world (Gee, 2014; Fairclough, 2010; van Dijk, 2012; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Even though the student teachers may have different visions of the kinds of teachers they want to become at the completion of this programme, their responses (to Foucault's notion of becoming) conveyed a critical consciousness of inequalities in the social environment and a responsibility to intervene in the reproduction of it in the education system. This reflects Brigid's statements (earlier) that some people enter the teaching profession because they want to bring about change to present inequalities identified in the schooling system. The student teachers have been selected for this programme for their open-ness to want to engage with difference. Prompting them to examine the changes they want to effect and to reflect on their role in bringing about those changes, helps to sustain their professional identity and discourages them from re-enacting prevailing practices that they want to change.

Nevertheless, new teachers tend to focus on their teaching practices, such as what went well or what did not, whereas more experienced teachers use theoretical knowledge to examine how they can improve on their practices (Williams & Grudnoff, 2011). In her interview, Brigid explained why she

incorporated the notion of becoming as a way to encourage student teachers to strengthen their professional identity amid the contested purposes of education:

The Ethics of Care of the Self is important for a teacher as it's not about arriving, but that it's ok to be becoming and emerging. That's why we did it [used Foucault], because it's a way to reflect in an on-going way. If a school you go to is not inclusive, you don't like the way it is operating, it won't always be that way. You can make a change. It is the whole idea of becoming – of how you want to 'become'. (Interview, 19 May 2016).

In prompting student teachers to look beyond their daily practices to locate how and where they can make a difference over time, Brigid's reflections above illustrate her attempts at stimulate student teachers to explore their ability to influence the changes they want to see happen in their classrooms. Brigid's statements are similar to Hilary's comments about the struggles to hold out against prevailing approaches that may not be inclusive. She encourages student teachers to understand that they are capable of changing these perspectives. Her reflections also are consistent with Lucy's comments on the way she stimulates student teachers to reflect in an ongoing way on how they can make learning more inclusive of their students. This is crucial for student teachers as they seek to respond to the needs and interests of a student population that is constantly changing.

## Conclusion

This chapter started with an exploration of how the teacher educators in this new ITE programme confront the tension of facilitating a new programme that attempts to complicate, rather than explicate what student teachers need to know about teaching and educational practice. I examined how teacher educators negotiate the struggle of what they can realistically effect in this programme as they work against the backdrop of neoliberal ideas, practices and processes in the education system. I explored how the teacher educators encourage the student teachers to locate what they can do within wider institutional and societal systems and to create the conditions that will make learning more inclusive of all their students.

In the second section, I explored the implications underlying the development of ITE programmes and the importance of *being* attentive to the progress of student teachers, rather than assume that they will all respond to the programme in the same way and produce similar learning outcomes to their peers from entrance to completion of the programme. I also analysed how teacher educators attempt to strengthen student teachers' professional identity, which they have been encouraged to develop in the programme, and to hold on to this identity in their teaching practice.

In the final section, I looked at how teacher educators attempt to encourage student teachers to examine what they can do in response to student population becoming increasingly more diverse than the current teacher

population. Lastly, I explored how teacher educators are supporting student teachers to understand that being inclusive teachers is a process in which they are always emerging.

In Chapter 8, I shall once again look at the key research questions of this study and how I have sought to address these questions in the findings chapters through critical discourse analysis within a qualitative case study. I will also discuss recommendations for future research from insights gained from the findings of this study. Lastly, I discuss how this study contributes to existing literature in the field of inclusive education.

## Chapter 8: Discussion and conclusion: Process and change

### Introduction

This thesis sought to investigate – in relation to inclusion – what a set of course developers and teacher educators *said* and *did* in their response to the Ministry of Education's (MoE, 2013) request to develop and facilitate a new initial teacher education (ITE) programme aimed at improving the overall student performances in the Aotearoa New Zealand education system. A key goal of this new postgraduate ITE programme is to generate new teachers who will *be* conscious of inequalities that have disadvantaged some students in the education system, and to examine what they can *do* as teachers to make schooling more inclusive and equitable to all students.

This concluding chapter discusses key findings generated from analysis of the documentation developed and published by course developers, as well as fieldnotes recorded and interviews conducted during the inquiry process. Recommendations for future research will be explored based on the insights gained from this exploration. Last but not least, I conclude this thesis with some thoughts that have emerged in the process of conducting this study, as well as my aspirations for educational research to always *be* in a space that explores how education can be more inclusive.

## **Review of the key research questions**

In this final chapter, I review the research questions introduced in Chapter 1, and discuss the outcome of my investigations relating to these questions.

Key research questions:

- How is inclusive education for all students articulated, both across official documents from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and in the programme proposal and published outputs by the course developers of this new MTchgLn programme?
- How do teacher educators make sense of past and current notions of inclusion in the context where they and student teachers are situated?
- How do teacher educators reconceptualise possible alternatives to what inclusive education might mean?

Sub-questions:

- How do teacher educators conceptualise their roles, and enact inclusive practices in their interactions with student teachers?
- What do teacher educators see as impediments to the realisation of inclusion? How does this shape their practice as teacher educators?

I will draw on the key findings that have emerged from this study to summarise evidence relevant to these research questions. They are:

- That the MTchgLn programme ‘worked the space’ to interweave multiple worldviews in its design in order to confront prevailing



- ideologies embedded in past and present ITE frameworks grounded in dominant (white, middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied) culture;
- That teacher educators ‘worked the space’ to deconstruct inequitable practices underlying past and present educational approaches in order to reconstruct different ways of thinking about and enacting inclusive practices focused on enhancing students’ learning outcomes; and
  - That teaching practitioners ‘worked the space’ – with student teachers – to identify, develop and attend to the ways teachers can make schooling more inclusive and equitable for all students in a shifting and complex schooling environment.

These key findings were discussed in Chapters 5-7.

### **Summary of findings**

Drawing on critical discourse analysis (CDA), this study reviewed how inequalities in academic outcomes are shaped and sustained by the social, cultural, political, historical, and institutional contexts which frame it. Chapter 2 discussed the ways inclusion is articulated in official documentation from the education ministry (MoE, 2010; MoE, 2013) and how these articulations may reproduce unequal achievement outcomes, rather than raise or improve existing student performances – the original goal of the MoE in its request for the development of new ITE programmes. Through consideration of related literature, I have analysed the tendency for educational initiatives to call for ITE providers to facilitate programmes that aim to raise emergent teachers’ responsiveness to student diversity and

difference in response to ongoing disparities in educational outcomes. Yet, what often remained unsaid in these policies is how ITE providers are expected to equip new teacher candidates with skills necessary to ensure that school students succeed in academic subjects. The consequence of which is that student teachers are diverted from attending to how prevailing discourses are hindering school students from pursuing and succeeding in learning outcomes that matter to them. Furthermore, ITE providers are constrained in their attempts to highlight to student teachers the importance of situating knowledge acquisition that connects to and engages with their academic interests and sociocultural contexts.

A case study approach was used to gain an insight into the complexities underlying the attempts by teaching practitioners to confront prevailing practices grounded in dominant interests, in order to facilitate knowledge acquisition that is engaging and relevant to school students. Through 11 months of classroom observations, my inquiry into how teacher educators make sense of and model inclusive practices to student teachers expanded to include investigation into the opportunities and limitations underlying the wider purposes of schooling. I also examined the impact of current schooling practices on teacher education in general and the facilitation of this new ITE programme in particular. This helped me to gain a deeper understanding of the constraints underlying course designers' and teacher educators' attempts to construct alternative approaches to existing ITE programmes.

Fairclough (2000, 2010) asserts that intervening in and challenging the status quo is a reflexive process which requires social actors to deconstruct, as well as reconstruct alternative approaches to existing practices. Using CDA, I investigated how teaching practitioners have ‘worked the space’ to accomplish the two goals of exposing student teachers to inequalities that may exist in prevailing school-based discourses, and identifying spaces and practices where they can improve school students’ academic performances. The evidence gained from the investigation contributes to existing CDA literature which has been criticised for its over-emphasis on critique, with little attention paid to how social actors can ‘work the space’ to turn constraints into possible transformations of educational experience.

The findings in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 detailed what course developers and teacher educators *said* and *did* to establish inclusion as an ethical disposition and encourage student teachers to *be* more conscious and responsive to the needs and interests of individual students. Such attempts were noted in classroom fieldnotes which documented talk and classroom activities by teacher educators directed at challenging student teachers to examine how discourses may influence the way they perceive and respond to their students’ abilities and progress in class. Furthermore, the thesis has documented how teacher educators challenged student teachers to examine what they need to do to enhance the learning outcomes of students through identifying achievement outcomes that recognise the students’ funds of knowledge, rather than those conventionally considered as ideal in the education system.

Moreover, the findings illustrate the programme's attempts at developing student teachers' cultural competency through prompting them to understand how their own cultural beliefs and assumptions, if unexamined, can potentially perpetuate inequities through their teaching practices. The aim was to challenge student teachers to examine the extent to which ideas and values they have taken for granted are influenced by their own cultural locatedness. Teacher educators engaged in particular classroom practices in order to prompt student teachers to understand that every culture has their own ideas and beliefs which also influence their thoughts and actions as teachers. This was directed at getting student teachers to actively engage with a range of different cultural perspectives, which they may previously have assumed as inferior or inappropriate, depending on their sociocultural backgrounds and experiences in diverse contexts.

In Chapter 5, I discussed how teaching practitioners attempted to interweave values and beliefs of different worldviews in the design of this new ITE programme. I examined the programme's intention to develop an ITE programme that confronted existing frameworks based primarily on values and interests channelled to benefit white, middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied students. Through incorporating different perspectives and philosophies of local community groups, including the Ngāi Tahu Rūnanga Advisory Group, the MTchgLn programme demonstrated its commitment to inclusivity through engaging with the prior knowledge of the local community in the development of the programme.

Chapter 6 documents teacher educators' efforts to expose student teachers to understandings of how power works to govern the ways particular knowledge and values come to be established as ideal, and superior relative to other forms of knowledge. The purpose was to encourage student teachers to pursue learning outcomes that are inclusive of and attentive to the varied local contexts of their students. Fieldnotes and interview records were used to illustrate the ways teacher educators encouraged student teachers to examine how teaching practices which they may have assumed to be ethical and inclusive, including those directed at generating greater inclusivity, may continue to marginalise, rather than improve, the academic outcomes of students identified as underachievers, or "priority learners."

Chapter 7 detailed attempts by specific teacher educators to equip and prepare student teachers with knowledge and confidence to negotiate complex schooling environments where they will be working as teachers. The goal of this work was to ensure student teachers understood that they may be challenged by values and perspectives which may be in conflict with what they were exposed to in the MTchgLn programme. Fieldnotes and interview records provided examples of teacher educators encouraging student teachers to recognise that they have the power to intervene in and construct different practices to make their classrooms for more inclusive. This is consistent with CDA's analysis of social actors as agents who are capable of effecting change within the constraints in which they are situated.

## *Discussion*

The aim of this doctoral study was to explore how a set of teaching practitioners attempted to deconstruct and reconstruct accepted practices of inclusive education aimed at intervening in the ‘long tail of underachievement’ in the Aotearoa NZ education system. Through analysis of documents, fieldnotes and interviews, I have identified how teaching practitioners articulated their understandings of the complex functions that inclusive education is set to serve in the schooling environment. The thesis has documented the ways in which this set of teaching practitioners are working to facilitate inclusive values to student teachers in the face of constraints on educational equality in an era of neoliberalism, and the disparate needs and interests of students across Aotearoa NZ. CDA has been drawn on to understand teaching practitioners’ attempts to effect change in this space through equipping student teachers with knowledge and confidence to resist and reorder dominant understandings and practices about teaching and learning.

In Chapter 2, I discussed how teachers need to acquire both skills from traditional approaches such as literacy and numerical skills, as well as critical approaches that focus on analysis and action that would enable them to connect new knowledge which school students acquire at schools to the students’ local (sociocultural) contexts (Abbiss, 2013, 2015; Benade et al., 2014; Bolstad et al., 2012; Gilbert, 2013; Grossman et al., 2009; McPhail & Rata, 2016). Findings from this study show teacher educators working to

establish the critical stance necessary for student teachers to understand how prevailing discourses may inhibit some students from being recognised for their abilities and achievements in the education system. Yet, teaching practitioners did not exempt these emergent teachers from the responsibility of ensuring that school students acquire general literacy and numerical skills, or knowledge that will be useful to them in later years. Most importantly, teacher educators reminded student teachers that the purposes of schooling were complex and the need for them to constantly reflect on how they could enhance the learning outcomes of their students.

Ladson-Billings (2006) asserts that teachers who are culturally conscious do not take as given what is commonly accepted as ideal knowledge, nor widely held values in the education system. Responses from teaching practitioners in this new ITE programme communicate their attempts at confronting the dominance of what is considered as ideal knowledge influenced by postcolonial and neoliberal values. Chapter 5 analysed the programme's attempt to incorporate different worldviews and values in its design, rather than focus solely on those conventionally privileged in the education system. Chapter 6 documented teacher educators at work in encouraging and challenging student teachers to examine the extent to which discourses govern their thoughts and actions of what is appropriate or superior, and how these assumptions impact the way they see the role and purpose of schooling and what they need to do as teachers. Ladson-Billings (2006) further accentuates that "no curriculum can teach itself" (p. 33) and that even the best curricula require teachers with skills and competencies to help their

students connect what is taught to their prior knowledge. The findings in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 illustrated teaching practitioners' emphasis to situate knowledge acquisition in the context of students' wider local contexts and interests. Such emphasis also demonstrated how teaching practitioners are working the space to confront prevailing assumptions that assume good practice as teachers' ability to efficiently *bank* new knowledge, regardless of whether or not what is being taught is of relevance to students' sociocultural backgrounds.

As discussed in Chapter 2, inclusive education demands teaching practitioners to look at themselves to identify what they need to do or change, in order to support students to perform better at schools (Allan, 2008; Baglieri, 2018; Ballard, 2013; Slee, 2001, 2011). This study has documented how teacher educators stimulate student teachers to understand that they have the power to potentially perpetuate harm or create barriers to students achieving to their full potential in the schooling environment. I have also documented how teacher educators work to increase awareness about how teachers can effect change through utilising their power as teachers to support their students to fully achieve in a variety of educational settings. In this space, teaching practitioners frequently made student teachers aware that inclusion is not a duty which they *do* as part of their job, but ongoing action that requires them to *be* attentive of the needs of their students, as well as the contested purposes of the schooling environment.



Increasing the cultural competency of emergent teachers in ITE programmes is often assumed as efforts directed at expanding student teachers' knowledge of cultures that are different from their own (Jani et al., 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Findings in this study documented that what teacher educators *said* and *did was* directed not only at enlarging student teachers' knowledge about cultural diversity, but also recognising the funds of knowledge embedded in these differences. Chapter 6 documented how teacher educators make student teachers aware that inclusion is not a static set of skills that they can acquire and use on their students. Instead, findings from the study demonstrated teacher educators' attempts to make student teachers understand that inclusion is an ongoing process that is always conditional on the sociocultural, political, historical, institutional context which influences how students are perceived and treated (Fairclough, 2010, 2014; Fairclough, Graham, Lemke, & Wodak, 2004; Gee, 2001, 2014, 2015; van Dijk, 2008, 2012; van Leeuwen, 2012).

Accordingly, Chapter 7 documented teacher educators' articulation of how they, too, need to be attentive to student teachers' backgrounds and experiences. This thesis has demonstrated that teacher educators do not only *teach* student teachers to be attentive to their students' interests and backgrounds, but are also reflective about how they encourage student teachers to examine their own cultural assumptions. The teacher educators who participated in this research were thoughtful about the impacts of these challenges on student teachers and were keen to ensure that the programme

did not discourage emerging teachers' commitment and confidence in learning to become inclusive teachers.

Smith, Hoskins, & Jones (2012) highlight the importance of not just theorising *kaupapa Māori* through a third person or merely describing practices and rites outside the context in which they occurred, but actually embodying the philosophy and values of the culture. In Chapter 6, I explored how EDMT602 addressed issues raised by Smith et al. through the use of various teaching resources (photos and videos taken of particular cultural rites) which illustrates the importance of encouraging student teachers to feel and embody, rather than merely read about, the meanings and values embedded in different cultural rites and practices. I also discussed how the teaching practices in this course are relevant to Macmurray's (2012) argument, which critiques ITE frameworks that are aimed at turning student teachers into engineers who are responsible for putting technical skills to work in the classroom.

In stepping out of their comfort zone of expertise to engage with different ways of understanding and thinking about inclusion, teaching practitioners in this MTchgLn programme illustrate that alternative approaches to implementing inclusive education are not only possible, but also achievable. Hooks (2010) states that "through the sharing of experience, a foundation for learning in community can emerge" (p. 56). Evidence from this study demonstrated teaching practitioners' own attempts at engaging with, and

recognising the different worldviews and perspectives of others, in the design and facilitation of this new ITE programme. Evidence of the programme's attempts to confront the 'long tail of underachievement' through multiple perspectives is consistent with CDA's philosophy that urges researchers to analyse the issue under investigation through interdisciplinary stances.

This thesis has argued that effecting change is an interdisciplinary project that requires social actors to work in a participatory framework, rather than as individuals. The opportunity provided by the MoE's (2013) RFP to develop a new ITE programme that addressed issues of inclusivity enabled a set of teaching practitioners to work this space through the education of a new generation of teachers. The MTchgLn programme has also provided me, a non-teaching educator, with the opportunity to gain an insight into the complexities and challenges involved in efforts to reconceptualise inclusive education and the processes and practices that might facilitate this goal. In participating in this study, teacher educators not only demonstrated their commitment to make education inclusive to all students, but also, as in the words of Rice et al. (2015), they indicated their readiness to challenge their own practices and ideas about inclusion for collaborative analysis.

### **Recommendations for future research**

Based on the findings and insights gained from this exploration, two suggestions for future research are made below:

- 1) The findings in Chapter 7 documented teacher educators' recognition that the schooling environments in which student teachers will be going out to teach may be different, and potentially in conflict with the inclusive strategies/practices which the MTchgLn has encouraged them to develop. One of the teacher educators, and several other experts in this field (see Andreotti, 2016; Florian et al., 2017; Strom & Martin, 2017), indicated that the extent to which student teachers will be able to put into practice what the programme has advocated is largely dependent on the institutional cultures of the schools in which they will be situated.

This exploration has focused on what teaching practitioners *said* and *did* and examined the aspirations and challenges underlying their commitment to make schooling more inclusive. Future studies can potentially follow graduates of the MTchgLn programme into the different educational settings where they will be teaching to explore what they *say* and *do*. This could identify the challenges and the potential for *effecting* change in schooling environments. Insights gained from the proposed study will be useful for ITE providers in their attempts at 'working the space' to prepare future teachers for the complexities of being inclusive teachers in different institutional settings.

- 2) As I discussed at the start of the thesis, my interest in how inclusion is framed in professional educational programmes started after I

completed my degree in Human Services. Courses and discussions offered within this major focused heavily on the private troubles of individuals, with little attention being paid to the public issues that may have contributed to these troubles. Such insights led me to ponder how professional education may perpetuate, rather than alleviate, negative assumptions about those who are disadvantaged or marginalised.

Findings from this study demonstrated the importance for students in professional education programmes to understand the ways social, cultural, historical, political and institutional contexts impact on how individuals or recipients of social services support are perceived and treated. A recommendation for future research is to explore how findings from this study relate to other professional education programmes, such as human services, social work and counselling. The conceptual framework of ‘working the space’ and focusing on what tertiary educators *say*, *do* and *be* to facilitate change in teaching can be used to investigate the teaching of other professional programmes in which inclusivity is a key goal. The proposed study could explore how social services workers can better facilitate services that respond to the sociocultural contexts of those seeking support.

## **Contributions to knowledge**

This doctoral study focuses on what a set of teaching practitioners *said* and *did* to encourage new teachers who to *be* conscious of inequalities that have disadvantaged some students in the education system, and to examine what they can do to make schooling more inclusive and equitable to all students. Rogers et al. (2016) state that most research using CDA focuses on *saying* with little emphasis on *doing*: that is, how changes can follow from a critical analysis of prevailing constraints. Through enquiring into how teacher educators expose student teachers to the challenges which they may face in their efforts to implement inclusive practices in the schooling environment, this study examines not just what they *say* about inclusion, but what they *do* to confront the persistent disparities in student performance in the Aotearoa NZ education system.

Mutch, Perreau, and Houliston (2016) state that teaching practitioners committed to the effort of developing student teachers to be more socially conscious are often overwhelmed by the constraint of meeting the requirements of existing ITE frameworks (contents and assessments). As a result, it is difficult for them to fully unpack with student teachers what teaching for social justice actually entails within the teacher education programmes. This study explores how a set of teaching practitioners have ‘worked the space’ to meet the requirements of the MoE to develop and facilitate this MTchgLn programme, while also reorientating existing ITE frameworks with the goal of challenging the status quo.

The provision of new ITE programmes are usually in response to particular purposes set by the MoE. The University of Canterbury may in due time be called on to develop and facilitate future ITE programmes in response to the MoE's requests. However, the insights gained from this exploration will be useful for professional education programmes that aim to encourage new cohorts of teachers to develop the critical consciousness necessary for them to do something about making education, and schooling, more inclusive for all students in the Aotearoa NZ education system.

### **Final thoughts**

The overarching intention of this study was to explore how teaching practitioners are working to effect changes within ITE programmes that are directed at being more inclusive of the different sociocultural contexts and academic interests of students across Aotearoa NZ. The fieldnotes and interviews provided me with insights about the *saying, doing* and *being* of teacher educators and their reflections on the challenges of making education inclusive.

My argument in this thesis is that an education system that seeks to be inclusive of the needs and interests of all students requires a more collaborative analysis among teaching practitioners, students, and students' *whānau*. The shifting nature and complex social, cultural, historical, political and institutional contexts in which students are situated need to be considered in any analysis that aims to raise the academic outcomes of

learners across the education system. This exploration has involved constant attention to all manner of thinking directed at generating greater inclusivity in education and in the wider social worlds we inhabit. My commitment to confronting the challenges of achieving inclusion has not changed, but is reinforced, as I conclude this thesis.



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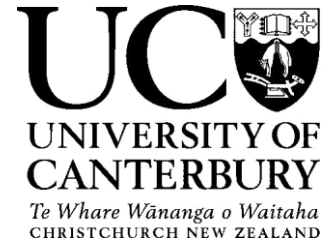
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## Appendix 1: Ethics approval



HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Lynda Griffioen

Email: [human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

Ref: 2014/65/ERHEC

10 December 2014

Leechin Heng  
College of Education  
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Leechin

The College of Educational Research Human Ethics Committee is pleased to inform you that your research proposal “Constructing inclusion: meaning-making and process in professional education” has been granted ethical approval at their meeting on 3 December 2014.

Please note that should circumstances relevant to this current application change you are required to reapply for ethical clearance / approval.

If you have any questions regarding this approval, please let me know.

We wish you well for your research.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Surtees', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Nicola Surtees

**Chair**

***Educational Research Human Ethics Committee***

*“Please note that Ethical Approval and/or Clearance relates only to the ethical elements of the relationship between the researcher, research participants and other stakeholders. The granting of approval or clearance by the Ethical Clearance Committee should not be interpreted as comment on the methodology, legality, value or any other matters relating to this research.”*

## Appendix 2: Information Sheet for Educators

Telephone: +643 341 1500 ext. 43224

Email: [leechin.heng@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:leechin.heng@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)



### Constructing inclusion:

### Meaning-making and process in professional education

#### Information Sheet

This study will explore how the ideals of inclusive education are constructed, critiqued and negotiated in a particular professional development programme. I hope to achieve this through a case study project with the teacher educators delivering the – Master of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn) programme that is being offered at the University of Canterbury from January 2015. Through this case study I hope to understand the possibilities and challenges of integrating inclusive values and strategies into professional development programmes in the education sector.

I am a PhD candidate at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, working under the supervision of Associate Professor Missy Morton and Adjunct Associate Professor Rosemary Du Plessis. I am a wheelchair-user from Malaysia. I completed my Bachelor of Arts in Human Services and Japanese at the University of Canterbury in 2012, and my Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Sociology (First Class) in 2013. Inclusion is not just something I will be studying for this project, but also something I have lived and negotiated on a day-by-day basis as a wheelchair-user and international student in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I invite you to collaborate with me in this exploration of what inclusion means and how it might shape learning and professional practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. Please note that participation in this study is voluntary and you can decide how you would like to be involved in this doctoral project. Participation may include: allowing me access to course material or the LEARN websites related to the course you are teaching; allowing me to attend classroom discussions when you are teaching; or to participate in an individual interview or focus group discussion. As



you will see in the consent form attached to this information sheet, you can choose to participate in either one of the activities in the study, or a combination of the activities listed. If you consent to participate in this research, you also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, I will do my best to remove any of the information you have provided from the study, as long as this can be practically achieved at the time you withdraw. I am committed to sharing my research findings with the team of educators delivering the Master of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn) programme and publishing the results of my research with them. How this can be effectively achieved during the research process will be discussed with the research participants before the research commences.

I will take particular care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. As the research will include focus groups, I will take all appropriate steps to safeguard the confidentiality of those involved and establish protocols of confidentiality at the start of every focus group session. While the major output from this research will be a doctoral thesis; the findings may be submitted for publication to national or international journals, book chapters or presented at major conferences. However, I will take care to ensure your anonymity and you will have the opportunity to withdraw or limit the publication of any of the data relating to you before presentations at conferences or submission of papers or book chapters for publication.

All raw data will be held securely and kept for a minimum period of five years following completion of the project and then destroyed. A copy of the full report or summary of this study will be emailed to you upon request at the email address you provided in the consent form.

If you agree to participate in this case study project, please complete the attached consent form that includes information about what the study entails. Note that you can choose your level of participation in this research. Please return the consent form to me in the envelope provided. Should you have any queries about the study, please feel free to contact me or my supervisors at the contact details below.

The ethical protocols for this research have been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. Complaints may be addressed to The Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics

Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch. Email:  
[human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

Thank you for considering participation in this research. I look forward to embarking on this exploratory journey with you and to what I can learn along the way.

Yours sincerely,

Leechin Heng

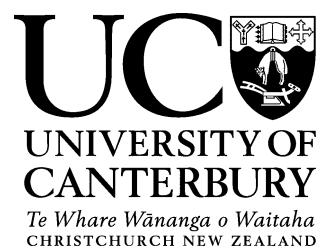
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## Appendix 3: Consent Form for Educators

Telephone: +643 341 1500 ext. 43224

Email: [leechin.heng@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:leechin.heng@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)



*You are invited to participate in the following case study project:*

### *Constructing inclusion*

#### Meaning-making and process in professional education

#### Consent Form for Educators in the MTchgLn programme

I have read the information sheet and understand that this qualitative study will explore how the ideals of inclusive education are constructed, critiqued and negotiated in the Master of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn) programme.

I have had the opportunity to discuss with the Head of the School of Teacher Education and the relevant course coordinators any concerns I have about this project. I have had access to information about the planned research strategies and have had time to assess any potential ethical dilemmas that may arise in this research. As part of the invitation to participate in this project, I have been given the opportunity to have input into how my anonymity and the anonymity of the programme can be protected.

I also understand that:

- If I require further information I can contact the Head of the School of Teacher Education, researcher and PhD Candidate, Leechin Heng and/or her supervisors Associate Professor Missy Morton and Adjunct Associate Professor Rosemary Du Plessis;
- My participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any stage without penalty;
- Should I choose to withdraw, any of the information relating to me from the study will be removed, provided that is practically achievable at that time;
- Any information or opinions I provide will be treated as confidential and any published or reported results will remain anonymous;

- All data collected for this study will be kept in locked and secure facilities at the University of Canterbury and will be destroyed after five years;
- I will receive a report on the findings of this study upon request to the email address provided below; and
- I can contact the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee if I have any complaints about the research.

*Please read the options below and indicate with a tick the specific research activities to which you consent:*

- I understand I can consent to participate in this study in different ways / roles. I consent to participate in this research in my capacity(ies) as .....
- I consent to Leechin Heng having access to documentation related to the course I am teaching in the MTchgLn programme. This is conditional upon the consent of other educators involved in the same course.
- I consent to Leechin Heng attending meetings, where appropriate, of educators delivering the MTchgLn Programme.
- I consent to Leechin Heng attending face-to-face classroom discussions for which I am responsible in this course.
- I consent to Leechin Heng having access to the Learn websites on which I post course material for students related to the course I am teaching.
- I consent to participate in an individual interview or focus group that explores the commitment to integrate inclusivity values into diverse aspects of this teaching and learning programme.\* I understand that participation is not compulsory and that I can decide not to participate in these interviews if my schedule does not permit me to do so.
- I give Leechin Heng permission to share analysis of anonymised data to which I have contributed with all the educators involved in the MTchgLn programme.

- I consent to participate in an individual interview or focus group at the end of the one-calendar year programme to reflect on how inclusivity values were constructed by the stakeholders involved in the delivery of the MTchgLn programme.\* I understand that participation is not compulsory and I may not participate if my schedule does not permit me to do so.

*\* Individual interviews or focus group discussions will be semi-structured and each session will take approximately 30 to 60 minutes. Topics for discussion will be negotiated with participants and, if necessary, any of the educators involved in this study can ask for time to reflect or evaluate questions that arise during the interview/discussion. Interviews and focus groups will be arranged at times and locations mutually agreed upon by Leechin Heng and those who have consented to participate. Interviews will be audio recorded and Leechin Heng will take notes. Interview transcripts and/or summaries will be sent to the interview or focus group participants for review and they can modify or delete material from these documents before it is analysed.*

By signing below, I hereby give my consent to the level of participation I have indicated above.

Full name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email address for interview transcripts and report

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this completed consent form to Leechin Heng in the envelope provided by [Date].**

*This application has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. [human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)*

## Appendix 4: Interview questions for teacher educators

For my PhD I would like to know more about how you construct inclusion:

1) Please can you tell me about the role in you have in the Masters programme?

- [Course code] course developer and lecturer?
- How does your role align with the roles of colleagues?

2) Through teaching this course has your construction of inclusion changed?

- If yes – can you tell me how?
- The co-design and teaching with your colleagues?
- Did your teaching and your students' response to it generate further changes?

3) Please can you give me an example of a teaching strategy that you and your colleagues have used in the course that you may do differently next year?

Prompts:

- Activity in class on campus?
- Preparation before the class?

4) Are there any resources, including articles, that you could recommend for me to use to better appreciate your construction of inclusion and being an inclusive teacher?

Thank you 😊!

## **Appendix 5: Interview guidelines**

Topics for discussion with teacher educators based on classroom observations in the courses in which they were teaching.

The interviews took to form of a discussion about particular observations I had recorded in my fieldnotes on topics related to inclusion. For this reason, each interview had a similar format, but was distinct. I would narrate what I had recorded in my fieldnotes about a particular strategy/activity used in class in which teacher educators were asked to comment on or elaborate:

With respect to a strategy/activity/component of course teaching

- ✓ Can you tell me more about the strategy/activity you used on [date]?
- ✓ What was the strategy/activity intended to achieve?
- ✓ What did you think about the student teachers' response to the strategy/activity?

With respect to a comment or statement made during course teaching

- ✓ Can you elaborate on the statement you articulated on [date]?
- ✓ What did you want to communicate to the student teachers?
- ✓ How did the student teachers respond in ways to what you said?

**Appendix 6: Overview of the Master of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn) programme indicating courses in which observation occurred and interviews with teacher educators conducted**

<b>Course Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>NZQA Level</b>	<b>Points</b>
All student teachers take the following programme courses				
<b>EDMT601</b>	<p>Teaching and Learning in Aotearoa New Zealand</p> <p>Classroom observation: 19 January – 11 February 2015</p> <p>Interview with teacher educators: March 2015</p> <p>Classroom observation: 1 and 11 February 2016</p> <p>Interview with teacher educator: May 2016</p>	Summer (January start)	8	15
<b>EDMT602</b>	<p>Toward Māori Success: Presence, Engagement and Achievement</p> <p>Classroom observation: 23 March – 28 October 2015</p>	Whole year	8	15
<b>EDMT603</b>	<p>Creating Inclusive Learning Environments for Diverse Learners</p> <p>Classroom observation: 18 February – 4 November 2015</p> <p>Interview with teacher educators: November – December 2015</p>	Whole year	8	15



<b>EDMT604</b>	Inquiry and Evidence-based Practice for Inclusive Learning Contexts 1  Classroom observation: 20 March – 12 June 2015	Semester 1	8	30
<b>EDMT605</b>	Inquiry and Evidence-based Practice for Inclusive Learning Contexts 2	Semester 2	9	30
<b>EDMT606</b>	Developing a Teacher-Researcher Stance	Summer (November start)	9	15
Student teachers complete one of the following sequences based on Endorsement area (Primary or Secondary)				
<b>EDMT611</b>	Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment in Primary Contexts 1: Engaging Diverse Learners in NZC	Semester 1	8	30
<b>EDMT612</b>	Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment in Primary Contexts 2: Engaging Diverse Learners in NZC	Semester 2	8	30
<b>OR</b>				
<b>EDMT621</b>	Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment in Secondary Contexts 1: Engaging Diverse Learners in NZC	Semester 1	8	30
<b>EDMT622</b>	Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment in Secondary Contexts 2: Engaging Diverse Learners in NZC and NCEA	Semester 2	8	30

Source: College of Education, University of Canterbury. (2015). Master of teaching and learning (endorsed in Primary or Secondary) (Table 1, pp. 11). Christchurch, New Zealand: Author.

## **Appendix 7: Masters of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn) – Programme focus and conceptual framework**

Source: College of Education. (2015). Master of teaching and learning (endorsed in Primary or Secondary) (pp. 13-20). Christchurch, New Zealand: Author.

### **6 Programme focus**

The Master of Teaching and Learning (MTchgLn) programme is an intensive professional preparation programme comprised of an extended academic year of coursework completed in a calendar year. The qualification provides an opportunity to bring synergy to and make connections between the primary and secondary sectors, while resulting in sector specific endorsements in either Primary or Secondary teaching. The MTchgLn integrates research-informed professional knowledge and evidence-based inquiry with embedded practice-based experiences.

These professional practice experiences will be situated in inclusive learning contexts developed with local partnership schools who serve significant numbers of Māori and diverse learners, including Pasifika youth, students for whom English is a second language, those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds and those who experience special learning needs (Ministry of Education defined ‘priority learners’). Pre-service teachers in the programme will have the opportunity to work in two different Partner School communities, to ensure a variety of experiences across school settings.

The programme is aligned with the New Zealand Teacher Council Graduating Teacher Standards (see Section 11), and graduates will be eligible for professional registration.

### **7 Conceptual framework**

The Master of Teaching and Learning (endorsed Primary or Secondary) is a professional, postgraduate qualification for those who wish to become teachers, and who already hold degree in a disciplinary field appropriate to

teaching and learning in Aotearoa New Zealand. In keeping with the Mission of the UC College of Education, this programme will prepare teacher graduates who are critical pedagogues, and who will be distinguished as beginning teachers by their action competence as professionals with respect to: cultural competence and responsiveness to learners, critical engagement with educational issues, relationships with community, and collaborative ways of working in a variety of professional learning communities. It is expected that the teacher graduates from this programme will also have advanced research-based knowledge, action research and inquiry skills, and integrated understandings and experiences of contemporary educational theory and practice. They will be highly knowledgeable and skilled beginning teachers with the adaptive expertise and dispositions essential to schools in the 21st century, and will meet the requirements to gain New Zealand Teachers Council provisional registration.

The College of Education maintains strong collaborative relationships with the local schools, community groups and the local iwi. In the process of developing the MTchgLn programme, we have consulted widely with UC staff, principals and teachers from our local partner schools, representatives from Ngāi Tahu and members of the local Pasifika community. The conceptual framework for the qualification has been developed through this consultation and consideration of a wide range of research on teaching and learning, education and schooling, and initial teacher education. It draws upon and extends key aspects from the recently developed GradDipTchLn (Primary) conceptual framework, which was a refinement from the BTchLn (Primary) conceptual framework. These previous conceptual frameworks were also developed following extensive consultation internally, within the College of Education and University of Canterbury, and externally, with a variety of stakeholders.

The MTchgLn conceptual framework and the nature of the proposed qualification, take into account the NZ Teachers Council's Approval, Review and Monitoring Processes and Requirements for Initial Teacher Education Programmes (2010), the NZ Teachers Council Registered Teacher Criteria (2010), the Graduating Teacher Standards: Aotearoa New Zealand (2007), the New Zealand Curriculum/ Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (Ministry of Education, 2007), Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners (Ministry of Education, 2011), Best Evidence Synthesis iterations and the Key Competencies in Tertiary Education: Developing a New Zealand Framework (Ministry of Education 2005). The programme conceptual framework is also responsive to the Ministry of Education's criteria for pilot programmes undertaken through the Exemplary Postgraduate Initial Teacher Education Programmes Initiative (2013).

## 7.1 The philosophical and evidence base of the qualification

The MTchgLn programme is grounded in recent research on initial teacher education that has illuminated both effective and promising practices of programme design, knowledge-base, pedagogical practices and implementation (e.g. Ball & Forzani, 2009; Darling-Hammond 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Grossman, 2005; Korthagen, Loughran & Russell, 2006; Loughran, 2013), including digital technologies (Davis, 2010) and building cultural consciousness (Hunt & Macfarlane, 2011).

The programme design is informed by current research and theoretical frameworks on how people learn (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000), and in particular the development of adaptive expertise (Bransford, et.al, 2005; Hatano & Inagaki, 1986), and its implications for teacher learning and preparation (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald and Zeichner, 2005; Korthagen, 2010; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Timperley, 2012). Moreover, the programme is informed by sociocultural and constructivist theories of knowledge and learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzales, 1992; Rogoff, 2003), and takes as the central theory of action the development of a community of practice (Wenger, 1999) as a situated learning context for developing teaching practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Pugach, 2005; Timperley, 2012).

**7.2 Key Principles** The programme is grounded in a set of mutually reinforcing principles that are research-informed, including a range of research by UC staff.

1. Teaching is a complex, learned profession Teaching is a profession that draws upon a number of fields of professional knowledge, understanding and expertise. Teachers need to be able to access, understand and integrate research relating to learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum and to participate in dialogue about these matters in a range of professional contexts. Teaching is complex, dynamic and unpredictable (Fitzsimons & Fenwick, 1997; Davis, 2009; Aitken et al., 2012). Teaching involves multiple roles and interactions, and complex personal and professional decision-making. It is intellectually demanding work that requires the adaptive expertise to remain responsive to student learning needs within these complexities (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Timperley, 2012) Furthermore, learning about teaching is an iterative process, and involves continuously conflicting and competing demands (Korthagen, et al., 2005, Loughran, 2013) and the coevolution of schooling and ITE with

each other in our 21st century bi-cultural nation require the development of adaptive expertise in all those involved (Davis, Eikelmann & Zaka, 2013; Macfarlane, 2004, 2007). The geographical, political, historical, cultural, and social contexts of a nation or community, and the varying learning needs of each student make learning to teach a high level intellectual, cognitive and intrapersonal task, requiring an amalgam of one's sense of identity, personal attributes, and practical and theoretical skills, knowledge and understandings.

2. High quality ITE student education is research-informed and results in more effective classroom teaching. Over the last two decades, research on initial teacher education has led to a more robust understanding of the effective practices of programme design, knowledge-base, pedagogical practices and implementation (e.g. Ball & Forzani, 2009; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Grossman, 2005; Korthagen, et.al., 2006; Loughran, 2013). This research has illuminated such common programme elements as: 1) shared vision of effective teaching; 2) clear standards of performance; 3) curricular coherence; 4) extended clinical experiences; 5) strong school-university relationships; and 6) extensive use of effective pedagogies such as case studies, teacher research, and performance assessments. Research has also shown that such high quality teacher education programmes have a positive effect on the capabilities of graduating teachers (AACTE, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2000, Darling-Hammond et al., 1999; Zeichner, 2003). Such research suggests that graduates of high-quality programmes are beginning teachers who have particular strengths in some aspects of instruction, management, and assessment and are “more integrated and student centred in their thinking about planning, assessment, instruction, management, and reflection” (Castle, Fox & Souder, 2006, p. 78; Whitford, Ruscoe & Fickel, 2000).

3. Teaching is intellectually and emotionally challenging work that demands self-awareness, on-going inquiry, critical thinking and problem solving. Effective teaching involves emotional work and a commitment to the wellbeing of others (Hargreaves et al., 2001, Zembylas, (2003). It involves ‘moral purpose’ - the enhancement of each and every student’s learning and development - and ethical decision-making. Teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, values, feelings and worldviews significantly impact on their classroom practice (Bishop et al., 2007; Fletcher, Parkhill & Gillon, 2010; Snook, 2000). Teacher candidates therefore must become aware of the affective factors that influence their teaching effectiveness. Changing personal beliefs and attitudes is challenging, particularly beliefs about teaching that are grounded in significant personal life experiences as well as experiences with schooling (Lortie, 1975; Tillema, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The processes of learning and enacting the practice of teaching are considered

by Kagan (1992) to be affective at their core: “the practice of classroom teaching remains forever rooted in personality and experience and learning to teach requires a journey into the deeper recesses of one’s self-awareness, where failures, fears, and hopes are hidden” (pp.163-164). Moreover, research has demonstrated the critical importance of teacher engagement in ongoing inquiry in order to enhance practice in ways that increase positive learning outcomes for all students (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007; Davey, Ham, Stopford, Calendar & Mackay, 2011) Engaging in such systematic examination of the ‘problems of practice’ requires teachers to critically analyse classroom learning situations and events, and to review multiple forms of student learning data and information in order to identify alternative learning opportunities and strategies that are responsive to student learning strengths and needs (Fickel, Henderson & Price, 2013; Morton, McMenamin, Moore & Molloy, (2012).

4. Skillful teaching makes a difference in student leaning and development Recent empirical evidence confirms the impact of teachers on students learning (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2009). Effective teachers are those who: are committed to each and every learner in their care; demonstrate they continually adapt teaching practices and teaching supports to meet the needs of individuals; understand and implement research informed effective instructional practices (e.g., Carson, Gillon & Boustead, 2013); and who recognise students as competent; and whose practice is informed by an understanding of the socio-cultural contexts of students’ lives (Tracey & Morrow, 2006; Bishop 2003; Rogoff, 2003). Moreover, effective teachers who make a difference for student learning recognise the reciprocal nature of the teaching and learning relationship, where the educator is also learning from the student and where educators’ practices are informed by the latest research and are both deliberate and reflective. The Māori concept of ako describes this reciprocal teaching/learning relationship. Ako is grounded in the principle of reciprocity and also recognises that the learner and whānau cannot be separated (Ministry of Education, 2008; Macfarlane, 2007).

5. Teaching and learning are situated in diverse socio-cultural and socio-political contexts Educational researchers (Biddulph, Biddulph & Biddulph, 2003; Bishop & Glyn, 1999; Macfarlane, 2007, 2010; Ministry/Ngāi Tahu Partnership, 2005; Te Kete o Aoraki, Ngāi Tahu Development, 2003) have emphasised the importance of the social, cultural and political contexts of teaching, learning and education. The political context of schools and curriculum, the socio-cultural context of the classroom, the variety of beliefs and values of whānau, caregivers and teachers, and the nature of home/school interactions all determine what students learn. These underpinning social and cultural theoretical perspectives require that teachers acknowledge and effectively engage with the diverse cultural,

linguistic, and socio-historical knowledge and strengths of the learners in their care.

6. Effective teachers engage positively and purposefully with the language, identity and cultural background and worldviews of their students and recognise these as strengths and foundations for learning. Within New Zealand, and internationally, many students from lower socio-economic and minority cultural backgrounds can have difficulty engaging with the teaching and learning that typically predominates in schools (Alton-Lee, 2003; Howard & Aleman, 2008). The pedagogical practices and school environment can often reflect the values and beliefs of the mainstream culture (Macfarlane, 2010; Parkhill, Fletcher & Fa'aoi, 2005; Taleni, Parkhill, Fa'aoi & Fletcher, 2007). The former may thus feel alienating and demotivating for students from different cultural backgrounds (Macfarlane, 2007). Teachers play a critical role in developing effective classroom learning environments to support culturally diverse learners (Bishop, 2003; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Greenwood & Wilson, 2006). Culturally responsive pedagogical approaches can positively engage learners' identities, languages, and cultures in ways that improve outcomes for our students. To be successful, pedagogical approaches must be effective and authentic and this requires culturally informed and culturally competent teachers and teacher educators (Fickel, 2005; Macfarlane, 2010; Purdie et al., 2011).

What a teacher values, their attitudes to those forms of cultural capital that their students bring to the classroom learning environments, and how teachers implement their planning and teaching are key issues that influence learning outcomes (Macfarlane, 2007, 2010; Moll et al., 1992). Deficit thinking and theorising about the identities, languages, cultures and learning needs of students by teachers can result in low expectations for achievement, antagonistic and disrespectful relationships, and other barriers to educational success for students (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007; Dudley-Marling & Paugh, 2005; Morton, et.al., 2012) In order for teachers to become culturally competent and responsive, they need to dispel such deficit thinking. To do this teachers must re-examine their own and others' cultural identities, and become skillful at analysing situations that obstruct the realisation of more just and equitable educational opportunities. Teachers must also be challenged to reflect on the power imbalances that may obviate learning, and how they create their own classroom environments through the amount of control and responsibility given to students for their own learning (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson, 2003). Consideration of how teachers can be effective for diverse learners underpins theories of social justice and practice (Howard & Aleman, 2008). The changing demographics within schools have major implications for

how we view equity, student opportunities and social justice for our upcoming generation of citizens.

7. Effective teaching is fundamentally about positive relationships and collaborative engagement with young people, caregivers, families, whānau, aiga, and communities in ways that engender the confidence, trust and respect of those involved. The importance of developing strong relationships with young people and their caregivers, families, whānau, aiga, and communities is highlighted as a demonstrable change in practice to improve learning outcomes for all students (Biddulph, et al., 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Hattie, 2009; MacCartney & Morton, 2013; Macfarlane, 2010). Young people who have positive, supportive relationships with teachers are more engaged learners and have stronger educational outcomes (Bishop et al., 2009; Nuthall, 2002; Hattie, 2009). Effective home-school partnerships and parents' involvement in their child's education are critical, as meta-analysis research has shown that parental involvement in students' academic achievement has a notable effect size on achievement (Hattie, 2009). Partnerships between home and school are more likely to be effective when they are based on shared expectations between teachers and parents that the student will succeed as a learner (Biddulph et al., 2003). Absolum (2006) suggests that building a partnership with parents is about building a sound trusting relationship amongst the teacher, the student and the student's family. Furthermore, with the growing cultural diversity of students within our New Zealand classrooms and therefore parents from many diverse ethnic groups, there is a challenge for teachers to uncover appropriate ways to help all parents understand how they can support their children's learning (Fletcher, 2009).

8. Effective teachers engage in professional learning communities that include colleagues locally, nationally and internationally. Learning is socially and culturally mediated and situated within a range of contexts (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003). It is strengthened when teachers collaborate and work together as practitioners (CochranSmith & Lytle, 1993; Morton & McMenamin, 2011). The development of communities of practice helps break down the traditional isolation that had been evident in teacher's work in their classrooms (Loewenberg, Ball & Cohen, 1999). Research has demonstrated that teachers are better able to sustain their professional growth and implement ongoing reform if their school context manifests features of professional learning communities (Ewing, 2002; McLaughlin, 1997; Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton & Kleiner, 2000). Communities of practice are powerful contexts for engaging in collaborative and reciprocal professional relationships that bring collective focus and shared responsibility to the work of resolving problems of practice that enhance learning for students. Such communities can be



effectively supported and expanded by the high-quality use of digital technologies (Fickel & Chesbro, 2010; Mackey & Evans, 2011).

Moreover, Pugach (2005) and others (Mule, 2006; Sim, 2006) in the field of education argue that the concept of communities of practice be extended to those learning to teach (i.e. student teachers, teacher candidates and pre-service interns) during their professional learning experiences in schools. Such communities of practice provide high-quality professional learning environments and opportunities where pre-service teachers can acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions to develop the adaptive expertise needed to successfully navigate the complex challenges of the classroom. It is therefore crucial that beginning teachers learn how to participate in such communities as part of their in pre-service teacher education.

Wenger (1998) argues that communities of practice coalesce around a shared concern or purpose, and describes four main aspects to their development: building relationships, making some work public, making meaningful connections between the learning community and local settings, and making meaningful connections between the community and the wider-world. Collaboration in a learning community assumes an active interest in immediate contexts and through engagement in joint problem posing, problem-solving and approaches to shared challenges and concerns, the community positively influences the wider context. Working collaboratively relates closely to the Māori concept of *whakawhānaungatanga*, which can be described as the commitment whānau members (and groups of people with a common goal) have to each other. Bishop et.al. (2003) describe *whakawhānaungatanga* as a metaphor for building family-type relationships through working collaboratively.

### 7.3 Programme Cohesion

The research on teacher education has demonstrated that strong, effective teacher education programmes share a set of common characteristics, including cohesion around a set of centralising principles, frameworks, and shared visions of effective teaching. These are used to purposefully design the curriculum content, learning processes and learning contexts (see Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). The MTchgLn programme has been developed with these design principles in mind.

#### Shared Vision

Effective teachers make a discernible difference in student learning and development, and, to make that difference, demonstrate a sense of agency and responsibility regarding their skills and abilities (Alton-Lee, 2003;

Hattie, 2009, 2002, 2003). Being an effective teacher requires self-awareness, ongoing inquiry, critical thinking and problem solving (Bishop, et.al., 2007; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Snook, 2000).

Teachers graduating from this programme will be defined by their professional dispositions and skills around four core values that reflect our shared vision of highly effective teachers:

1) Intellectual Rigour and Scholarship—Teacher graduates examine diverse perspectives, engage in research and scholarship, contribute to knowledge and practice, and adaptively enact evidence-based and data-informed pedagogical innovations in face-to-face and e-learning contexts. They are:

- able to take the perspective of others
- adaptable and flexible
- critically reflective thinkers
- take initiative
- innovative
- imaginative

2) Leadership of Learning—Teacher graduates have a sense of agency and are proactive leaders who take responsibility for creating culturally responsive, inclusive and engaging learning contexts that enable each student to meet the learning outcomes of the New Zealand Curriculum, as well as the broader educational aspirations of their families, whānau, hapū, iwi, aiga, and communities. They have:

- a sense of moral purpose and well-articulated philosophy of teaching and learning
- skill in dealing with complexity and uncertainty
- grit and perseverance
- agency and take responsibility

3) Commitment to Inclusiveness and Equity—Teacher graduates advocate for and skillfully develop learning communities that advance knowledge and understanding, and ensure the inclusion, support, and development of students' identities, abilities, cultural worldviews, values, ideas, languages, and expressions. They:

- view diversity as a strength, rather than a “problem” to be managed
- have sensitivity and compassion (aroha)

- are tolerant (rangimarie)
- are respectful
- are fair

4) Collaboration and Partnership—Teacher graduates initiate, seek out, and support collaborative relationships and partnerships with their students, families, whānau, hapū, iwi, aiga, and community, and other health and education professionals. They have:

- positive attitudes toward children and their families
- trustworthiness
- discretion
- enthusiasm and vitality
- honesty
- reliability

#### Centralising Constructs

Two frameworks form those centralising constructs, which inform the purposeful design of a coherent and integrated approach to the curriculum content, learning processes and learning context for the programme. The use of these constructs is supported by the evidence-based findings from current research on key design features of high-quality initial teacher education programmes (Darling-Hammond, 2005). As organising constructs, they support the intentional interweaving of the three learning strands of this programme: research-informed knowledge in curriculum and pedagogy, evidence-based inquiry into practice, and embedded professional learning experiences.

The first framework is drawn from Feiman-Nemser's (2001) conceptualisation of a continuum of teacher learning - from preparation to practice. She argued the delineation of the "central tasks" of key phases of teacher professional growth enabled the design and delivery of programmes that would more consistently engage teachers in the sort of rigorous and complex learning that resulted in more effective outcomes for students.

The key tasks identified for initial teacher education programmes are:

- analysing one's own beliefs and forming new visions and a professional stance;
- developing subject matter for teaching;
- developing understandings of diverse learners and learning;
- development of a repertoire of effective practice; and
- developing the tools to study teaching.

The second framework we have used to inform the design of this programme is a set of learning principles derived by Timperley (2012) from a synthesis of the research in the areas of initial teacher education, teacher learning and development, and current theories of learning. Her proposition is that these five principles can serve as an organising construct for designing opportunities for “learning to practice” for the development of adaptive expertise.

- Principle 1: Develop knowledge of practice through actively constructing conceptual frameworks
- Principle 2: Systematically build formal theories of practice by engaging everyday theories
- Principle 3: Promote meta-cognition, co- and self-regulated learning
- Principle 4: Integrate cognition, emotion and motivation
- Principle 5: Situate learning in carefully constructed learning communities.

### Learning Contexts & Processes

#### *Community of Practice*

Digital technologies are deeply embedded to serve this programme and situate the pre-service teachers in learning strategies that are relevant to the contemporary learning environments that are evolving rapidly in Aotearoa New Zealand, including the networked schools of the Canterbury region rebuild. The programme is designed to engage pre-service teachers in a community of practice that is situated in a careful blend of physical and virtual spaces. The pre-service teachers will be members of a learning community led by teacher educators and collaborating mentor teachers who support their learning and assist them through coaching to become fully engaged participants in the community. In this way, the pre-service teachers develop their teaching practice in an authentic community of practice, culminating in their taking on a central role as practitioner researchers, which involves gathering and interpreting high-quality evidence on their teaching practice relating to effects on student learning.

In support of the development of the community of practice, the structure of the courses will be designed as “flipped classrooms.” This is a pedagogical practice often used to support contemporary learning environments where didactic delivery of 'content' will be provided through media, including online Learn (Moodle) courses and e-library readings and multimedia, that pre-service teachers can access individually and asynchronously at their own pace.

### *Iterative use of Core Conceptual Frameworks*

In keeping with the “learning to practice” principles underpinning the programme (Timperley, 2012), the following conceptual frameworks will be used as anchoring constructs within the courses that allow for reiterative reflection and self-assessment by pre-service teachers of their growth and development toward effective practice:

- Educultural Wheel (A. Macfarlane, 2004)
- Te Pikinga ki Runga (S. Macfarlane, 2008)
- Te Kotahitanga Effective Teaching Profile (Bishop & Berryman, 2009)
- Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners (Ministry of Education, 2011)
- Inclusive Schools Framework - What Inclusive Schools Look Like (Ministry of Education, 2012)

The coursework will also include pre-service teacher engagement with key Ministry of Education documents including:

- Ka Hikitia, Accelerating Success 2013-2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013)
- Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013)
- Success for All: Every School, Every Child (Ministry of Education, nd)
- New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007)

### *Embedded Professional Practice Experiences*

This programme has been designed to embed professional experiences in classrooms and schools across the year and within the framework of the courses.

Having on-going, workplace-embedded professional learning experiences, in tandem with course-based instruction, provides the pre-service teachers with an array of practice-based experiences, involving particular groups of learners, that help the pre-service teachers to contextualise their learning. They will engage with theoretical models and frameworks in order to examine their own ‘puzzles and problems of practice’ in ways that will directly address the learning strengths and needs of the students they are working with. Moreover, by sharing these individual ‘cases of practice’ within the community of practice, they are also able to consider the different ways that the models and frameworks may guide teaching and learning in various contexts, thus strengthening the likelihood of being able to transfer

this knowledge and understanding to future teaching-learning situations and novel contexts. Pre-service teachers will work closely with teachers and learners in two different Partner School settings during the academic year. In each semester the pre-service teachers will spend the majority of their embedded professional experiences working with the staff at the school. These learning opportunities will be co-designed and co-led by university and school staff.

### *Assessments and Structured*

**Teacher e-Portfolio** An array of learning tasks and connected assessments underpin the courses in such a way as to draw together the pre-service teachers' learning across the contexts of the coursework and the embedded professional practice experiences. They are designed to enable pre-service teachers to critically engage with representations, decompositions, and approximations of teaching practice (Grossman, et.al. 2009), using research-informed frameworks as analytic tools. These include: research-based pedagogies, such as case studies; opportunities for 'rehearsals'; examination and analysis of student learning using a variety of assessment forms and data. The course assessments explicitly support the on-going inquiry process into practice, and resulting professional learning will be developed and documented in a Structured Teacher e-portfolio. The e-portfolio is a structured inquiry and professional learning process that explicitly engages pre-service teachers in examining the effects of their teaching practice on student learning and outcomes from units of study. Drawing on assessments from January summer, semester 1, semester 2 and whole-year courses, the structured e-portfolio is systematically organised and critically reflected on by pre-service teachers in the Inquiry courses. This iterative use of the inquiry and structured e-portfolio process affords pre-service teachers opportunities for engaging in systematic self-reflections on their learning and growth toward effective teaching practice, and will serve as one form of evidence for determining course and programme completion.

## Afterword

The preface on page xiii and the afterword are added to this thesis after the oral examination in response to the examiners' comments about the thesis and inclusive education that have made significance contribution to the thesis. I have also published various parts of the thesis to various journals, as well as a book chapter, since the thesis submission. This afterword includes some of the newer literature that I have been recommended to read by blind peer-reviewers and potentially to include in my publications. The afterword consists of two sections. The first section presents reflections and responses of the thesis with regards to comments and questions posed by the primary examiner. The second section presents my views and responses towards inclusive education, as well as reflections of the thesis and research process generated by the secondary examiner.

### **Responses to comments and questions posed by the primary examiner**

With regards to my concluding tentative theory of the study, as I have noted in Chapter 4, the research inquiry expanded from looking at how teacher educators model inclusive practices to the constraints and possibilities, of what they achieve, within the space provided by the Ministry of Education (MoE). I investigated ways in which teacher educators were working to discern and put to practice different ways of thinking about inclusion with student teachers, while exposing them to inequalities underlying existing teaching practices. In the process, I explored how teacher educators were

‘working the space’ to challenge dominant assumptions of inclusive education as pursuits that ensure all students have equal access to succeed in what is dominantly considered as ideal in the education system. At the same time, I analysed teacher educators’ attempts at encouraging emergent teachers to engage in the intervening space of making education more inclusive through situating students’ learning outcomes and sociocultural contexts at the centre of teaching and learning.

As I have noted in the preface of the thesis, I was drawn to critical discourse analysis (CDA) because of how it has spoken to my personal worldview that there is no meaning outside of discourses. I was further drawn to Gee’s (2015) theorising that in language, “there are important connections among saying (informing), doing (action), and being (identity)” and “to understand anything fully you need to know *who* is saying it and *what* the person saying it is trying to do” (p. 2). The framework of “saying, doing, and being” coherently conceptualised the understandings generated from the inquiry process of the new ITE programme’s attempts to achieve what it *says* (via text documents), *do* (via classroom observations) to *be* (via classroom observations and interviews with teacher educators) in the intervening space of resulting in emergent teachers who will be inclusive teachers. Bhabha (2012) states that “being in the ‘beyond’ then, is to inhabit an intervening space” and that “the intervening space ‘beyond’, becomes a space of intervention in the here and now” (p. 10). The conceptual framework reflects what teacher educators were trying to *achieve*, through the space of the new ITE programme, to intervene in the ongoing disparity in student



performances in the here and now of what they *say* and *do*. The conceptual framework further aligns with what I have noted in Chapter 3, drawing from Freire's (2000) and Williams's (as cited in Gee, 2015) statements, that consider human beings – in this study, teacher educators – as agents with the ability to both reflect on and create the history that makes them.

I began the study through looking at the documents, debates and responses from the MoE and the programme's course developers about "what student teachers need to know," and "what course developers need to include in their ITE programmes." Next I proceeded to classroom observations to understand what teacher educators *do* in the classes, and conducted interviews with them at the completion of the classes observed to further understand and clarify teacher educators' intentions of doing what they *did*. Through the classroom observations conducted in 2015, I began to gain a deeper insight of the underlying constraints and imagined possibilities of what inclusive education might mean. This was why in Chapter 7, which focuses on *being*, I have drawn on data taken from classroom observations made in 2016. My focus on these classroom observations was to strengthen the research inquiry with respect to how teacher educators were 'working the space' to encourage student teachers to understand the importance of teaching for social justice.

Through exposing student teachers to the importance of teaching for social consciousness, the programme moved the dominance of "how to include

particular groups of students” in traditional ITE programmes to unravel the perpetuation of systemic inequitable practices within the education system. Consequently, the programme illustrates how it uses the space provided by the MoE to develop what Bhabha (2012) refers to as the ‘third space’ or to locate “moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences” (p. 2). That is, to interweave and negotiate different cultural, linguistic and cognitive perspectives, rather than negate dominant ideas and practices, into the development and facilitation of this new ITE programme.

My tentative conclusion theory of the study is that teaching for social justice is a journey that requires teacher educators and student teachers to *be* in an intervening space of the beyond, through conscious examination of what they *say* and *do*, to achieve the imagined possibilities of making schooling more inclusive. The study has illustrated how teacher educators are taking the responsibility, as Bhabha (2012) puts it, to bring to light the “unspoken, unrepresented pasts” (p. 18) that influence and impact ongoing disparities in student outcomes. At the same time, teacher educators are encouraging student teachers to imagine, or what Bhabha describes as “to touch the beyond on its hither side” (2012, p. 26). That is, to encourage in student teachers to situate students’ learning outcomes at the centre of teaching and learning, as they locate and strengthen their own identities as inclusive teachers.

Nevertheless, as the two counter examples I have chosen below illustrate, there were times when the teaching (or learning) did not go according to what teacher educators have planned prior to their classes. The amount of data gathered and generated from the inquiry process was massive. One of the themes generated from the analysis process was:

- What are the implications and challenges of putting articulations to practice for teacher educators?
  - Institutional challenges
  - Response of the preservice teachers

There were two examples from my individual interview with Margaret which depicted the complexities of what teacher educators intended for the programme, and the actual delivery or response of what were intended.

Brigid had started the class off on a way of thinking and challenging student teachers' thinking and moving them to reflect about themselves that when I came in with what we had pre-determined, it just went clunk, it did not fit. Therefore, I had to go away that night and I had to reconsider completely what I was going to do the next day and think how do we make this relevant and meaningful. Not for what I wanted to do but from where the student teachers were at and how do we be responsive to that position of the student teachers and work from that. So, it was a rapid re-think, completely turning things on its head (Interview, 12 March 2015).

I noted in the thesis that the programme attempted to interweave multiple disciplines and backgrounds into a single class. The statements above illustrated the challenges and implications teacher educators are faced with, when what they have planned did not go in the way they have intended. It also depicted the toll of facilitating ITE programmes in which teacher educators do not only have to be conscious of what they have intended, and

facilitated, are making sense to student teachers. They also have to be adaptive in modifying what they have planned to do through different approaches, in order to get what they have intended across to student teachers in ways that are relevant to their learning.

The second example that emerged from Margaret's interview was the time constraint of a four-week introductory course. During the interview, Margaret explained about a theoretical concept in which she had highlighted to the student teachers that was intended at inclusion in which they were encouraged to understand the importance for teachers to fit their classrooms to the needs of the students, rather than expect their students to fit themselves to their educational settings. However, Margaret said:

The student teachers got that wrong because when I read their assignment, they thought the concept refers to the child having to fit in but it's actually, the schools have to fit in with the child (Interview, 12 March 2015).

However, as Margaret said:

It is an issue of the nature of having a block course...when you have a week by week sort of programme, you might meet two or three times a week, there is a bit of time for reflection and consolidation in-between for readings (Interview, 12 March 2015).

The statements above illustrated two challenges which teacher educators need to be faced with in their teaching. The first is the difficulty of highlighting to student teachers concepts that are counter their prior assumptions or the traditional practice of assimilating students to the classroom culture, rather than to discern and situate students' learning outcomes at the centre of teaching and learning. The second challenge is

when teacher educators have to effect, or put into practice, what they have intended for student teachers to know, within the timeframe, or the space in which they were allocated within the programme.

The two examples above from Margaret illustrate the challenges and frustrations of facilitating an ITE programme which is not always smooth and consistent with initial planning. The data adds to our understandings that as much as teacher educators have planned for how they are going to ‘work the space’ in their classes, they always have to address the fact that what they have intended may not always achieve its means, even to the extent of producing completely contradictory outcomes.

However, along with the recommendations for future research I have noted in Chapter 8, my suggestions for a follow up study is to observe how graduate teachers of the MTchgLn programme (upon approval from these potential graduate teachers as participants for the follow-up study) are able to put the inclusive values and practices they have been exposed to in this programme to work in their school settings. As I have noted in the findings chapters and literature from several educationalists (see Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Izadinia, 2014; Rice, Newberry, Whiting, Cutri, & Pinnegar, 2015; Swennen, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2008; Timmerman, 2009), the extent to which student teachers will be able to put into practice what the programme has encouraged them to do is largely dependent on the institutional cultures of the schools in which they will be situated. Follow-

up studies, therefore, can only be taken as examples of case studies rather than as representation of how well the programme has achieved its aim of resulting in emergent teachers.

As I note on page 249 through Lucy's statements, the agency that teacher educators and student teachers have outside of the university settings reverberates throughout a teaching practitioner's career. Kohli, Lin, Ha, Jose, and Shini (2019) highlight how teaching for critical consciousness is not an end in itself at the successful completion of ITE programmes, but a means to an ongoing journey achievable only through continued engagement with students and the classroom context. Even so, insights gained from follow-up studies will be of value to ITE course developers and teacher educators for them to better prepare emergent teachers of the varied settings they will be going out to teach. At the same time, it illustrates to student teachers how they are to negotiate and put to work what they have learned at university classrooms to wider school settings.

Additionally, I have noted in Chapter 8 how the study would be of interests to other professional education providers, such as human services, social work and counselling, as they attempt to make their programmes, as well as to result in students, to be more conscious and responsive of the sociocultural contexts of their clients. Readers – this includes service providers as well as service users – from these fields may benefit from a

wider analysis of the issues their clients are facing and the sociocultural, historical, political and economic contexts that frame these issues.

Also, issues pertaining to the constraints and possibilities of confronting accepted institutional practices in the workplace, may be of interest to readers outside the field of teaching and learning. In what Bhabha (2012) refers to as “the difference of the same” (p. 33), he considers any issue that requires to be solved, can lead to the emergence of the ‘third space’. In other words, efforts directed at effecting change opens up a space for social actors to intervene in the beyond and put imagined possibilities to work. The reflexive stance of CDA that underpins this study may be useful for readers to discern and exercise their own agency amid the constraints of their practices working within/under the constraints of outcome-oriented institutions channelled towards the benefit of neoliberal policies and self-maximisation

### **Responses to comments and questions posed by the secondary examiner**

Inclusive education is often simplistically conceptualised as a pursuit of enabling all students to perform well academically (often in what is dominantly established as ideal skills and knowledge, as with the case of United Nations’s Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015a) agenda, which will be discussed later on page 250). Literature and studies in inclusive education have at times become trite in its arguments, or debates, on:

- 1) Critiquing social phenomenon i.e., personal trouble vs social issues; medical model vs social model; or
- 2) Explicating from “why” to “how to include” students historically disadvantaged or marginalised in the education system with equal opportunities to partake and succeed in skills and knowledge channelled towards benefiting those in the dominant – white, middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied – culture; and economic advancement of the nation.

Inclusive education articulates with CDA in Rogers et al. (2016) has stressed to be an over-representation of the critiquing in CDA studies. Furthermore, CDA reinforces inclusive education’s attempts to not only to critique, but also discern emergent practices (Fairclough, 2010) on integrating students who have previously been in special schools to mainstream settings. Both discourses are directed at confronting the status quo that has marginalised students historically disadvantaged in the education system. Zembylas (in press) states how inclusive education has now become intertwined and accepted to be a universal human right.

Additionally, Bhabha (2012) asks if the “‘new’ languages of theoretical critique ... [or] is the language of theory merely another power ploy of the culturally privileged Western elite the location of culture to produce a discourse of the Other that reinforces its own power–knowledge equation?” (p. 30). CDA aligns with inclusive education in its attempt to challenge unfair practices made on those identified as the “other.” As Burr states, discourses validate those who have been considered as to deviate from the



norm to be treated as different or as inferior. To this, CDA aligns with inclusive education in its attempt to confront prevailing ideas that construct students as “other” and the unfair practices that have been permitted to be done to these students. This results in attempts, or the discovery of techniques, directed at assimilating those labelled as “others” to the ways of being and knowing of those dominantly considered as normal, and thus superior.

However, CDA transgresses from existing inclusive education literature in its potential to complicate what is dominantly considered as the norm, and to challenge ethical assumptions underlying efforts or techniques developed to assimilate those labelled as “others” to those of the dominant “norm.” Moreover, CDA directs our consciousness to the slippage between the articulation and practice in policies, to discern and think about how inclusion can be achieved through opportunities that emerge from successive educational reforms and initiatives.

As Bhabha (2012) states, the language of critique opens up a space for the construction that is “*neither the one nor the other ... and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics*” (p. 37, emphasis in original). CDA urges its researchers to explore beyond binary discourses such as special vs inclusive education, or postcolonial vs. imperialism, as it recognise the importance of negotiation, rather than negation, in the intervening space of making schooling inclusive to the different and shifting needs of all students.

‘Working the space’ in this thesis illustrates the recognisance from teacher educators that inclusion is always “efforts that are in progress.” Throughout the findings chapters, I noted teacher educators’ attempt in letting student teachers understand that they will be faced with policies and practices that may challenge and impede their attempts at making schooling inclusive. Particularly, in Chapter 6 and 7, I noted how teacher educators have highlighted to student teachers the importance of locating emergent spaces where they can make a difference, and ‘working the space’ is not only directed at how teacher educators are influencing emergent teachers to be more inclusive when they go out to teach, but to let student teachers know that they, the student teachers, are also ‘working the space’ to make their classroom more inclusive to all their students.

The agency which teacher educators and student teachers have outside of the university settings is further illustrated at my interview with Lucy, who articulated that of all the jobs she has had, being a teacher educator provided her the best space to effect change. Lucy indicates in her statements (below) the potential impact she can make, through her students (who will be teachers to other students), to make learning more inclusive to wider groups of students:

If I do my job really well, I can impact on maybe thousands of students [or student teachers] by making little, subtle changes in the thoughts of the students that are going to be good teachers (Interview, 16 December 2015).

During our interview, Lucy communicated a conversation she has had with some student teachers she has taught five years ago where they said to her that: “I will always remember what you have said in class.” This led Lucy to think about the saying ‘monkey on my shoulder.’ Lucy conceptualised her role as a little monkey on her students’ shoulders who is constantly reminding them to the importance of situating learning outcomes that are relevant to their students’ interests. I noted in Chapter 7 how Brigid highlighted to student teachers that even if they may find themselves working in a schooling environment that is contradictory to the inclusive values they have been exposed to in the programme, there will always be room where they can make subtle changes to make their classrooms more inclusive. Lucy’s statements (above) indicate that the impact teacher educators and emergent teachers have outside of the university settings is one that develops and scatters over time and place.

With reference to the extent in which inclusive education has become an unwitting tool of neoliberalism, within the broad agenda of the United Nation’s (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 17 areas were identified that requires:

Call for action by all countries - poor, rich and middle-income - to promote prosperity...[and] recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, equality and job opportunities (UN, 2015a).

In the fourth call for action, “Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All,” the UN identified that:

More than half of children and adolescents worldwide are not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics. Refocused efforts are needed to improve the quality of education. Disparities in education along the lines of gender, urban-rural location and other dimensions still run deep (UN, 2015b).

Even though the MoE’s RFA is published in 2013, and the SDGs two years later in 2015, the RFA intersects with SDGs’ agenda in its aims to advance the economic prosperity of the country, through addressing ongoing disparities in educational outcomes, especially among students identified as “priority learners.”

Ahmed (2007) states that diversity and equality have come to be taken up as expressions of commitments in which institutional performances are measured. Yet as Sara Ahmed highlights, commitment relies on other actions, or on what is done ‘with it,’ in order for the commitment to take effect. This reflects the MoE’s (2013) RFA. The core of the MoE’s requests illustrate their expression of commitment, as a country that is committed to ensuring that all students, including those identified as different from the norm, have equal opportunities to contribute the advancement of the economy. ITE providers are expected to fulfil this commitment through what Ahmed refers to as ‘good practice’. The RFA is an expression of commitment from the education system to diversity

and equality. And, ITE providers are requested to act on and result in emergent teachers who will be able uphold this commitment.

Morgado, Cortes-Vega, Lopez-Gavira, Alvarez and Morina (2016) describe inclusion as implementations which ensure that students identified as 'priority learners' are continually 'nurtured' to pursue and succeed in what is desired by neoliberal policies. They argue that to include is to mainstream. Ahmed (2007) argues how diversity is increasingly perceived as a human resource. Inclusive education, in this perspective, serves both economic and moral value. While educational policies and schooling practices may emphasise on expanding inclusive education to include more and more groups of students identified as "different" into mainstream education, yet what constitutes as achievement and inclusive, often remain unquestioned.

Nevertheless, inclusive education is becoming increasingly prominent in Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ). The Focus Prize for the 2018 Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards was given in recognition of those who have made an outstanding contribution to inclusive practices in teaching and learning (MoE, 2017). However, definitions as to what "inclusion" refers to in schooling practices, are yet unclear. One such example is New Zealand's "Success For All – Every School, Every Child" initiative which was launched in 2010. The initiative was intended to support schools to develop a more inclusive education system to meet the needs of ALL children.

However, in a press statement from the then Associate Minister of Education, it states that funding allocation will be made:

...to upgrade existing special schools and satellite units, and create new satellites around the country...schools will work with the Ministry of Education to determine the best solution that will optimise students' integration and learning in a mainstream setting. In most cases this will mean expanding satellites units or establishing new ones (Associate Minister of Education, 2011, para. 1 & 4).

Further ahead, in 2013, the Education Review Office (ERO) reported that 77% of primary schools in Aotearoa NZ were mostly inclusive (ERO, 2013). However, as McMaster (2014) argues, ERO's definition of "inclusion" is based on the integration of students with special educational needs with "no consensus of what an inclusive model looks like and hence nothing to actually measure practices against" (McMaster, 2014, p. 32). The statement from the Associate Minister of Education, as well as McMaster's (2014) argument, illustrate that what is defined as inclusive, as well as "success for all," continues to be framed along the literature that I have noted in Chapter 2. That is, the physical integration of students who were previously located in special schools to mainstream settings which lacks a wider understanding of the sociocultural and academic needs of students identified as "priority learners."

Ballard (1997) states that New Zealand political reforms in the 1980s led to the disbandment of central government's Department of Education and its 10 regional Education Boards. As a result of the reform, through the New Zealand Education Act 1989, responsibilities involved in the running of

schools shifted from central government to the schools governed by parent-based boards progressively led to education policies in New Zealand that focused on schools as service providers, which not only fostered the value of consumer choice and competition between schools, but also encouraged the use of management and marketing strategies and practices to run schools like commercial enterprises.

Some educationalists in Aotearoa NZ (see Kearney & Kane, 2006; Ballard, 1997, 1998; Wills, 2006) thus argue that the values and practices of inclusive education are difficult to sustain in Aotearoa NZ. This is because schools are under pressure to maintain a high level of academic outcomes in student performances in order to attract families to enrol their children to the schools. Such pressure invariably affects the acceptance of students identified as underachievers, or priority learners, by their local schools for fear of lowering the overall academic outcomes of their schools.

The surprises, or what I would refer to as transformations, that I have gained in this research journey are many. As I have noted in the preface and in Chapter 4, when I began the study, I started from the focus of observing “how teacher educators model inclusion.” Yet as the classroom observations progresses, my attention of the study has expanded to the challenges of not only “producing a teacher” but also one that is both conscious of inequalities in existing institutional/teaching practices and adaptive/responsive to the individual needs of their students. The expansion to my observation lens in

many ways fill the gap in which I have felt in some existing social sciences research that illustrate knowledge through critiquing social phenomenon, explicating on why we need to make education inclusive, but with little emphasis on how we can make it different, that is, it lacks the imagination of how things can be different.

The critical consciousness component illustrates how this programme is doing “more than” what previous studies or research in more traditional teacher education or inclusive education have talked about, in the way it does not only tell us the “how to” but also attempts to develop and encourage emergent teachers to be conscious of the shifting sociocultural and political contexts in which discourses emerge. At the same time, the programme exposes student teachers to the ways which classroom students are constructed, framed through different sociocultural, historical, political, economic contexts channelled to benefit those in the dominant – white, middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied – culture.

There were many “ah ha” moments during the classroom observations of what teacher educators were trying to *achieve*, through what they *said* and *did*. An example is Robin’s question to the class on the third day of the programme (as noted in Chapter 6). The surprise was not only in what Robin *said* (the question), but what he has intended to *achieve* through what he *did* on the third day of the programme when student teachers were happily picturing themselves saving students (akin to the Hollywood movies they



have watched). It actually made my heart skipped a beat when I heard the question because Robin created “an elephant in the room” situation that challenged student teachers to silently reflect on, because none of them responded to his question, their intentions of wanting to become teachers.

The biggest transformation I experienced in this research journey, as I have discussed in the preface, is my “attitude” towards schooling. Having been barred from the four walls of former education has always left a big hole in my heart. However, through the research journey, my perceptions of schooling have changed from “the grass is always greener on the other side” to being relieved to have *escaped* the potential *harm* I may sustain as a deviant “other” in the orderly world of schooling. The research journey has along the way, become not just a process in which I have to go through to be doctored, but the beginning of a life agenda of bringing to light the presence of those who have been kept in the shadows.

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