Discourses of inclusion in initial teacher education: Unravelling a New Zealand ‘number eight wire’ knot

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A B S T R A C T
Institutional politics and diversity of ideological positions create challenges for teaching staff with polarised beliefs about inclusive education. This paper provides a methodological justification for a longitudinal study of the experience of developing an integrated ‘inclusive education’ curriculum in one initial teacher education programme. The research focus is on the day-to-day practicalities of how teacher education programme reform is attempted, rather than abstract theories about how it should take place. First, the paper considers why an ‘inclusive education’ approach is problematic. Second, the case narrative approach is explained. Finally, examples from two years of programme development are discussed.

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1. Introduction

Although New Zealand is a relatively small country (population est. 4.28 million, September 2008), it has a large number of pre-service teacher education providers. While over 90% of primary school pre-service teacher education in the country now occurs in the public university sector, there are, nevertheless, a total of 30 approved providers of early childhood, primary, and secondary teacher education, including Māori language medium teacher education, in both public and private sector institutions. Increasing government concern that providers offer 85 different qualifications in a range of delivery modes such as campus-based, distance and online delivery prompted a series of reviews of initial teacher education. Four studies were commissioned by the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Teachers Council over a two year period.

In the most recent report, Initial Teacher Education Policy and Practice, Kane (2005, p. 88) examined the documentation for each teacher education programme in New Zealand. She noted that the core content of the teacher education programmes could be viewed broadly as: curriculum studies (study of the curriculum documents and requirements, pedagogy and assessment); subject studies (student teachers’ own knowledge of special subjects or disciplines); educational studies (the purposes of education, how children learn, human development, inclusive education, sociology philosophy, history of education, the role of the Treaty of Waitangi); and, professional practice (the role of the professional, critical reflection on the practicum, development as a teacher, ethics, and legal responsibilities).

Kane (2005) observed that while the graduating standards for these programmes identified that all teachers need to be able to teach a diverse range of students, the standards were usually expressed in general terms such as being able to ‘work with all students’. Inclusive education was not a compulsory component for most of the teacher training providers, although there were optional ‘add on’ courses in many. Kane (2005) stated that “explicit attention given to inclusion theory and practice is variable at best or apparently absent from most qualifications” (p. xv). With regard to inclusion, Kane noted (p. 20) that: most providers did not have a clearly articulated policy on inclusion; most referred to inclusion within the graduate profiles or outcome statements rather than within explicit policy; undergraduate programmes generally required students to complete at least one paper on inclusion (but with a focus on diversity and/or special needs); one year graduate programmes typically adopted an infusion

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The Treaty of Waitangi was originally signed in 1840 by representatives of the British Crown and various Māori tribal chiefs. In recent decades, it has been revived to permit both Treaty partners to address historical tribal grievances and safeguard indigenous resources, culture and autonomy.
or integrated approach to inclusion; and that there was little evidence of relevant theory used in programmes, or of the literature on inclusive teacher education practice.

In a related policy strand, the Ministry of Education has commissioned a series of systematic reviews of the literature (‘Best Evidence Synthesis’ or BES in the New Zealand vernacular) to support ‘evidence-based’ education policy development. In the recent BES on ‘quality teaching’, preparing teacher graduates with the confidence and ability to teach all learners has been identified as a characteristic of such teaching.

The central professional challenge for teachers is to manage simultaneously the complexity of learning needs of diverse students. The concept of ‘diversity’ is central to the synthesis. This frame rejects the notion of a ‘normal’ group and ‘other’ or minority groups of children and constitutes diversity and difference as central to the classroom endeavour and central to the focus of quality teaching in Aotearoa, New Zealand (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. 5).

In New Zealand, this has signalled further fracturing of the discourse around inclusion insofar as policy for inclusion no longer refers solely to pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities but also to the incorporation of diversity and difference in all its forms at the centre of pedagogy. This poses major conceptual and practical challenges for teaching and teacher education to change sedimented historical practices and dispositions that have long been oriented to ‘special’ education.

At Massey University, the institution where the present research is being conducted, special education and, latterly, inclusive education have been taught as a compulsory single course component (out of 24) during the final year of the former three-year undergraduate programme. This course has been taught by a small group of inclusive education teaching staff with specific interests, practitioner experience and research expertise in this area. For the majority of teaching staff, inclusive education has been an ‘other’ course. Conversely, in the new four-year programme which began in February 2008, this segregated approach has been abandoned in favour of an integrated model in which all teaching staff are required to address issues of diversity and difference.

Equally, teaching staff are required periodically to demonstrate to external programme monitors on behalf of external agencies of the state that such issues are being actively addressed in practice. For example, the statutory approval to offer a pre-service teacher education programme required from the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) takes place via submission of a comprehensive written proposal, a formal panel review of documentation and a site visit (NZTC, 2005). The required written evidence drills down to a detailed ‘quality assurance’ audit of the programme’s philosophy and conceptual framework and an examination of the learning materials, resources, experiences and assessment tasks that are to be provided to students. There are frequent references to elements of, or proxies for, ‘inclusive practice’—broadly defined—in both the NZTC criteria for approval of programmes and its new graduating standards for teachers (NZTC, 2007). The existence of these criteria and standards implies that teaching staff will be held to account for the ways in which the programme’s paper commitment to an integrated approach will, in practice, be realised.

2. Issues in developing inclusive education in teacher education programmes

One of the major difficulties in preparing teachers for the ideal of inclusive education in New Zealand is that special education ideology is still very dominant in thinking, policy and practice. Historically, special education was constructed on an ideology of individual pathology, that created demarcations between normal and abnormal, on theories of deficit, and on the belief that only expert teachers can know about, and meet the needs of, students who are disabled (Ballard, 1990). However, as Corbett and Slee (2000), point out: “A great deal of theory and practice which forms the special educational tradition is essentially disabling, compounds the patterns of educational and social exclusion we witness in schools and communities” (p. 143).

Inclusive education, in contrast, does not involve itself in normalising, labelling, and pathologising learners. Inclusive education involves itself in identifying and minimising the interactive socio-cultural factors that influence the idea of disability and difficulty. Obviously, teacher education is not immune from the dilemmas that originate in these differing positions, and it is special education discourse that is at present deeply entrenched in most teacher education programmes in New Zealand. Moreover, Slee (2001) warns of the dangers of “linguistic dexterity” (p. 167), when traditional special educators use the language of inclusion to describe unchanged, special education practices based on assumptions of pathological deficit, discrimination and exclusion.

In a recent study, examining the nature and extent of initial teacher education and ongoing professional learning around inclusive education in New Zealand, Morton and Gordon (2006) found that there were problems with how the concept of inclusion is defined and used in the education sector.

It is our view that these competing discourses permeate every ‘level’ of inclusion from government policy making to individual schools and classrooms. The findings of our study indicate a sector rife with differing definitions and meanings, disparate policies and practices, highly uneven descriptions of what inclusion means in teacher education, courses that uphold the theory of inclusion but not its practice, and resistant discourses at the level of the school. It is therefore not surprising that the emerging teacher may not always have a clear view of what inclusion means in New Zealand schools (Morton & Gordon, 2006, p. 10).

Another recent study in New Zealand, reporting on the experiences of disabled children who had been excluded or marginalised from regular school, showed that teachers demonstrated a lack of responsibility to disabled students (Kearney, 2007). This was by way of: abdicating responsibility for the disabled student to the teacher aide; refusing full attendance of disabled students if the school felt they did not have the resources to ‘cope’; expecting they had the right to say if they wanted a disabled student in their class or not; not providing learning materials to disabled learners as they would for non-disabled learners and not reporting on the progress of disabled learners as they would for non-disabled learners.

Such problems are exacerbated by the absence of an explicit commitment to inclusive education by the New Zealand Ministry of Education. The Ministry continues to prefer the term special education, which is described using ideologies of individual deficit and categorisation of impairment:

Students with special education needs include learners with disabilities, learning difficulties, communication or behaviour difficulties, sensory or physical impairments (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Although the Ministry of Education has begun to use the term ‘inclusive education’ in some texts, this has been by way of a synonym for special education and often used in conjunction with it, as in ‘inclusive/special education’. Nonetheless, there is also evidence that the Ministry is attempting to focus the attention of teacher education providers on preparing graduates to meet the needs of an increasingly heterogeneous school population, through
its Strategy for Preparing Beginning Teachers to Teach Diverse Learners Effectively (Ministry of Education, 2005). This strategy aims to improve the quality of initial teacher education and is based on a coordinated interagency approach. All agencies involved in the development of the strategy agree to work towards the goal that “Teacher education graduates teach diverse learners effectively.” The strategy outlines an overall intended outcome and five key objectives. So, for example, the intended outcome states:

Student teachers and beginning teachers must gain the skills, knowledge and pedagogical strategies that will make them effective teachers of all of New Zealand’s diverse learners. Teacher educators must ensure student teachers and beginning teachers have the desirable dispositions and values that are needed to make them effective teachers of all of our students. The key outcome of the strategy is assurance that practices are in place to provide professional support and other conditions to enable teacher educators and initial teacher education programmes to meet this complex challenge (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 2).

In addition to the discursive effects of educational philosophy, policy and practice within a given system, a second major issue in teacher preparation is that an integrated model of inclusive education for pre-service teachers may simply not work. Garner (2000) describes ‘permeation’ or ‘infused’ models as “a process by which special educational needs matters are embedded within other, usually subject-based parts of a teacher training course” (p. 113). He claims the original intention of permeation was to encourage all those teaching in courses to include special educational issues and also to send out a clear message of inclusion.

This is obviously a worthy aim; however, some studies into infused or permeated models report negative outcomes. Criticisms include the argument that infused models do not allow enough time for pre-service teachers to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes; the level of inclusive input is often left up to the judgment of individual tutors; and that because of their nature, infused models are difficult to monitor (Cook, 2002; Garner, 1996, 2000). The evidence is, nonetheless, mixed. There are some studies that report greater or lesser degrees of success in attempting to infuse the teaching of special-inclusive education curricula within pre-service teacher education programmes (Carroll, Forlin, & Jolting, 2002; Kluth & Straut, 2003; Poon-McBrayer, 2004). Overall, though, the inference to be taken from the literature is that the integration of inclusive education within pre-service teacher education programmes remains both contentious in conception and problematic in its execution.

3. Studying curriculum reform at Massey University

The foregoing discussion has described the complex policy, institutional and regulatory contexts within which the curricular reform of initial teacher education at Massey University is taking place. This raises questions about the way in which meaningful and systematic inquiry into the development and implementation of a radically revised initial teacher education programme might be undertaken. In a report on the work of the American Educational Research Association’s Panel on Research and Teacher Education (Cochrane-Smith & Fries, 2005), the issue of the use of research to justify the structure of teacher education programmes was raised. Different assumptions, conclusions and arguments were based on the same research, and there was little evidence that linked a strong research base to the teacher education programme content and delivery. An acknowledgement of the scant evidential base for a theoretical approach to the study of our reforms led us to focus on the day-to-day practicalities of how teacher education programme reform is attempted, rather than abstract theories about how it should take place. A key interest for our project focuses on how to research the practicalities of bringing a new teacher education programme from words on a page, to lived reality in pedagogical practices and student experiences.

The revised programme aims to challenge the existing assumptions and practices of teaching staff regarding the best way to prepare beginning teachers to teach disabled students in diverse elementary school classrooms. The central question for the researchers is:

“How do teaching staff at this university, with opposing views on inclusive education, engage with the preparation of beginning teachers who will work with disabled pupils?”

The emphasis of the research is firmly on engagement in routine teacher education work over time, as the programme unfolds, rather than abstract a priori theories of how to engage. Researcher interest lies in understanding how teacher educators work with and against each other, in and around ‘inclusive education practices’, within a particular teacher education programme in one provincial university in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This is a complex issue that, ultimately, calls for practical resolutions. As such, the title of this article uses a ‘number eight wire’ metaphor. This metaphor resonates strongly with New Zealand colonial popular cultural discourses of creative problem-solving, making do and getting by with limited tools and resources. Because the study focuses on the actual practice not the abstract theory of teacher education programme development, it is argued that a case narrative approach, in this instance Bent Flyvbjerg’s (1998, 2001) ‘narratology’, is most appropriate to explore the playing out of issues of ‘power-knowledge’ (Foucault, 1981) that are implicit in the research question.

The methodological justification for the use of a case narrative lies in the sense that “the aim of methodology is to help us understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself” (Cohen & Manion, 1989, p. 42). So far, we have considered two major reasons why an ‘inclusive education’ approach to pre-service teacher education programme design is likely to be contentious or problematic. Consistent with Flyvbjerg’s emphasis on ‘the little things’ in social science research, the final part of the paper illustrates the usefulness of Flyvbjerg’s methodology by reference to selected structures in the emerging case that were put in place during 2007 and 2008, the first years of programme delivery. The purpose of these structures was to encourage a broadly consistent approach to inclusion (a) across the programme as a whole and (b) among staff and students within the various courses that comprise the programme.

4. Researching the practical realities of teacher education programme development

This section discusses the complex process of attempting a ‘narratology’ or case narrative (Flyvbjerg, 1998, 2001) of the development, approval and implementation phases of one new programme of pre-service teacher education at Massey University, New Zealand. It is, then, the study of a particular, local case.

The intention over coming years is to “emphasize the little things” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 133) or the minutiae of everyday events that constitute the practical establishment of one teacher education programme which adopts an integrated approach to teaching inclusive education in one “remote corner of the universe” (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p. 1). This is a programme where all staff in every paper or course are required to take responsibility to encourage ‘inclusive education practices’, irrespective of their qualifications, disciplinary background, expertise or prior experience. As we have
argued above, such a conception of teacher education sits in sharp contrast to that of the former programme in which a single dedicated course on inclusive education has been taught by specialist ‘inclusive education’ staff to students, normally in the final year of the programme.

In order to give a narrative account of the programme’s practical development, it is important to focus on concrete attempts by teaching staff to realise values in what they do, when and how. This places the exercise of power or realpolitik at the centre of analysis and thereby gets closer to the reality (Flyvbjerg, 2001) of ‘doing’ teacher education for staff and students in the programme. In particular, it foregrounds the experiences of the various teaching staff in terms of their attempts to influence the direction of ‘inclusive education practices’ within this. In other words, over the coming years the researchers will write a ‘warts ‘n’ all case narrative.

Actual practices are studied before their rules, and one is not satisfied by learning only about those parts of practices that are open to public scrutiny... In order to stay close to the complexities and contradictions of existence, case researchers...demur from the role of omniscient narrator and summarizer in favour of gradually allowing the case narrative to unfold from the diverse, complex, and sometimes conflicting stories that people, documents, and other evidence tell them. This approach leaves ample scope for readers to make different interpretations and draw diverse conclusions (Flyvbjerg, 2001, pp. 85–86).

Teacher education programmes come into being both rationally and discursively. Occasionally, rationality and discursive practices dovetail neatly, but most frequently they do not. This is because the practices of programme development occur in complex cultural, workgroup, institutional and regulatory social networks, generally over extended periods of time. The practices involve inevitable struggles and tensions between analytical, practical and value rationalities (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Thus, at the outset one might reasonably propose an analytically rational response (Flyvbjerg, 2001, pp. 14–15), based on theoretical and empirical research evidence, to a problem or challenge in pre-service teacher education (e.g., in order to help novice teachers “take difference into account from the outset”, or disabuse them “of the notion that they are not qualified to teach disabled children”, or enable them “to learn new strategies for working with and through others” (Florian, 2007a)). However, this analytical rationality frequently mutates in both form and substance as a result of (i) the exercise of power by individuals and groups, (ii) practical rationality considerations of programme implementation in particular circumstances and cases (Flyvbjerg, 2001, pp. 135–136), and (iii) the effects of differing, contested ideologies and positions among the various participants who bring a paper programme to life—that is, their value rationalities (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 167).

Among inclusive education discursive practices that advocate “new ways of thinking and working” (Florian, 2007b), this mutation seems to occur frequently where proponents of ‘inclusive education’ (based on learners’ rights or the need for whole school, whole curriculum reform) become mired in debates based on value rationalities. This seems to be less the case among their colleagues who teach categorical ‘special education’ curricula where analytic rationality is arguably more visible. That is not to suggest that practical and value rationalities are to be discouraged or silenced. On the contrary, they are a natural part of any complex and worthwhile educational process. The issue is to understand how these operate on language, practice and relations in real educational settings, and to accept that the apparently compelling logic of theory and research alone will not secure genuine ‘inclusion’ in practice, either in teacher education programmes or in schools and classrooms. That being the ‘case’, what sources of evidence are available to us as researchers in order to find out what is going on in terms of teaching staff engagement with the requirements of an integrated inclusive education curriculum?

The programme is being implemented from February 2008 until the first cohort of graduands emerges in December 2011. We, therefore, have the case to hand on which to base our social inquiry, as well as our professional practice. If we are to remain true to the aims of Flyvbjerg’s narratology or case narrative, we need as stated above to ‘attend to actual practices before their rules’ and to focus on ‘the diverse, complex, and sometimes conflicting stories that people, documents, and other evidence tell’ us.

This suggests that we might reasonably consider three main domains of data gathering: archival or documentary sources, the experiences of teaching staff, and the experiences of students in the programme. In terms of the first of these, we are fortunate in so far as a sizeable archive already exists that documents the process of programme review and reform from December 2004, to date. This comprises minutes of meetings and staff blogs, consultation and discussion papers, an external qualifications review, minutes and other artefacts from numerous paper writing and steering groups involved in the implementation process since 2007, and so on.

Many staff involved in these processes would also be able to flesh out for us the practices that are not currently ‘open to public scrutiny’. And, it is surely these that will in future prove most illuminating in terms of the practical and value rationalities of ‘doing’ teacher education reform. Thus, purposively chosen interviews will also form a major part of our data gathering and emerging understanding of what is taking place over coming years. While these interviews afford crucial self-reported data, we will also be interested in undertaking observations of practice. For example, we will observe students in action in classrooms attempting to work in inclusive ways; we will also want to observe how teaching staff bring to life their paper obligation to infuse or permeate inclusive education throughout each of the courses in the degree, both face to face and in the Moodle online learning system adopted for the new programme—this in itself creates significant ethical challenges for us as insider participants researchers.

Overall, then, the narratological research agenda of this study concerns the practical realities of attempting and practising radical reform of teacher education practices in the context of inclusive education. Within the constraints of this paper, however, there is space only to demonstrate how the archival record is already burgeoning, in real time, through the process of programme implementation. Two archival sources are used in the next part of the paper to illustrate early practical attempts to influence the conception of inclusive education in the programme within the Moodle learning management system: at programme level, a teaching staff community site (BEd (Teaching) Primary Development Community); and, at course level, learning materials that have been written to encourage students to understand the practical teaching implications of ‘diversity’ and ‘inclusion’ within one course (136.108 Introduction to Classroom Practice), which prepares students to undertake their first practicum experience.

5. Framing conceptions of inclusive education for staff and students

According to the conceptual framework for the programme (Massey University College of Education, 2007a), inclusion, together with biculturalism and information and communication technologies (ICT), is an ‘integrating theme’. This means that all the staff in the programme are responsible for ensuring that the
developed by teams of teaching staff and as part of this, seeks

At programme level, an emerging infrastructure of practical support for implementation of the programme, as conceived, has been operationalised during 2007 and 2008 by the programme management group through the Development Community site in Moodle. The Development Community site has been consciously planned to encourage and frame both informal and formal social interaction among teaching staff across the programme as a whole. By 2008, the first year of programme implementation, it had grown from a simple noticeboard and repository of working documents to comprise the following sections: ‘General news and bulletins’ (including a forum for weekly updates from the programme management group); a discussion forum for ‘Big questions/Little questions’, official ‘Programme documents’ (including the conceptual framework, graduate profile, and programme structure); ‘Researching your own BEd Teaching’ which includes advice and exemplars of the scholarship of teaching together with links to external websites such as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, ‘Design aids’ that provide templates and checklists for the writing of student learning materials, official outlines for all courses in each of the three substantive teaching strands: ‘context’, ‘content’ and ‘professional practice’ (to promote connections within and across courses), and ‘Thematic resources’. It is the latter that is most relevant to this discussion.

In the ‘Thematic resources’ section of the Development Community sit three documents written by teaching staff with relevant expertise, to provide basic guidance for those who do not have expertise. The documents are: ‘Inclusion guidelines’, ‘Bilingual education guidelines’ and ‘ICT guidelines’. The ‘Inclusion guidelines’ (Massey University College of Education, 2007b) were written for teaching staff in the programme following a professional development session on inclusion run in early 2007 by staff who teach in the area. These guidelines comprise a definition of inclusion, principles of inclusion to be ‘reinforced’ by teaching staff, examples of ‘opportunities’ to develop inclusive knowledge, skills and attitudes that should be offered to students, and a list of expert staff who may be asked to help those without expertise. In the definition, inclusion is:

...seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (UNESCO, 2005, p. 13). Furthermore, the Index for Inclusion suggests that inclusion is the process of increasing the presence, participation and achievement of all students in their local schools, with particular reference to those groups of students who are at risk of exclusion, marginalization, or underachievement (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) (Massey University College of Education, 2007b).

At the time of writing, no formal evaluation has been undertaken by the programme management group of the extent to which this or the other two integrating themes have in practice been embodied within each of the first year courses. However, the management group does peer review course designs as they are developed by teams of teaching staff and as part of this, seeks specific assurances on the ways in which each of the themes is actively incorporated. While, at this early stage of programme implementation, this does not guarantee that inclusion is woven systematically throughout all papers, and, indeed, is unlikely to meet the desirable practice suggested in the guidelines document, it does mean that teaching staff are required to articulate a justification for the extent to which they have or have not adopted the guidelines. As such, inclusion at the very least forms part of the discursive language and practices of teaching staff course teams. This in and of itself may be argued to be a sign of modest constructive progress. Yet, as will be evident from the discussion, the relationship between the Development Community site and what is actually created to facilitate teaching and learning within individual courses is not deterministic.

In developing guidelines and templates to support course writing teams, a principled but contested decision was taken that irrespective of study mode, all students should access learning activities online in Moodle, while only compulsory course readings would be provided in hard copy (Massey University College of Education, 2007c). Highly structured guided reading and directed learning activities were introduced to scaffold deeper participation in intended course learning among growing numbers of what the scholarship of teaching literature now ubiquitously refers to as ‘non-traditional students’.

Within the course writing and teaching team for 136.108 Introduction to Classroom Practice, there are six staff. Of these, two have expertise in inclusion, one in biculturalism, and another in the education of Pasifika peoples. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the learning materials and pedagogies adopted within this particular first year course convey a strong emphasis on both cultural diversity and inclusion. To illustrate this, the first of four modules in this single semester course is described below.

Module one is entitled Marau: A metaphor for diversity and inclusion. The introduction to the module informs students that:

In semester one you were introduced to narratives and stories. In this module we extend your understanding and look at the ways children’s stories, and teachers’ stories shape their understanding about schools and learning. You will write stories of your experiences and learn that your stories may be different to your peers’ stories depending on a range of personal, social and cultural factors. These ideas about story will be developed as you explore narrative pedagogies (Massey University College of Education, 2008).

In the module, students are introduced to Clandinin’s (2006) conception of storied lives of children and teachers, in and out of school; they have structured opportunities to observe (using various static and moving image online resources), narrate and reflect on various stories of teaching and learning in diverse educational settings, they vicariously explore the experience of exclusion through the eyes and words of young children (Paley, 1989, 1992); consider how children and adults from indigenous cultures want their diverse local experiences of a colonising education to change (Wendt Samu, 2006), and what all this means for the ‘culturally responsive pedagogy’ of relations (Bishop, Ber-ryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007, p. 15) they will endeavour to create in their own classrooms as teachers. Specifically, they explore the meanings and concrete implications for their pedagogical practice of Māori cultural metaphors around teaching and learning, or ako (on the basis that when they graduate from the programme, the classrooms in which they work will be increasingly heterogeneous, socially, economically and culturally). Throughout the module, they are encouraged to articulate realistic stories to live and teach by, and to see teaching as the process of helping young people to develop the capacity to change and enrich the stories they
in turn live by. It is a practical, skill focused (Flyvbjerg, 2001) induction to the emancipatory potential of inclusion in its broadest sense, but one that is also grounded, just as strongly, in relevant classroom research and theory.

6. Conclusion

The paper as a whole has argued a methodological justification for adopting a ‘case narrative’ approach to investigating the practical ways in which teaching staff, with opposing views on inclusion, bring into existence a new university-based teacher education programme where inclusion is ‘taught’ in integrated fashion by all teaching staff, not separately by those with specialist disciplinary knowledge and attendant ideological commitments.

The paper has introduced two major potential difficulties of adopting such an integrated approach. The national teacher education context in which the programme under study is currently being implemented has also been discussed. Given these contextual complexities, it has been argued that research on programme implementation may most usefully focus on the details and practicalities of implementation over time, not abstract theories or ideologies of how teachers should be prepared to teach inclusively.

Flyvbjerg’s (1998, 2001) narratology enables us to probe the politics of innovation and change, how actual events come to be and how these are shaped by the power and knowledge that is differentially distributed among individuals and groups. In this paper, two of the artefacts of these activities have been described in respect of the first years of implementation of the programme under study. In order to develop richer and more complete understandings of how and why inclusive teacher education programmes develop as they do, other sources of data, particularly the reported experiences of teaching staff and students, will clearly be needed in future. For now, though, we can say with some confidence that the archival record of what teaching staff actually do provides a fruitful line of inquiry in our attempts to unravel the complex knot of inclusive teacher education programme reform.

References
