

The Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe (CiCe) Thematic Network links 28 European states and some 80 universities and college departments which are engaged in educating students about how children and young people learn about and understand their society, their identity and citizenship.

A cross-disciplinary group, we include lecturers in social psychology, pedagogy, psychology, sociology and curriculum studies, and those who educate various professions such as teachers, social pedagogues, psychologists, early childhood workers and youth workers.

Citizenship Education and the Inclusion of Vulnerable Young People

Richard Etienne, Suzanne Parkinson, Hugo Verkest

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Guidelines

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Citizenship Education and the Inclusion of Vulnerable Young People

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Citizenship Education and the Inclusion of Vulnerable Young People

Why?

These guidelines aim to facilitate citizenship education for the teachers of vulnerable young people who will become full citizens when they become adult. They are based on the declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It is unjust to exclude children from education because they have learning difficulties or behavioural difficulties. The reverse should be the case: these children should progress through critical situations and overcome their difficulties through practices based on research and training.

Our analysis of contemporary practice in our countries will contribute to reaching and including young vulnerable people. Our information is divided into three main fields:

- education policy, whether this is by the state, regional government or local authority: the values of society are asserted and defined through policy,
- education practices vary within an area, and this may create gaps between policies and practices,
- anticipating the education needs of young vulnerable children has implications for teachers' training, school equipment, school care policy, care organisation and co-ordination.

Vulnerable young people in Europe tend not to be a focus of interest: some countries provide 'special education' for those with special needs. Children that drop out are only given a basic education. In other countries some efforts are being made to develop a two-fold policy of social inclusion that:

- welcomes them into ordinary schools
- is adaptive, with well-trained staff to integrate students.

1. Awareness raising

Detecting the vulnerabilities of developing young children is difficult. Parents may pay little attention to difficulties in adaptation to learn and live in the community. Preschool may give an opportunity to note difficulties in behaviour and learning before it is too late.

The first step to include vulnerable young people is through contacts with the family and the kindergarten/infant school staff. Awareness leads to improved diagnosis through observation and discussion with parents.

2. Providing and facilitating a role model encourages reflection and critical thinking

Standardisation has for three centuries made people suspicious of differences from the norm, considering this as abnormal. Difficulties or peculiarities are seen as a fault requiring 'special' education: this represented a form of progress at the beginning of 20th century. The aim today is more difficult; to integrate or include vulnerable young people whatever their difficulties - in learning, behaviour or due to handicap.

3. Models of working: teachers build their methods on a basic framework

Teaching can be innovative and creative. The inclusion of vulnerable young people requires teachers to develop teaching methods and find ways to bridge the gap. Such improvements will benefit everybody. Teachers need to set up their own methods related to students and the class.

4. Ecological models: a partnership with teachers, parents, educators and others

Including vulnerable young people requires partnerships in diagnosis and solution finding. This partnership of teachers, parents, educators and other staff needs to develop. The skills for partnerships are not yet evident in all European countries, but once established the whole system will be improved.

Parents have the legal right to seek mainstream provision and schooling for their disabled child, supported by additional appropriate services. New insights and laws require services and professionals to work in partnership with parents to assess individual children's needs for appropriate services. New ecological models now include the space to cultivate creative dimensions in art, drama and sport.

The details of a child's individual statement will start with the child's specific learning difficulties and how he or she functions, including strengths and weaknesses. It will then detail the kind of help that will be appropriate for these learning needs and how this will help. Finally it should identify the facilities and resources from higher education or industry that should, ideally, be available for the child.

Careful observations and records make a positive contribution to this assessment. Carers and teachers need to contribute honest descriptions, and a well-rounded picture of the individual child: what they can do and their strengths, not just what they find difficult. Home and parental encouragement is widely acknowledged to be of major importance in influencing academic motivation, though the relationship is complex.

Teachers have two very important tasks in making learning effective:

- to be alert to a particular pupil's learning problems being due to an underlying special educational need that needs to be identified: in such cases an assessment will be required, often involving an educational psychologist
- to be involved in the school's programme for special educational needs: this may require developing new skills, special equipment or materials, or liaison with a support teacher.

Factors influencing whether and how a pupil is assessed depend not just on the child's behaviour, but also on other circumstances (Wyffels, 2002). For example, it is claimed that children of middle-class parents with reading difficulties are more likely to be diagnosed as dyslexic; misbehaviour by pupils from certain ethnic minority groups is more likely to be diagnosed as emotional disorder behaviour (Feys, 2002). Abused girls and boys may be perceived differently. Some children are in both a cycle of poverty and a cycle of abuse: the idea of a cycle is itself problematic, as the abused child who becomes a child abuser is not repeating their experience but reversing it. The concept of a cycle lumps all forms of violence together (Kelly, 1996).

The ecological model clarifies the networks causing the vulnerability of children at school: these causes are not fixed, but may appear, disappear or diminish. The surroundings affect children, whether school, family or social background: we need a paradigm to understand this complex situation.

Undiagnosed children with special needs may develop forms of aversion to school and be held back: cause and effect become entangled, and children are first victimised when they are not diagnosed in time, and this is reinforced by lack of treatment.

Factors commonly found among the vulnerable include:

- poor school results (assessment criteria not matched to individuals),
- precariousness,
- being an asylum seeker or a displaced person,
- social background, district or gender: there are disparities between groups and people.

Vulnerability is complex and changeable; teachers and educators need to handle this so that students and their families know and get their rights.

Variable concepts of inclusion and vulnerability

Language and Labelling

Each child is a distinctive collection of talents, abilities and limitations, but despite this uniqueness, there is an overwhelming educational trend to label children who appear different from the norm. In this booklet we use the term 'vulnerable children'. A word of caution: labelling children is controversial: labels are symbols, constructed to serve a purpose by those who use them. While labels may identify and access help for a child, they may also be used to discriminate or to derogate. Many educators object to labels such as 'vulnerable' or 'marginalised' children, because describing a complex individual with one word might imply that this is the most significant aspect of the person. Studies of labelling have persuasively shown that labelling children may be a self-fulfilling prophecy, destructive to the child.

It is important to be conscious of labels, classifications and their meanings, and be aware of what purposes and injustices they may serve. Some terms may be valuable in treating an individual and also harmful in terms of social decisions made as a consequence – or *vice versa*.

In all countries and periods the depiction of vulnerable children has changed to fit how society views them and the wish for them to enjoy the same rights at school or at work.

Vulnerability

The words or the actions of others can hurt, and children and young adults can be made more vulnerable if they miss opportunities through lack of education, a healthy lifestyle or a stable job: they may end up on the edge very quickly (Staes, 1992). If this marginalisation happens to a child, and that child has parents who are unemployed, or have long-term illness, or are in poor accommodation, then the child is a prisoner of poverty. Can this kind of vulnerability be hidden? Boundaries develop into insurmountable walls (Sölle, 1987). The core questions: Can we close the gap or break the circle? Can we lift the barriers or shift the boundaries? Can we live with 'enough'? Does helping help?

Vulnerability is a versatile notion

Whoever is weak, dependent or humiliated, be it permanent or temporary, is vulnerable. The situation is one of going without: to change means the acquisition of power and social status: money, relationships, influence, technical qualifications, and a status based on background, intellectual competency, personal freedom and dignity (Mollat, 1974; Boff 1982; Haers, 2000).

Living from one day to the next, the vulnerable cannot get ahead without the help of others.

Inclusion versus exclusion

The terminology of integration, inclusion, communication and motivation need clarification.

Inclusion does not mean that everyone is the same, or that all agree. Inclusion rather celebrates diversity and difference with respect and gratitude. The greater our diversity, the richer our capacity to create new visions. Inclusion is an antidote to racism and sexism because it welcomes and celebrates difference, seeing them as capacities rather than deficiencies.

Disability is a symbolic crucible where we face our feelings about differences head on. Inclusion is about how we tolerate those who look, act or think differently than so-called 'ordinary' people. Inclusion challenges unexamined notions of what 'ordinary' and 'normal' mean: hidden values appear in action and reaction, and some of this is discomfiting.

Such questions become very personal. How would I feel if I were unable to walk, talk or move? Or had a child who was so labelled? Or feel about myself if I were disabled in an accident? How do I feel about growing older? Where will I live, with whom will I associate? Will family and friends care for me when I need help, or will they cast me aside? Inclusion is about embracing humanity and working out how we will live *with* one another in the years to come.

Inclusion means inviting those who have been historically locked out to 'come in'. Well-intentioned, this meaning must be strengthened and examined. Who has the right to invite others 'in'? How did those who do the inviting get in themselves? Who is doing the excluding? We ought to recognise and accept that we are all born 'in', and no one should be able to invite others to be included! It is a social responsibility to remove barriers that enforce exclusion. Inclusion is thus recognising our universal oneness and interdependence. Inclusion recognises that we are one, even though we are not the same.

When people are included, they feel welcome; they feel good; they feel healthy. When they are excluded, they feel bad. Inclusion is a precondition for learning, happiness and healthy living; exclusion is a precondition for misery, loneliness and trouble. Teenagers may choose to die, rather than be alone; to join gangs, rather than appear 'outside' the mainstream. Belonging is not incidental - it is crucial to our existence. Exclusion kills, physically and spiritually. Living with exclusion is a learned skill: adults often numb the pain with alcohol, drugs and obsessions to override the anguish of exclusion.

Inclusion is a foundation: not a guarantee, but a precondition for the growth and development of full and healthy human beings.

Disability or special needs, more than a word!

Some prefer the term 'disabled children', which is the preferred phrase of disabled adults. This term is also widely used among professionals who work with disabled children and their families. The phrase 'children with special needs' may still be used, but it brings some problems.

All children have special needs, in the sense that they have individual wishes, wants and specific needs at different times of their lives. The phrase was originally intended to include children with very striking development, who could be described as gifted, but in practice the term is almost always only applied to disabled children.

The notion of special educational needs has had a major impact on school practice, not just in how best to cater for pupils with such needs, but also in terms of catering for the education needs of all pupils in school.

Evolution in the approach of vulnerable young people

In the 1980s the dominant approach to disabled children and their families was to focus on the disability in medical terms: diagnosis, treatment and management of the condition. Often no cure was possible. This has been called a *medical model* of disability.

A re-evaluation of this approach has been stimulated by disabled adults sharing their memories of how they were treated as children. Parents of disabled children have been vocal in their criticism of the medical model, which treats their children as a disability or a case, rather than as children.

Some of the criticisms of the lack of information, disrespect (to parents and children) and conflicting advice from different medical professionals are shared by families without disabled children, but who have met poor practice from health and other services.

An alternative *social model* of disability focuses on the child as an individual; this highlights social conditions outside the child's specific disability that contribute to making the child even more disabled. The social model does not deny the value of appropriate treatment or medication, but stresses that the child's life should not be driven by the disability label they have been given, or by a regime of treatment. Disabled children have individual needs, wants, interests and views about what happens to them, just like any other children.

International policies on inclusion and vulnerability

To understand national policies and the projects ministries support we need to know the origin of the external stimuli that start 'new ideas'. One such source is UNESCO; in the last decade UNESCO has been the 'engine' for new movements.

The Salamanca statement (1994)

The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and a Framework for Action came from a conference of 92 governments and 25 international organisations organized by the Spanish and UNESCO in June 1994. This furthered the aim of *Education for All*, by considering the basic policy changes needed to promote inclusive education, so schools could serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs. These two documents were important in ensuring that schools work to fulfil the principles of *Education for All*. Education Ministries across the world used these from 1995 to improve the education of the disabled through inclusive education policies.

The Statement expresses the fundamental principle of the inclusive school:

All children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school.

The Salamanca Statement set out that:

- every child has a basic right to education
- every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs
- education services should take into account these diverse characteristics and needs
- those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools
- regular schools with an inclusive ethos are the most effective way to combat discriminatory attitudes, create welcoming and inclusive communities and achieve education for all
- such schools provide effective education for the majority of children, improve efficiency and are cost-effective.

The Salamanca Statement asks governments to:

- give high priority to making education systems inclusive
- adopt the principle of inclusive education as law or policy
- develop demonstration projects
- encourage exchanges with countries with experience of inclusion
- plan, monitor and evaluate educational provision for children and adults
- encourage and ease the participation of parents and organisations of disabled people
- invest in early identification and intervention strategies
- invest in vocational aspects of inclusive education
- ensure adequate teacher education programs.

The Framework for Action outlines new special needs education and guidelines for action at national, regional and international levels. Among the guides for national action are:

- Policy and organisation
- School factors
- Recruitment and training of educational personnel
- External support services
- Priority areas
- Community perspectives
- Resource requirements

(*The Salamanca Statement and Framework For Action*, UNESCO, 1994.
Ref: ED-94/WS/I 8)

Towards a Disability Convention

Ten years after the Salamanca Statement a new UNESCO document is being constructed with the working title *Disability Convention*. The following comments are based on internet material at <http://www.usicd.org/mtg2outcome.htm>.

From 2003 to 2005 an *ad hoc* Committee constructed a draft for a new human rights convention for people with disabilities. The intention is to give the right to choose inclusive and accessible education. There is no intention to create an obligation for students with disabilities to attend general schools, where their needs may not be adequately met. The document is original in its focus on the employment of teachers with disabilities in the general education system, removing legislative barriers to persons with disabilities becoming teachers, and raising teachers' awareness of the needs of children with disabilities. Article 17 of the Convention is dedicated to education with links to citizenship:

[we] recognise the right of all persons with disabilities to education. With a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, the education of children with disabilities shall be directed to the full development of the human potential and sense of dignity and self worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity; enabling all persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society; the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; take into account the best interests of the child, in particular by individualising education plan (...)

[we] shall ensure that all persons with disabilities can choose inclusive and accessible education in their own community (including access to early childhood and pre-school education); the provision of required support, including the specialised training of teachers, school counsellors and psychologists, an accessible curriculum, an accessible teaching medium and technologies, alternative and augmentative communication modes, alternative learning strategies, accessible physical environment, or other reasonable accommodations to ensure the full participation of students with disabilities;

The draft includes some 'new' recommendations for policy makers: *'different approaches were also identified to setting out the relationship between the provision of specialist education services and the general education system'*. The authors consider that the *'education of children with disabilities in the general education system should be the rule, and the provision of specialist education services the exception'*. Others thought that *'specialist education services should be provided not only where the general education system is inadequate, but should rather be made available at all times without a presumption that one approach was more desirable than the other'*. The ad hoc Working Group (the Resonance Group) highlighted the need for deaf and blind children to be allowed to be educated in their own groups. If this were done, the group considered that there was still an explicit obligation on the state to make the general education system accessible to students with disabilities, without limiting the individual's ability to choose either the general system or the specialist services. It is strange that they use the terms such as 'blind and deaf' children, but when it comes to promote human dignity and potential the term children 'with a visual or hearing restriction' is used.

We now give three case studies of provision in different countries, that show the processes set out in these European reports are found in successful practice.

National policies on inclusion and vulnerability

An overview of the Flemish part of Belgium



Before 1970 special classes were located in regular schools and children with SEN were brought together in them. In 1970 these special classes were ended, and a separate system of special schools (divided into eight types, based on pedagogical and didactical needs from the specific kind of impairment). Most schools for children with special needs were founded by religious congregation from the Roman Catholic church. Three educational levels in special education were established for nursery, primary and secondary levels.

Nursery and primary special education is still divided into eight types, while special secondary education has four forms: social training to integrate into a protected environment; general and social training to integrate into a protected environment and work situation; social and vocational training to integrate into a regular environment and work situation; and preparation for study in higher education and integration into active life.

In 1983 an integrated education was possible for children with a physical or sensorial impairment, with pedagogical support from teachers and therapists of special schools. In 1991 policies started to deal with the problems of immigrant children and refugee children who did not speak Dutch. By 1994 the integration of all types of pupils began, and regular schools started an extended care programme for pupils with Special Education Needs. Projects for the inclusion of children with moderate or severe mental retardation in mainstream classrooms of primary schools began. But progress was slow.

In 2002 the Flemish Minister of Education moved towards more inclusive education in Flanders. Instead of referring the child, support has to be brought to the child: an IEP (individual education plan) supported the teacher (see box opposite). Special schools became expertise and support centres. This change has had consequences for initial teacher training, with more attention given to extended care and the tools for the process of preparing children with special needs for legal status citizenship. They develop the skills of citizenship by conceptualizing different projects, designing and managing projects, planning activities, delegating responsibilities, communicating with peers and use new media and engaging pupils in dialogue about citizenship (Tuytten and Feys, 2002, 2003).

From 2003 'care improvement' has focused on deprived migrant children, and is undertaken by teachers and a multidisciplinary team additional to the school. In Flanders, each school has a policy contract with a Pupil Guidance Centre, where a multidisciplinary team (social, medical and psychopedagogical) offer additional support in preventive and curative care policy.

The concept of 'children from deprived families' emerged in the mid 1990s. 'Vulnerable pupils' have to meet one or more of the following indicators: a mother with no secondary school qualification; both parents unemployed; the child in a single-parent family. Parents complete questionnaires, and schools may then apply for 'care improvement'. Children with learning deficits are targeted, and the new policy is a shift to vigorous support for underprivileged pupils.

But children from single-parent families are not necessarily problem children, though they may be when they live with an unemployed and poorly-qualified mother.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP)

The purposes of the IEP are:

- to clarify immediate short-term help for the child and help staff enable the pupil to make progress
- to help adults plan what, why and how the pupil should be taught through 'additional' or 'extra' activities

Five actors involved in the IEP: the child, the parents, the headteacher and the teachers, the Senco (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) and Learning Support Assistants.

The **content** of the plan is based on core questions: *What is the child good at? What does he/she enjoy doing? What has the child already achieved? What are his strengths and interests?* Clear targets are to be achieved over a specific period.

The plan includes the advice of outside specialists and the views of the pupil and their personal perceptions of difficulties. Children have a right to be heard, and to participate in decision-making. Core questions include *What are your worries and concerns for the future? What are your expectations of the child's performance, progress and behaviour at school and at home?*

The challenge: should an IEP only specify extra provision and targets, over those generally available for all pupils? (Wyffels, 2002).

To achieve an IEP the school uses two complementary methods: consultative pupil guidance and action oriented diagnosis. Consultative pupil guidance, emancipatory and participative counselling, focuses on problem-solving, creating solutions and realisable ideas for the IEP by systematic conversation. Action oriented diagnosis (Pameijer and Van Beukering, 1997) is used for further diagnosis and assessment. The models do not exclude each other, but are complementary.

An overview of France



In France school is an entitlement for all, to make free citizens of men and women. If a child or young person is vulnerable or disabled they have more detailed rights. Any disabled or sick pupil is entitled to the specific healthcare that will allow them to access schooling. Each school must welcome the child or the adolescent if the family asks for their education to be integrated. The only exceptions are when the school can prove it is impossible to make provision, or if integration would be too demanding for the pupil. Commissions for special needs advise and counsel, working at the level of the *department*: they arrange structures adapted to needs.

School integration is achieved through individualised integration projects that link the educational team and the care and social professionals with families and pupils. These projects are frequently reviewed to assess developments and plan further activities. Meeting in professional confidence, assessments aim to further the best interests of the child, placing personal development within a global frame. These rights to healthcare and schooling have brought fundamental changes in French education practices since the 1980s, opening partnerships between professionals and families to develop autonomy and facilitate social inclusion.

Schools are adapting progressively to this new and egalitarian outlook towards the vulnerable and disabled. Some schools for vulnerable pupils, seen as a dead end, have closed: they only remain for pupils whose health or personal development does not allow full integration into mainstream schooling. Specific adaptations to examinations allow mainstream diplomas to be awarded, through extra time, provision in Braille, information technology support and the help of someone with special training.

The French educational system is determined to secure equality and to avoid school and social exclusion by commitment to flexible partnerships, and through a two-step gradation:

- making vulnerable children's schooling a success through a package of measures delivered by trained staff
- holistic integration of vulnerable young people through close and collective collaboration from professional staff.

The authorities show a strong determination to counter resistance to this programme, which generally comes from a lack of training or insufficient school resources to accept vulnerable pupils (amenities such as ramps, lifts, computers, etc).

An overview of Ireland



Ireland's system of education differs from much of Europe, as it is largely denominational (managed by the church, funded by the State), centrally controlled, and until 1998 not regulated by law. The lack of legislation meant that the rights of children with special educational needs were not protected. Since the 1950s parents and religious orders had created voluntary schools for 'mentally handicapped' children: the special school model matched the prevailing philosophy and practice, and the perceived incapacity of the ordinary school to respond.

In the 1960s the Government established a Special Education Inspectorate, which had a major influence in shaping growth, and significant new supports were introduced. These developments were prompted by:

- influential Reports and Papers on Special Education (SERC Report, 1993; *Charting Our Education Future*, White Paper on Education, 1995): there was a clear policy that the Government was willing to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs. The Education Act (1998) clearly commits a continuum of provision.
- the Irish Government accepted the European Community Council of Ministers of Education Resolution of May 1990, and the integration into mainstream schools of children with disabilities is on the basis of individual assessment. The 1998 Education Act emphasised the integration of special needs into ordinary schools. No further special schools have been created for pupils with mild learning difficulties. Increasing numbers of children with special educational needs have entered mainstream education, and parental rights have been stressed in mainstreaming.
- the courts have interpreted the law, ruling that every child - no matter how disabled - is entitled to an education (Roche Case, 1999) and that the State is liable for damages if that right is not vindicated (Sinnott Case, 2000).

Recent initiatives in Ireland, such as the introduction of resource teachers, special needs assistants, special need co-ordinators are major landmarks in terms of assisting schools in providing education to meet the needs and abilities of children with special needs. These initiatives are intended to support the inclusion of marginalised children and represent an exciting new opportunity to respond in a real way to children with different needs. Nevertheless present policies to determine child eligibility for additional resources are pre-occupied with categories, ratios and statistics.

The dragons within an inclusive education

In fairy tales, dragons turn up at the most inopportune times – very often at the moment that the hero thinks s/he has overcome all their difficulties. Slaying the dragon is an important task, because the dragon undermines confidence in the notion of citizenship and moral truth (Cooling, 1998). Talking to teachers working in schools with vulnerable children revealed several 'dragons'. How do we challenge these monsters through integrating learning styles?

The first dragon is **fear**: 'Will I be able to do this?' If fear is the dominant emotion, it is important to note that the fear is ours - not the pupils'. This is about our fears: we are afraid we might fail. The literature on constructivism advocates the need to learn by doing: failing quickly, noting learning points, and moving on to try again. The lesson is: face the fear dragon; stare it down. Name it and move on.

The second dragon is **control**: 'If I include this child, it will mean giving up control.' I can't do this all by myself; I will have to ask others (including students, parents and other teachers) to help. This means admitting that 'I' don't have all the answers - that 'I' am not in total control. We suggest it is time to give up this fantastic illusion and to learn to share control. Cooperation and collaboration thrive as control is replaced and fades into oblivion with fear.

The third dragon is **change**: inclusion is the beginning of change. 'I'm afraid of change therefore I won't include people.' There is no question that inclusion means change. But change is not optional: it is here. Our choices are limited - we can grow with change, or fight a losing battle with the past. Choosing inclusion gives us the opportunity to grow with change. One teacher said: 'Change is inevitable; growth is optional.' We recommend growth in values as:

- cooperation, not competition;
- participation, not coercion;
- relationships, not isolation;
- interdependence, not independence; and
- friendships, not loneliness.

Learning styles: the special weapons for an inclusive approach!

Understanding the different ways pupils think and process information is essential to developing learning systems appropriate to an inclusive approach. This section examines common **cognitive, communicative, relational and motivation styles** as they apply to the inclusive classroom.

Gollnick and Chinn (1994) suggest there are *field independent and field sensitive* individuals. The latter have a more global perspective of their surroundings and are more sensitive to the social field. There are sometimes tensions in the classroom because the majority may be field independent individuals, who tend to be more analytical and comfortably focused on impersonal and abstract aspects of the environment.

The inclusive approach offers the challenge of working in *cooperation (an adventure model)* rather than in *competition (a winner model)*. The teacher who understands which students respond to cooperative learning (*we*) and which prefer competitive situations (*I*) can provide classroom opportunities to accommodate both (Versteylen, 1991).

Inclusive teaching means not only moments of the 'trial and error' way of working, but also a strategy of 'see – judge – act' (Cardijn) or 'direct instruction' (Feys, 2004). Many classrooms have wall posters of Meichenbaum's bears, supporting children with learning problems to solve problems step by step. Inclusive education means also *tolerance* for ambiguity. Some teachers or systems are open-minded about contradictions, differences and uncertainty.

Communicative style

Communication is probably the most vital activity in the classroom: it is the mechanism through which learning occurs. Communication involves speaking, listening - and critical thinking. Teachers who are unfamiliar with cultural preferences for direct or indirect forms of communication may perceive students who prefer indirect communication as stupid, unmotivated or learning disabled. Inclusive education needs informal communication more than it does formal communication. In a classroom with vulnerable people there is not only *topic-centred communication* but also *topic-associating communication* (Lombaerts, 1996). Teachers unfamiliar with the topic-associating approach may not allow students to finish their communications.

Preparing students to work in an inclusive system involves initiation into relation styles, and some of these styles impact on inclusive education:

Dependent versus independent learning: Teachers must reflect on how much students rely on support, help, and the opinions of their teachers.

Participatory versus passive learning: Pupils may prefer one or other of these as a learning process. Passive learning focuses on listening, watching (observing) and imitating. Participatory learning involves critical thinking, judging, questioning, and the active initiation of discussion.

Reflectivity versus impulsivity: Pupils may think about a question for different lengths of time before arriving at a conclusion.

Aural, visual, and verbal learning: the degree to which pupils are primarily aural, visual or verbal learners. When there are a range of learners a multisensory approach to teaching and evaluation is often effective (Reybrouck, 1989).

Energetic learning versus calm learning: this describes whether pupils function better in highly active and animated classrooms or calm and placid environments.

Motivation style

There are culturally diverse reasons why it is important and desirable to learn, and these are the motivational bases that prompt participation and effort. It is important to investigate vulnerable children's motivation to learn. Is their motivation intrinsic or extrinsic? Is it to secure a good job and earn money, or to please their parents and impress relatives? Teachers must employ a variety of motivational tools that coincide with the vulnerable pupil's situation.

Another motivational style is learning on demand versus learning what is relevant or interesting. At the core is whether learning is best if based on a set curriculum or whether it should follow what is of interest and relevance to them in their vulnerable situation. They may give more attention to ideas that are more personally interesting.

Paradigm of citizenship

Education helps the child become a free adult and make personal choices, becoming free from mainstream opinion, from *doxa*. Vulnerable children challenge society and school on access to citizenship. Together with knowledge and access to employment, the child must also be educated as a citizen, building this on rational behaviour, democratic personality and the development of reflexive skills. Teaching through philosophical discussion is an important step towards being acknowledged as citizens (Pettier, 2004; Tozzi & Etienne, 2004). These experiences proceed beyond adaptation and integration towards inclusion and equality, founded on both rights and duties. (Gardou, 2004; UNESCO, 1994).

Guidelines and recommendations

Disability and vulnerability do not simply reflect the individual and their different proficiencies alone. They also concern the surroundings, in which school 'can become an obstacle because the latter adds on obstacles or can facilitate thanks to appropriate help' (Gardou, 2005). Approaches to the education of the vulnerable are better led by research and reason rather than by sympathy, that brings with it the idea that difference is deficiency. The following recommendations should be seen as a whole, not as list to select from.

Teacher of the future

The training to include vulnerable children requires teachers to have global and strategic skills. Teachers cannot work alone but must also intervene so that these pupils have a status at school. Individual education plans (see page 11) require both working in teams and individually, to shed the former practices of exclusion and replace them so each pupil finds a place through active learning. Inclusion is an opportunity for the educational system: success depends on awareness of difference and the personality adjustment of each child in the class or group.

Teaching strategies

Teaching strategies are basically similar in all contexts. All are vulnerable and all have assets on which to build knowledge and behaviour. Teaching requires preparation and cooperation with educative partners: teachers no longer face difficulties they cannot cope with alone. Active teaching analyses in the frame of inservice training will help improve children's ability to overcome and succeed. Yet the team must consider and provide for some individual and specific help.

Preventing problems

Problem prevention is critical: the important and significant phase is welcoming the child and family, and making the child comfortable in the classroom or school. There is also the discussion that sets an individual education plan (Tozzi & Étienne, 2004). The right of inclusion is built up. Regular meetings assess and modify its course in the child's interest.

Multi-disciplinary working → access

In the face of the wide range and combination of possible causes of vulnerability one must be very humble: the teacher's multiform work ends at the moment it becomes multidisciplinary. Key partners are always the family and the teacher, others may be needed: specialised teacher, care assistant, headteacher, social worker, nurse, doctor -

any competent person who can handle health, social or cognitive issues and who can counsel. All consult together as often as necessary - but it is the teacher who is the specialist in charge of school learning. Cooperation does not mean confusion.

Access to information for 'poor' families

One of the most important rights for vulnerable children is the right to be informed, through their schooling and afterwards, and this responsibility is shared between all partners and must be conducted actively with families. Each school may decide a general policy but in line with European, national and local demands. The more complex and varied the information, the more difficult it may be for the team member or family to understand it.

Technical skills to be developed to include vulnerable children

- Communication
- Disability and vulnerability of children's knowledge
- Balance, assessment and regulation
- Project management
- Differentiation
- Active learning
- Cooperative teaching

To work on citizenship for all children, different course packages need to be developed. For example, in Flanders the Centre for Intercultural Education (University of Ghent) developed Cooperative Learning in Multicultural Groups (CLIM) course packages. Groups work independently on tasks: a rotation system means pupils are given different roles so that their strengths can be discovered and respected by other pupils.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning, improving teachers' capacity to support children's learning by examining and reflecting on patterns of work. This section discusses issues in the assessment of vulnerable children:

- the purposes and functions of assessment
- sources of bias
- interactive/dynamic assessment

The purposes and functions of assessment in education

Assessment can have different purposes and functions. **Formative** assessment appraises performance and uses this to support further learning and development and to inform the teaching and learning process. **Diagnostic** assessment identifies the specific nature of learning difficulties, which is used in planning a child's learning. **Evaluative** assessment allows teachers to identify the effectiveness

of particular teaching strategies and curriculum content. **Summative** assessment identifies the outcomes of learning following a unit of work.

Assessment tools used in schools include: teacher observation, teacher designed tasks and tests, work samples, portfolios and projects, curriculum profiles, diagnostic tests and standardised tests

Potential bias in assessment

The qualitative and quantitative information provided by assessment tools is always subject to assumptions and qualifications; all assessment tools contain a potential for bias. An understanding of the diversity and limitations of assessment tools, their strengths and weaknesses is crucial in enabling teachers to arrive at balanced and informed judgments.

Interactive/Dynamic Assessment

Much classroom assessment is static or summative in style. This means much of the information gathered represents a single snapshot, not necessarily showing the possibilities for change or highlighting progression. Vulnerable children often underperform on traditional standardised tests. They may lack certain kinds of language or cognitive experiences; they may be unfamiliar with the culture of testing; they may not have had appropriate exposure to printed materials (pictures, text) or they may have had inadequate adult-child interactions. Any of these may prevent meaningful participation in traditional assessment scenarios.

Dynamic assessment assesses potential, or 'readiness', and is appropriate to consider for use specifically with vulnerable children. The model neutralises lack of experience, aspects of language and lack of experience of testing. It is based on the understanding that lack of experience is not the same as lack of ability. It emerged from the theories of Vygotsky and Feuerstein and may be referred to in the literature as 'interactive' assessment. It takes the form of 'test-teach-test':

Test: baseline data on the skill being examined (formal or informal).

Teach: engage in mediated teaching: teacher and child explore problems together to learn about the desired target.

Retest: see how much change has occurred.

Dynamic assessment is an innovative approach to educational evaluation, with immense appeal for those working with vulnerable and marginalised children. It seeks to emphasise potential rather than product, and explores the nature of learning rather than simple learning outcomes.

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