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What sort of 'inclusion' is Continuing Professional Development promoting? An investigation of a national CPD programme for Inclusive Physical Education

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Abstract

Inclusion is positioned at the forefront of global educational reform. The study reported focused on a national Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for Inclusive Physical Education (IPE) in England. The research was designed to critically explore how CPD providers (i.e. tutors) variously conceptualised and practised inclusion in the context of running a day-long CPD course for physical education teachers. Using qualitative methodology, data were collected via course observations (n=27), informal interviews with the tutors (n=10), and a tutor questionnaire (n=18). Findings suggest that although tutors' theoretical interpretations of inclusion were largely consistent with contemporary, broad understandings, there was notable variability and inherent tensions in the ways they talked about and enacted inclusion in practice. In many instances, inclusion was infused with particular perceptions about ability and ability grouping. Only a very small number of tutors encouraged teachers to question and 'disturb' their current practices. Findings from this research extend insights into the contested nature of inclusion in contemporary PE and highlight the need for research to engage with multiple stakeholders in physical education teaching and CPD. This research reflects that CPD providers have a key role to play in extending teachers' understandings of inclusive pedagogy.

Keywords: inclusion, inclusive practice, physical education, continuing professional development, CPD tutors

Introduction

Whilst contemporary educational discourse is now firmly situated in the context of inclusion, Thomas and O'Hanlon (2007) lamented over a decade ago that inclusion had become something of an 'international buzz-word', a cliché that had become 'obligatory in the

discourse of all right-thinking people' (p. 4). Yet, whilst inclusion appears to form the ethical substrate of educational rhetoric, there are concerns that lip-service is being paid to the notion at the level of educational policy and practice. For example, Tomlinson (2015) recently observed that there are now many instances where the term inclusion is used by practitioners to mean its polar opposite, namely exclusion. Teaching takes place in social settings in which teachers can unintentionally reinforce inequalities, as exclusion is deeply structural and cultural (Slee and Allan, 2001). With concerns that 'the *idea* of inclusion', or what we call the public face of inclusion, 'outpaces its *practice*' (Artiles et al., 2006, p. 8) (and private face), it has been argued that inclusive education is 'promising more than it delivers' (Florian, 2014, p. 286).

Florian's (2014) observations are arguably very pertinent to physical education (PE). Whilst high quality Inclusive PE (IPE) is promoted as a 'vital platform' for facilitating social integration (UNESCO, 2015, p. 6), researchers have repeatedly identified the perverse effects of professional practices that are exclusionary in nature (Fitzgerald, 2012; Grimminger, 2014). Specifically, research has highlighted that PE provision features practices that are primarily suited to students who excel in sport performance and competition, and/or have a particular set of movement competencies that align with culturally specific and gendered forms of sport and physical activity (Wilkinson, 2017). Thus, as Penney et al. (2018, p.2) emphasised, addressing inclusion 'remains a notable challenge' for the PE profession internationally.

This paper reports on research that sought to productively engage with this challenge by (re-)framing it as a challenge for professional learning and continuing professional development (CPD) in PE. Within the research, CPD refers to an educational process that incorporates agents (individuals and institutions) and activities (from formal to informal) that facilitate professional learning beyond the initial point of training (Author 2012; Higgins et

al., 2016). Overall, research on the nature and impact of CPD opportunities on inclusion is fragmented, lacking sufficient depth and specificity to guide policy and practice (Waitoller and Artiles, 2013). Within the PE and PE-CPD inclusion literature, more specifically, relatively little attention has been given to the ways that PE teachers are supported to develop - reproduce or scrutinise - their own understandings about IPE (O'Connor et al., 2016).

Given that the notion of inclusion remains contested within education and more specifically PE (Morley et al., 2005), and with a serious lack of knowledge on what IPE looks like in practice (Fitzgerald, 2012), research that explores how inclusion is conceptualised and practised in CPD contexts has important potential contributions to make. It can shed light on how teachers are being advised to develop inclusive pedagogy, and can prospectively inform the design, implementation and evaluation of future CPD initiatives in line with growing global aspirations to eliminate exclusionary practices from schools (UNESCO, 2014).

Study Purpose, Context and Significance

In response to calls for research on how inclusive pedagogies are enacted across different CPD contexts (Florian, 2014), the research reported in this paper was part of a larger independent evaluation[1] study and was designed to explore how *CPD tutors, as providers of CPD,* conceptualised and practised inclusion in the context of a national CPD programme on IPE in England (referred to as the 'Programme' thereafter). The following questions were set: (a) What were the tutors' interpretations of the concept of inclusion? and 2) How were these interpretations enacted in practice?

Launched in 2013, the Programme was designed for teachers, teaching assistants and other professionals with PE responsibilities (such as sport coaches) working in primary, secondary and special schools, as well as trainee teachers. Aimed at increasing participants'

[1] The evaluation was funded by a charity in England seeking to support and improve the provision of physical education and school sport (name to be added after blind review).

confidence and competence in delivering IPE, the Programme was implemented as a 1-day (6 hour duration) course delivered by a national faculty of approximately 30 tutors. Tutors were recruited across England and were mostly PE teachers with tutoring experience who worked in secondary or special schools, or independent consultants. Many of the tutors had professional expertise in special education[2]. All tutors were required to participate in 'tutor development days' one or two times per year, during which detailed course material was presented, explained and debated; and practical sessions were designed to illustrate examples of effective course implementation.

Over 5000 school staff participated in the Programme over the three-year evaluation period (2013-2016). The reach of the Programme was therefore extensive and questions about what participants were encouraged to understand about inclusive pedagogy are arguably even more pertinent in the light of this. The key premise of the Programme was that inclusion should be presented not as a 'specialist' topic, but rather as a core competency of effective teachers, who know and understand how to design and implement learning opportunities to help *all* learners participate and progress. To this end, the Inclusion Spectrum framework (Stevenson, 2009), designed in England for use by PE teachers and coaches, was used to underpin the implementation of the programme.

The Inclusion Spectrum is based on the principle that IPE requires changing teaching and learning (and the curriculum) not the child. The responsibility is therefore upon the teacher to design an appropriate learning environment to support all pupils progress in their learning. Specifically, teachers can differentiate activities by Space, Task, Equipment or People (STEP) and by adopting different approaches to teaching and learning. These include 'open' (i.e. all play together without highlighting individual differences), 'modified' (i.e. adapt activities using the STEP framework), 'parallel' (i.e. learners are grouped based on

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[2] The tutor workforce was fluid during the research and a single precise figure therefore cannot be provided.

ability) or 'separate' (i.e. some learners participate in temporary interventions separate from others; tasks are aligned with the learning objectives of the lesson) activities – or through a process called 'reverse integration' as all pupils participate in disability sport (Stevenson, 2009).

The inclusion spectrum and STEP framework are acknowledged as two of several approaches to IPE internationally, including TREE (Downs, 2017a) and CHANGE IT (Downs, 2017b). The inclusion spectrum and STEP were regarded as contextually appropriate for the Programme and the design of the 1-day course was therefore based on them. At the start of a typical course, an initial discussion about the features of IPE and the need to change provision (rather than the learner) was followed by an introduction to the framework and a practical session to illustrate its different aspects (i.e. – 'Open', 'Modified (STEP)', 'Parallel', and 'Separate' activities). Tutors were then expected to give participants the opportunity to test some of these ideas in practice by designing and modifying their own activities. In the afternoon session, the focus shifted to exploration of how to use the inclusion framework to assess learning in PE.

The programme designers produced detailed material to establish consensus about the Programme aims and content to be covered in the day, but did not expect the course to be rigidly implemented. How tutors would achieve the identified goals and what activities they would utilise to illustrate inclusive pedagogy, was open to any individual tutor's judgement that would reflect their existing expertise. It was therefore evident that the tutors delivering the programme would play a central role in shaping participants' thinking about what inclusion means in and for PE, and what inclusive pedagogy entails. Monitoring what knowledge was prioritised and understanding tutors' conceptions and practices was important as it was likely that this knowledge would provide the 'specialist foundation' (CUREE, 2011,

p. 6) upon which participants would sustain or change their practices. But what is already known about inclusive pedagogy and CPD for inclusion?

Inclusive Physical Education and CPD on inclusion

Since the publication of the Salamanca Statement in 1994, inclusion has been positioned at the forefront of global educational reform with the broad goals of 'combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, [and] building an inclusive society' (UNESCO, 1994, p. 2). The subsequent commitment of transnational organisations to making inclusion a global priority (e.g., UNESCO, 2014) offers a clear justification for research endeavours to better understand how inclusion is interpreted and practiced in various contexts.

Meanings of, and approaches to, inclusion

Florian (2014) recently argued that the notion of inclusion is conceptually 'muddled', with multiple and diverse definitions giving rise to a plethora of research (and CPD programmes) underpinned by different and sometimes contrasting agendas and priorities. For example, in some programmes or publications, a categorical approach is adopted with the expectation that teachers identify and address the needs of individuals belonging in certain groups, rather than focusing on wider contextual barriers and the intersection of factors supporting or hindering pupil learning (Messiou, 2017). In this situation, the messages that teachers get in various Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and CPD contexts about what inclusion is, for whom it is relevant, and how it can be evidenced in practice, is potentially confusing and at times even contradictory.

Multiple interpretations of inclusion, alongside a lack of knowledge and research on what inclusive PE looks like in practice (Fitzgerald, 2012) are important issues that this research sought to respond to. Following Penney et al. (2018), we point to the merit of DeLuca's (2013) framework, comprising four approaches to inclusion – normative,

integrative, dialogical and transgressive – as a means of articulating the complexity and diversity of approaches that are variously positioned as 'inclusive'.

The normative approach reflects an understanding of inclusive pedagogy as involving the assimilation of those at the margins of current educational provision into existing social practices and expectations, while highlighting potential deficits of these students; i.e. what they are lacking in relation to specific – often 'culturally specific and gendered' – standards or norms (Penney et al., 2018, p, 7). In this context, although the need to ensure that all learners have 'equal access' to opportunities is acknowledged, the emphasis here is 'to ensure conformity' to a 'narrowly conceived' curriculum and performance criteria (Penney et al., 2018, p. 6). Furthermore, the content and nature of activities themselves remain narrow, traditional, and unchallenged. This resonates with Larsson and Quennerstedt's (2012) observation that in the world of sport and PE, what a throw means is 'rarely negotiable to the movers' (p. 283). There are instead specific, narrowly defined expectations that are presented as 'natural' and which define what a throw should look like (ibid).

The integrative approach represents a significant departure from the normative approach in one significant way. In line with longstanding debates about ensuring equity rather than (or alongside) equality in education (e.g., Stidder and Hayes, 2013), all learners, and particularly those who face exclusionary pressures, are understood to need varied opportunities through differentiated instruction. From this perspective, activities need to be 'adapted' so that pupils' diverse experiences and abilities are 'accommodated' within existing [school/PE] structures' (Penney et al., 2018, p. 7). Yet, critical elaboration on the selection of activities themselves remains absent. This means that a PE curriculum that is, for example, dominated by culturally specific and often gendered 'traditional' competitive team games can exclude rather than include learners, despite teachers' intentions to 'deliver' activities in ways that cater for individual differences (Haycock and Smith, 2011).

The way 'differentiated' activities or tasks are implemented and assessed can also be problematic. As Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) caution, *teacher-determined* differentiation locates those students who are perceived to be lagging behind at the margins of the classroom. In the same line of thought, an integrative approach often argues for pupils' separation on the basis of their abilities, creating however a natural hierarchy. When this is combined with the selection of activities that 'privilege individuals who are white, masculine and of high sporting/motor skill ability', stereotypical thinking in terms of *who* can achieve in PE is still prevalent and potentially reinforced (Penney et al., 2018, p.7). Having the understanding and skills to differentiate instruction thus does little to 'question assumptions that underpin established curriculum, pedagogical and assessment practices that simultaneously contribute to the reproduction of inequities' (Penney et al., 2018, p. 8).

Dialogical and transgressive approaches to inclusion, within DeLuca's (2013) framework, seek to push the boundaries of conventional, often resistant-to-change practices in PE, specifically in relation to what pupils learn and how and why this learning is supported. Crucially, these perspectives acknowledge the multiple and diverse ways young people move and learn. Rather than 'trying to normalise' learners to 'fit an ideal type' (Slee, 2013, p. 905), the goal is to foreground decisions about the content and processes of learning on the basis of pupils' lived experiences, and to afford opportunities for critical thinking. In other words, and as captured by research in New Zealand (Petrie et al., 2013) or Ireland (Enright and O'Sullivan, 2010), PE practices are understood as fluid and dynamic, in constant negotiation with pupils whose diverse experiences are understood and valued.

Professional Development for Inclusion

Enacting inclusion in practice, in education generally and physical education more specifically, is acknowledged as challenging and demanding. One could argue that an important prerequisite for effective inclusive pedagogy is engagement in meaningful, relevant

and impactful CPD. ITE and CPD settings are often promoted as contexts within which teachers' understandings about the importance of inclusive education can be developed, their attitudes and preconceptions about diversity scrutinised, and the ways in which they understand, approach, and respond to differences expanded (UNESCO, 2014). Yet, evidence suggests that ITE programmes have limited impact on teachers' capacities to respond to the challenges of diverse learners (Rieser, 2013).

International research on the content, quality and impact of CPD for inclusion is fragmented and limited. Inclusion is often examined 'with regards to ability differences', and with a particular emphasis on developing teachers' technical competency in differentiated instruction in order to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (Waitoller and Artiles, 2013, p.324). Only a small number of CPD studies seek to transform teachers' pedagogies to 'empower' students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class groups (Capobianco, 2007, in Waitoller and Artiles, 2013). One CPD strategy that is widely accepted as effective involves teachers and researchers working together in whole-school collaborative action research style projects (Petrie, 2017; Petrie et al., 2013). Reflecting elements of the dialogical and transgressive approaches to inclusion (DeLuca, 2013), such studies report positive outcomes which are largely attributed to the ownership (and support) given to schools to respond to learner diversity positively and to subsequently develop and transform their inclusive pedagogies (Messiou, 2017).

As indicated above, the study reported in this paper sought to explore how CPD tutors conceptualised and practiced inclusion in the context of a national day-long course. The project took place over three years (2013-2016) and full ethical approval was obtained by the Ethics Committee of the [add name of Institution here].

Methodology

Research design and sampling

A multiple case study design (Thomas and Myers, 2015), with the case specified at the level of individual courses delivered by various tutors across England (n = 27), was adopted. This was regarded as the most suitable research design to investigate tutors' interpretations and practices about inclusion, enabling a focus on developing in-depth insights and supporting within-case and cross-case analysis.

To select the courses as cases, and with the aim to capture the anticipated variation in programme implementation, a cluster sampling procedure was utilised. Each of the nine geographical areas in England was identified as a cluster. Where possible, systematic sampling within the nine clusters was employed with the aim to collect evidence from the first course delivered in each cluster each year. In total, 27 courses, delivered by 20[3] tutors across eight[4] geographical areas were selected in their entirety. Additionally, all tutors involved in the delivery of the programme (n = 30) were invited to complete an anonymous online questionnaire at the end of the second year of the evaluation (May 2015). Eighteen tutors (45% response rate) provided full responses. Due to the ethical decision to provide a space for tutors to share their overall thoughts and suggestions about various aspects of the programme anonymously, questionnaire responses could not be matched to interview or observation data at the level of the individual. This also means that it is not possible to know if all responses were provided by tutors delivering the courses observed. However, only tutors who were qualified to deliver courses and who were at the time 'active' (i.e. had delivered courses or may at some point do so) were invited to be study participants. All

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[3] 17 tutors implemented one course only, whilst 1 and 2 tutors implemented 4 (courses 1-5-9-16) and 3 courses (courses 3-7-14 and 11-24-27) each respectively
[4] Courses from eight rather than all nine geographic areas in England were observed as, during the timeframe of the research, only a limited number of courses were delivered in one area and observations were not possible due to lack of tutor response.

responses were therefore deemed appropriate to be included in the data set to answer the research questions.

Data collection tools

Drawing upon qualitative methodology, data were collected via course observations, informal interviewing (during or at the end of each course observed), and a questionnaire. Collecting data using multiple sources was important in order to develop context dependent knowledge about the ways tutors talked about and enacted inclusion.

Observations of the selected courses aimed to generate rich data about tutors' embedded or craft knowledge and practices. Drawing upon the Observation of Tutors' Practices (or OTP)[5] developed specifically for the purposes of this Programme evaluation (*Author, 2018*), data collection involved making detailed field notes on the content and nature of tasks set by the tutors and their approach to the facilitation of professional learning. Specifically, the observer kept detailed notes on the topics, areas or issues presented by the tutors and discussed in the whole group, as well as how tutors explained, unpacked, and articulated key matters in relation to the meaning of inclusion and the features of inclusive pedagogy.

At the time of course observations, where possible, qualitative semi structured interviews were also conducted with tutors. Interview data gathered from 10 tutors is drawn upon in this paper (interview duration ranged from approximately 10 to 30 minutes). The aim of the interviews was to engage tutors in brief reflective conversations about the content they delivered, the activities selected, the strategies employed and what they believed worked well or should be improved. All interviews were conducted by the first author. Extensive notes of

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[5] A copy of the systematic observation tool and questions that guided the collection of qualitative field notes can be obtained from the author upon request.

tutors' comments/ responses were made as audio recording the discussions was not feasible due to the research environment (i.e. a noisy environment with tutors on the move).

The online questionnaire consisted of a number of open-ended questions, three of which are relevant in the context of this paper. Tutors were asked to provide their definition of inclusion (i.e. 'Please provide your definition (personal interpretation) of the notion of inclusion'), identify the core principles of inclusive pedagogy they wanted participants to get out of their participation (i.e. 'What should the participants be getting out of the course? Please consider the key principles of inclusive teaching that you want participants to learn / get out of their course participation), and to provide details on the features of their practices that they believed were effective (i.e. 'Can you identify three features of your practice that help to ensure the courses you deliver are effective? Please provide a detailed rationale to explain your responses (with examples whenever possible)'). Anonymity in responses encouraged responses but at the same time also precluded direct comparison with individualised observation and interview data.

Trustworthiness and generalisability

The trustworthiness of the qualitative data set was established by member reflections (Smith and McGannon 2017) that were conducted both during and following the tutor interview. Whenever possible during the interviews, tutors were probed to clarify points and elaborate on the issues in order to collect rich, detailed and accurate data. At the end of the interview a summary of key points from the interview was created by the researcher and discussed with the tutors to ensure that the researcher's interpretations reflected tutors' perspectives, and to generate additional data (if something was omitted or not extensively discussed previously).

The trustworthiness of the results from the field notes was ensured by randomly selecting tutors observed (n = 4), developing a course report including a summary of the key points identified, sharing the report with the selected tutors and engaging in discussions with

them about their views on the key themes reported. It is also worth clarifying that the observation tool (i.e. OTP) was developed through an extensive partnership-based process between the author and programme designers. Through this process, it was agreed that the course content would be monitored by keeping detailed notes for every one minute interval[i].

The data collection process, as previously noted, precluded direct comparisons between different data collection sources. Furthermore, the qualitative design of this research means that the findings cannot be generalised in the traditional sense. It is acknowledged that the ways these tutors interpreted and practiced inclusion are likely to differ from others in different contexts. However, it is also important to acknowledge that, as Stake (2005) explained, one of the greatest strengths of case studies is that they allow readers to experience vicariously (and learn from) the particular, ordinary, exceptional or unique experiences and views of others.

The results reported in this paper therefore have the potential to be *generalised* in two ways: (i) by allowing the readers (who might be school leaders, teachers, tutors, or other CPD stakeholders) to recognise the similarities and differences between the reported results and their own lives / professional practices, and to develop their knowledge and understanding as a result (*naturalistic generalisation*); and (ii) by encouraging readers to reflect upon the main findings, including implications for practice, and to consider adopting ideas or practices that are relevant to their context and existing priorities (*transferability*) (Smith, 2018). To achieve both types of generalisability, the goal was to provide detailed, rich descriptions of tutors' interpretations and actions in the results section.

Data analysis

Qualitative data from the various data collection sources (i.e. open-ended questionnaire responses, interview transcripts and fieldnotes) were analysed using constant comparative method, involving open coding, axial coding and ultimately selective coding to condense and

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draw themes from the data (see Charmaz 2006; Thomas 2017). The process of data analysis was ongoing; iterative (to enable further data collection when required) and theoretically sensitive as the researcher acknowledged entering the fieldwork 'cognisant of sensitive concepts that provided a point of departure for data collection' and analysis (Weed 2017, 152). Once data were available, the researcher engaged in initial coding – an incident-by-incident analysis seeking to describe phenomena and attach names or labels to data extracts. Example codes include 'communicate with carers', 'listen to pupils' voice', 'do not make assumptions', 'the meaning of (dis)ability'.

This initial coding process was supported by memo writing (i.e. initial interpretations of evidence) and constant comparisons between codes to decide which belonged together (Charmaz 2006). The process was theoretically sensitive as codes were developed and compared not just with other codes but also with theory and research to ensure that the results remained grounded (Weed 2017). As a result of the constant comparison, categories were developed. For example, codes revolving around the idea that planning should be based on teachers' understanding of what their pupils can do (e.g. 'communicate with pupils' 'communicate with carers', 'listen to pupils' voice') were grouped under the category of 'Can do'. Different categories (e.g. 'Can do', 'Understanding diverse learning needs', 'Plan for all', 'Individual learning progress') were then clustered together under the second theme reported below 'The core principles of inclusion'. Following completion of this interactive process, four themes relevant to the papers' research questions were created.

Findings

Findings grouped under the four themes are reported by drawing upon evidence from all three data sources (i.e., observations, interviews and questionnaire responses). Quotations are identified by the mode of data source and a random number allocated. Evidence from the

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tutor questionnaires (TQ) and interviews (TI) is acknowledged as TQx or TIx retrospectively, with x indicating the random number allocated to a tutor. Fieldnotes generated from course observations are allocated a unique, random number; and reported as OBSx.

The meaning of inclusion

The vast majority of tutors understood inclusion broadly; a process teachers engage in to support '*everybody in the lesson*' (OBS21), '*regardless of pupils' gender, age, ability, race, religion, socio-economic status etc.*' (TQ15) to participate, engage and achieve. This orientation to inclusion was primarily evident at the start of most courses observed, when tutors engaged participants in discussions about what is 'outstanding PE' and guided them to the conclusion that the ideal of being an inclusive teacher was equated to being an effective teacher, one who has '*the skills and the understanding*' (OBS22) to support **all** pupils to progress in their learning.

All but two tutors clarified that inclusion was frequently and historically equated with processes and practices related to SEND pupils. Instead, it was explained that the course was designed to offer participants the opportunity to learn how to implement '*simple, straightforward*' (TI8) strategies to include all pupils; not just SEND but also those learners who '*sit at the back, who do not want to be involved*' (OBS6):

> '*[It is important to] Understand that many people have 'needs', not just those with a named disability or medical condition, so that this is approach really is about making PE and sport accessible to all*' (TQ19).

By designing learning activities '*in a way that is appropriate*' and '*equally challenging and inspiring for all- those with disabilities and those without*' (TQ19), and with opportunities for pupils to both '*be challenged as well as to be successful*' (TQ8), most tutors strongly believed that '*more pupils [would] get at the end of the education process [having] a positive experience within PE*' (OBS2).

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Indeed, two potential outcomes of effective IPE were acknowledged across all courses observed: more pupils having positive experiences in PE and tailored opportunities to progress in their learning. As articulated by a tutor in the quote below, having pupils who feel confident in their achievements and know where they are in their learning, was portrayed as the 'proof' of inclusive teaching:

> '*When a child is confident enough to tell you what they hope to achieve and how they think they could improve you have included them. When a child with learning difficulties follows instructions, recognises they have been successful and leaves your lesson feeling proud you have included them!*' (TQ4).

Whilst inclusion was introduced at the onset as a fundamental aspect of effective teaching and learning, during the course of the day many tutors' discussions (n= 12) were centred on the '*unique needs*' (OBS14) of SEND pupils. Discussions frequently shifted to problem of access and the closing down of opportunities for 'these pupils'. External (e.g., family) and institutional (e.g., equipment or facilities, staff) barriers were also discussed.

Specifically, some tutors (n=10) expressed concerns about parents who, '*terrified to let them [their children] go and allow them to have life changing experiences*', were supporting their child's absence from PE, '*out of fear that participation might be not beneficial at best or even harmful*' (OBS12). These tutors also criticised the tendency some teaching assistants displayed to '*take control of the child's learning*', reinforcing perceptions around '*seeing*' and '*treating some pupils as fragile*', and thus allowing '*little independence to the child they are looking after'* (OBS18). In contrast, six tutors were keen to share their own success stories, primarily involving SEND pupils who were given the '*right support*' (OBS7) to not only participate in PE but also engage in competitive sport.

The core principles of inclusion

One of the key IPE principles conveyed by the vast majority of tutors observed was that teachers need to understand who their pupils are. This was again primarily linked to working with SEND pupils and having meaningful conversations with them and their carers. Lesson planning would then be based on teachers' understanding of what pupils 'can do' rather than delivering PE lessons grounded in misdirected and ill-informed assumptions about the difficulties some pupils experience:

> '*Think what your students can do. Ask the individual person what they can do. You might presume that they cannot push or that they cannot bring themselves out of the [wheel]chair. Ask them so they are involved in the learning / development process'* (OBS14)

Alongside consensus about the importance of adopting a 'can do' approach, another shared underlying principle for IPE promoted in almost all courses observed was that tasks need to be tailored to pupils' diverse learning needs: '[teachers need to] *adapt the teaching and learning environment to meet individual needs so that all pupils can engage with learning and make the best progress they can*' (TQ20). This was clearly articulated in one questionnaire response:

> '*The PE curriculum and teaching and learning strategies should be designed around the pupils rather than 'fitting in' pupils to pre-planned provision. Also the focus should be on desired outcomes of learning, not on the inputs, so learners can achieve those outcomes in a variety of ways, not one 'acceptable' way*' (TQ6).

As indicated in this extract, this and some of the other tutors (n=10) questioned the idea that all students' achievement can and/or should be 'measured' in a single, narrow way and against 'normative' standards. Instead, these tutors advised teachers to foreground individual

learning targets and individual learning progress, ensuring that pupils have opportunities for success. Here and on other occasions, it was apparent that although tutors shared broad understandings of the notion of inclusion, there was significant variability in the ways they talked about and enacted inclusion in practice.

IPE enacted in practice: differentiated instruction and ability grouping

All tutors advocated that inclusive practice could be achieved readily if teachers had the practical tools and the understanding of how to 'do it'. The tools revolved primarily around the notion of differentiated instruction. In the practical component of the course, most tutors included opportunities for participants to make tasks and activities more tailored to learners with different abilities. For example, one tutor asked participants to create '*three adaptations* [of a given activity] *for more able and three adaptations for less able learners*', so that participants understand ways to challenge all, *across the continuum, from highly able movers to those who struggle*', to work '*at their tipping point*' (OBS5). With the exception of two tutors, such tasks were concerned with individual skill development and the development of fundamental movement skills (e.g., throw and catch or target games), as the example below illustrates:

> '*The tutor demonstrates and explains four activities. "First activity – throw a ball to your partner, if you catch it, take one step back. Choose the ball. Second activity – throw and catch….claps in between. Third activity – you might rock, kick the ball against the wall. Fourth activity – bounce and catch. Individually and then with a partner"* (OBS4).

The extract below illustrates the importance some tutors placed on ensuring that SEND pupils are not standing out from the rest by doing something different:

> '*The tutor explains the activity and asks "if we were doing the same activity and we had a child with a wheelchair, you would have to modify the activity –*

any ideas?" Participants share some ideas and the tutor reinforces the key

point that the whole class is doing the same modification so that the child is

included without doing something different to the whole class' (OBS23).

The most prominent strategies presented were differentiation by space, task, level and

equipment. When tutors talked about differentiation by equipment, they underlined the

importance of giving pupils choice to select equipment to align the level of difficulty of the

task to their abilities. Most other practical tasks appeared to serve the purpose of enhancing

participants' understanding of how to make adaptations *for* their learners. Two tutors did

however promote the idea of teaching pupils how to use the STEP tool to be independent

learners by making appropriate adaptations that worked for them:

'*The tutor talks about a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. He*

says to the participants, 'ask the pupils the question so that they can make it

more challenging. Pupils are able to differentiate for themselves…' And

again, one minute later he said 'when children have the ability to self-

differentiate, they can make better progress' (OBS5).

Grouping based on ability was also presented as a powerful tool to achieve inclusion by many

tutors (n=14). In one course volleyball was used to illustrate this. The tutor explained that

learners can be allocated to one of the three groups to '*be challenged adequately*' and '*to play*

the game at the right level for them' (OBS17). Three tutors presented a different 'version' of

parallel activities, where three activities requiring different level of motor skill competency

were set up, and some learners (e.g., first in the row) could move flexibly between those

activities (to vary the level of challenge and required skills) whilst others (e.g., SEND pupils)

remained in one group, where throwing was possible using a larger albeit lighter and

therefore slower ball.

A critical lens?

Although most tutors (n=15) shared some form of justification about the differentiation strategies promoted, it was only in a small number of courses observed (n=6) that the tutors engaged participants vicariously (practical experience) in co-developing and evaluating possible differentiation strategies. This process is captured in this extract:

> '*Throw tennis. Tutor explains the rules. Two participants play, others watch. After two minutes, the tutor asks 'Is this a fair competition?' … 'What can we do to give this SEND student – Phil - a better chance' and to 'challenge the other student'? …. Participants made a few suggestions (e.g., change partners – people, change rules, the size of the court – space, the use of equipment). Some of these were discussed, trialled in action and each time the tutor asked: 'Are these two making progress? Why are they making more progress now? Why is it more challenging?*') (OBS9).

However, six other tutors tended to present tasks without any critical elaboration. In the example on using three different modes of volleyball game to '*challenge*' all learners '*adequately*', neither the justification offered was grounded in the best available evidence nor an attempt was made to discuss the potential effects of the suggested approach on different learners. This was also the case in the course observed below:

> '*Indoor athletics; relays with obstacles. The tutor discusses how SEND learners could be included by making modifications to the equipment or rules of the race. The tutor changes the obstacles (makes it easier) for the group coming third on both races (equipment). Later on, learners from this group are asked to run a shorter distance (space). Tutor explains how by making these modifications, teachers can give all learners 'equal opportunities for success'. Moving swiftly to the next task with no discussion*' (OBS27).

In a separate course (OBS2), when a primary teacher raised concerns about differentiating by ability, as she knew from '*experience….that this [differentiation by ability] is not something my kids like*', the tutor did not pursue this line of argument further. The teachers were advised instead to '*use their judgement*' to decide which activities '*work*' for them and which do not.

Discussion

This study was designed to explore how CPD providers interpreted and practiced inclusion in the context of a national CPD programme on IPE in England. We concur with O'Connor et al. (2016) that, despite the extensive line of PE research seeking to advance theoretical understandings of equity and inclusion (e.g., Hay and Penney, 2013), and studies that have sought to prompt fresh thinking about PE curriculum and pedagogy from the standpoint of critical pedagogy (Enright and O'Sullivan, 2010; Petrie et al., 2013), the goal of gaining greater clarity of the meaning and application of IPE in CPD settings is complex yet necessary.

Evidence suggested that in important respects the Programme was aligned with an egalitarian, non-categorical understanding of inclusion. Aspects of the tutors' practices reflected what Florian and Spratt (2013) identify as a genuine inclusive pedagogical approach, grounded in the fundamental principle of avoiding treating some children as different. We observed importance being placed on acknowledging and stimulating the learning potential of each student, with inclusive teaching 'rooted in the lived experiences of diverse students' (De Lucas, 2013, p.334). A number of tutors also encouraged participants to rethink student ability and achievement and were critical of an approach to assessment that is based on standardised, 'normative' standards. A participation, rather than performance, discourse was prevalent.

Yet despite this shared conceptual understanding about the 'idea' of inclusion (Artiles, 2006) (the public face), the practical aspect of the course (the private face) was perhaps the space when/where tutors' contrasting interpretations of inclusion and IPE were most vividly evident. On many occasions, IPE was 'a default vocabulary for SEND' (Slee, 2014, p. 12). Although a few tutors offered advice on how to support the 'whole spectrum', there was no evidence of moves to embrace what Fitzpatrick (2018) refers to as 'an intersectional critical pedagogy' (p. 2). With inclusion primarily interpreted as the process of addressing 'ability differences' (Waitoller and Artiles, 2013), the complex intersection of barriers different learners experience, and practical ways to address these, were not considered.

Atkins (2016, p. 8), amongst others (e.g., Thomas, 2013) have warned that teachers are 'increasingly using inclusive education as a means for explaining and protecting the status quo rather than as a means for developing more radical and democratic forms of education'. This observation is pertinent to our findings. In many courses observed a prevailing assumption was that 'if one is involved, one will learn' (Thomas, 2013, p, 483) (i.e. will develop motor skills) without much elaboration on the content and purpose of the PE curriculum, which researchers often portray as gendered, culturally specific and narrowly conceived (Penney et al., 2018). In the context of seeking to support individual learning progress, the most powerful approach was differentiated instruction. Yet, this approach was grounded in narrow/restricted interpretations of inclusion. Important debates and practical considerations associated with the social goals of 'combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities' (UNESCO, 1994, p. 2) and instilling a sense of belonging, identity and relatedness in diverse classrooms were overlooked.

Aligned with an integrative conception of inclusion (DeLucas, 2013), some of the tutors' approaches to inclusive pedagogy were also shown to be infused with particular

perceptions about ability and ability grouping in PE. Whilst some tutors demonstrated how to avoid singling out pupils as different, or explicitly talked about ways to avoid this, others presented ability grouping unproblematically, as a powerful, appropriate and easy-to-implement IPE practice. Fitzgerald (2012) has previously cautioned that the inclusion spectrum, which incorporates 'parallel activities' (i.e. ability groups) has yet to be subjected to intense empirical investigation about its effects and effectiveness and cannot be assumed to be a 'proven' model for effective IPE. Furthermore, researchers (e.g., Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011) caution that teacher-determined differentiation can marginalise and exclude learners. Yet, many tutors failed to scrutinise aspects of differentiated practices that can exclude rather than include learners; and even allured teachers to get quick fix solutions to an otherwise multi-layered, complex educational process.

CPD research suggests that to transform practice in a way that benefits pupils, CPD providers need to ensure that participants have ample opportunities to explore different teaching approaches in a critical way and to analyse them in light of their own, 'ongoing' and sometimes embedded 'systems of practice' (Kennedy 2016). As indicated, this Programme involved teachers in a one-day course, with limitations evident in relation to participants' opportunities for application, analysis and reflection. Critical engagement was largely absent from most courses observed. There were limited opportunities for participants to 'disturb' their current practices or to reflect upon their own beliefs, attitudes and values – factors which appear to shape the ways teachers organise the learning environment (O'Connor et al., 2016). There was also only meagre evidence of a critical pedagogical lens applied with the aim of encouraging participants to analyse the effects of the proposed inclusive practice on pupils (e.g., who benefits from certain activities and who is marginalised?).

Implications and future research

This paper seeks to make an original contribution to the existing literature by providing detailed accounts of tutors' interpretations and practices about IPE, as evidenced in the context of a national CPD programme in England. Data gathered in this research revealed a clear distinction between the expansive elaborations tutors offered on what inclusion means and the often restricted views on what IPE looks like in practice. Findings also suggest that effective tutoring for IPE is a complex process that calls for tutors who have a well-developed conceptual understanding of IPE, the ability to present aligned practical illustrations of IPE, and capacity to promote supportive critical reflection about IPE in varied teaching contexts. It is therefore important that tutors engage in high quality, sustained professional learning opportunities in order to develop nuanced and critical understandings of relevant literature and their own practices. This raises questions for organisations and agencies recruiting CPD tutors to (re)consider existing processes related to tutor CPD in order to assure tutors' currency and depth of knowledge, together with their capability to explore the pedagogical application of complex concepts in innovative and engaging ways.

At a practical level and in the context of this and similar programmes, we emphasise that tutors need support to extend their understanding of how (and when) to make effective pedagogical interventions to challenge participants' perceptions and existing practices, and to support participants to not only experiment with different ideas/strategies, but also articulate their understandings, evaluate (scrutinise) their ideas and synthesise new with existing understandings (Author, 2018). We acknowledge that this has implications for the training provided to tutors and thus, to funding for CPD programmes such as that investigated in this study. However, we contend that such investment is necessary to enhance the quality and effectiveness of such programmes.

This study has also reaffirmed the need for further research to extend insights into the diverse ways in which both ITE and CPD providers variously portray inclusion, and what strategies they employ to support teachers to learn. In the context of the present study, only a subsample of tutors was observed, and in the interests of assuring anonymity, it was not possible to triangulate questionnaire, observation and interview data at the level of the individual tutor. Further, in-depth, extended case study work tracking various tutors is recommended to build upon the insights this study has provided. Furthermore, in order to address the lack of knowledge on what IPE looks like in practice, innovative IPE approaches need to be developed, implemented and evaluated in order to provide the knowledge base upon which similar CPD programmes can be developed. We finally suggest that efforts to advance such innovation should involve multiple stakeholders in IPE and work across initial teacher education and CPD networks.

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ⁱ The observation tool was developed through an extensive partnership-based process between the author and programme designers. Initial codes were developed by the author following the observation of four separate courses, which provided a sharper understanding of the diversity of tutor practices. These codes were then piloted during four additional courses. The final codes were reviewed by programme designers to ensure clarity and alignment with programme expectations.

Although the results reported in this paper derive from qualitative fieldnotes, it is important to note that the initial reliability of the observation tool was also tested. Two research associates observed two separate courses each, alongside the lead researcher (author). Pearson's correlations and t-tests were conducted to examine the relationships and mean differences between the ratings made by the lead researcher and the two research associates. The results revealed the ratings made by the different observers to be strongly positively correlated ($r = .0.74$) and to reflect a good degree of inter-observer reliability (M ICC $= 0.93$ and 0.91)