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*Further Education and Inclusive Practice: Past experiences, Current Issues and Future
Concerns*

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Drawing on data collected in two stages this paper analyses the inclusive practices of a vocational sport programme at a college of Further and Higher Education in the North West of England. Thoughts and experiences were sought through the creation of an analytical auto ethnography alongside in depth interviews with key actors. Research focused on the historical development of inclusive practices, the current issues that are being faced and the future concerns of the college as it seeks to navigate the current social, economic and political landscape. The data disclosed that the college is facing complex challenges through the current Governments fiscal policy of austerity, impacting the college's capacity to promote social justice through inclusive practice. Policy is reduced to its financial imperative creating a situation where the college is no longer a site of resistance but one of survival through compliance.

Key Words

Further Education - Inclusion – Social Justice - Analytical Auto Ethnography –
Resistance

Introduction

The ideas of ‘inclusion’ and ‘inclusive practices’ are relatively new phenomena within Further Education (FE) Colleges in England, yet the terms have become ubiquitous across the sector. Inclusion is a misunderstood and misused concept that has, to some degree, become a ‘taken for granted’ assumption (Atkins 2016). It is most frequently constructed as a form of social justice, yet in many instances implemented by colleges and practitioners through a sense of duty; becoming formulated in policy and practice through institutional requirements rather than through a clear belief in the ideology itself. This creates a circumstance where inclusion is a fundamental principle for some, but no more than a convenient language for others (Dyson 2005). The impact is manifested through a disparity of provision, ensuring that inclusion, as a term and as an ethos, remains highly ambiguous. In the context of this research however, inclusion is understood as a journey (Culham and Nind 2003); a continuing journey towards social justice as opposed to a destination that can currently be realised (Naylor 2005). The rationale for this is that *‘inclusion must be seen as a never ending process rather than a simple change of state’* (Ainscow 1999, 128). The complexity of developing and maintaining inclusive practices within an FE college in England is conceptualised here within a social justice framework. The intention of this framework is to explain how inclusive practices are implemented and the challenges associated with maintaining an inclusive ethos as a tool to improve the life chances of all students.

This article is situated at a large College of Further and Higher Education in the North West of England with over 900 members of staff and over 16,000 students on a variety of different courses. The majority of students are from the most economically deprived local areas and almost two thirds of students enrol at the college without having

achieved five GCSEs (General Certificate of Education) at grades A* to C and 14% of the local population have no qualifications (Ofsted 2017). The college developed an inclusive ethos through the removal of all discreet provision (students with disabilities and / or learning difficulties educated together in the same class). All provision is mixed and students, regardless of their social and behavioural issues, disability and or learning difficulty were educated together on the same courses and in the same classrooms. The removal of discreet courses from the curriculum offer is unique within the sector, as all other FE Colleges in England maintain some form of discreet provision.

Data collection occurred over two stages. Stage one used an analytical auto ethnographic approach to collect the reflective thoughts and experiences of professionals (including the author) that worked on a specific vocational sport programme between 2004 and 2014. The research focused solely on a Level 1 BTEC Sport programme that is a pre-GCSE level programme. The course is designed for individuals who have not passed those qualifications alongside returning students who have achieved minimal if any qualifications during their previous compulsory schooling. During stage one the aim was to reconnect with the past to enable a clearer understanding of how the programme attempted to apply the inclusive ethos that was being developed within the college and how successful that process was. Stage two collected qualitative data through individual and focus group interviews with staff currently working on the programme between 2014 and 2017. Teaching staff, support workers and college managers were also interviewed to develop a broader understanding of the current state of inclusive practice on the programme and at the college as a whole. The aim was to determine the current issues and future challenges for delivering and developing inclusive programmes in these contexts.

Inclusion and inclusive practices are best understood through the concept that FE is never neutral; it does not exist apart from the social, economic and political worlds that surround it. The development of the inclusion within the college has not taken place in isolation. The programme and the college are influenced by the particular demographic, geographical, political and economic factors that shape it alongside contextually specific values and beliefs within the college (Ainscow and Miles 2008). This process has become more challenging since 2010 with the election of the Conservative-led coalition Government and subsequent Conservative governments under David Cameron in 2015 and Theresa May in 2017. The sector is persisting in a financially and ethically diminished form (Dennis 2016); it is in a state of crisis through the fiscal policy of austerity adopted by the Conservatives. The complexity of including students within further education is reinforced by the fact that those who have previously been excluded comes at a price (Tomlinson 2015); the greater the cuts are to the sector, the greater the threat to developing and sustaining inclusive practices.

The article begins by providing the context for the Further Education and Skills Sector in England, the inclusive development of the college and the social and economic issues within the borough where the college exists. Next a key historical policy that relates to inclusive practice with FE is analysed alongside a reflection of the current state of inclusion within FE in England before the methods are described and in particular the approach of analytical auto ethnography. Following this the data is presented in two separate stages and the development, maintenance and future issues of inclusive practices within an FE college will be analysed within the framework of social justice.

Research Context

Further Education

Originally FE colleges in England were owned and controlled by Local Education Authorities (LEA). LEAs are a local council body responsible for administering education in a particular geographical area. Through the implementation of the Further and Higher Education Act (FHEA) (1992) colleges became corporate bodies, independent from the LEA, but funded directly and inspected by a national organisation, the Further Education Funding Council (DBIS 2012). This created a transformational shift with the sector now being driven by a heightened neo-liberal model that focused on targets and outcomes with successive governments seeking to control costs and to engineer quasi-market conditions (Simmons and Thompson 2007). These changes instituted an approach to college leadership that *'subsumed public service commitments beneath a business ethos'* (Dennis, 2016, 122). Further development at the end of the 1990s brought the coming together of further education, work-based learning, employability programmes and community education as the Learning and Skills Sector. The Learning and Skills Act (2000) brought together the sector under the new national funding and planning agency, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). In 2007, the whole of the learning and skills sector gradually became known as 'further education'. Whilst there is no settled consensus about its name today, the most widely used term is the 'Further Education and Skills sector' (DBIS 2012).

FE colleges in England, such as the college featured in this article, generally offer vocational programmes across different levels, ranging from 'Entry Level' (below GCSE level) to Level 5 (Higher National Diplomas / Foundation Degrees). They also

offer academic pathways through GCSE and A-Level provision, alongside apprenticeships, ESOL (English for Speakers of other Languages) and Foundation programmes (Access to Higher Education). FE colleges contain significant numbers of unskilled, unemployed and otherwise socially disadvantaged students. The most recent statistics available from 2016 show that there were 209 FE colleges and 127,000 full time staff of which 65,000 are academic staff. They catered for a total number of 839,000 students aged 14 – 18, 17% of those students have a learning difficulty and / or disability (AOC 2016). Alongside this there have been an extremely high level of cuts over the last seven years through the deliberate fiscal policy of austerity. Overall there has been a third cut from the Further Education and Skills budget since 2010 with the drop in the overall budget falling from 3 billion to 2 billion between 2009 and 2015. In 2015 the National Audit Office warned that the number of colleges with inadequate financial health was expected to rise rapidly. This has proven to be the case as by 2017 41 colleges were subject to a notice of concern over their financial health (Belgutay 2017).

The Local Authority and the College

The local authority in which the college is based has a strong industrial and manufacturing heritage and a highly problematic present. It was ranked as 13th out of 353 local authorities in England on the 2015 Index of multiple deprivation. At this time a total 10.3% of the population were unemployed with 20.7% claiming some form of working age benefit and 31.2% of the population are economically inactive. In terms of educational issues 28.7% of residents had no qualification, 7.3% of 16-18 year olds were not in education, employment or training and 24.6% of children were living in poverty (BwD 2013). In 2011 there were a number of areas where people with a long-

term illness or disability was as high as 26% with 15 out of 23 wards having a percentage of 19 or higher (Census 2011).

The original adoption of inclusive practice at the college was a direct response to these ‘poverties’ and their impact. This process started in 1991 with a report on provision for adults with learning disabilities at the college. The key recommendation from the report identified that if the college delivers inclusion through providing individual support, encouraging social networks and providing appropriate role models, *‘it is difficult to imagine what the rationale for discreet provision might be’* (Austin, Gathercole and Kagan, 1991, 20). The former manager of the Additional Learning Support (ALS) Department, who was instrumental in creating institutional change, defined inclusion as a ‘human right’ and stated that there is no value in segregation within a learning environment as it diminishes an educational culture. Inclusion at the college was simply defined as seeing every person as a student first, providing support to enable them to achieve their goals through a non-segregated curriculum (Harwood 2013). The college moved from a discreet curriculum-based model to a cross college inclusive support model, where support for all students was recognised as the responsibility of all staff. It is important to identify at this point that not all staff at the college universally embraced inclusive practices; many small battles were fought on a daily basis across the college to ensure the continuation of the process towards full inclusion. This approach preceded key policy (which will be discussed in the next section) and impacted upon the lives of numerous students through embedding an inclusive ethos throughout the college.

Origins of inclusion in Further Education

The development of inclusive practice within FE is best understood through the desire for social justice within an educational context. The pursuit of social justice is a reflection of the desire for a more equitable society through the development of a deeper understanding of the meanings of injustice. Reflecting this desire for a more socially just model of FE was a report entitled 'Inclusive Learning' (Tomlinson, 1996). This was a significant policy development and was the first national review of FE for students with learning difficulties and / or disabilities. At its heart was a desire to move away from discreet provision, to a less fragmented and more inclusive approach. Findings from the review influenced attitudes, understanding and ultimately the culture of FE colleges (Wright 2006). There were two main findings that emerged from the report. First, the quality of learning opportunities was poorer for those with learning difficulties and / or disabilities alongside the fact that they were not properly represented in FE. Secondly, there was a switch in thinking that moved away from having the deficit with the learner and looked at how the institution should respond to the individual. This approach related to the social model of disability, focusing on the view that people were not disabled by their impairments but by the disabling barriers they faced within society. The social model challenged the hegemony of special education through the removal of some disabling barriers (Oliver 2013). This emphasised the need to redesign provision through curriculum change, developing an equitable approach through the inclusion of all students. The report was clear as to its intention for colleges to implement inclusive practices. It made a number of recommendations including the development of long term strategic plans, ensuring the principles of inclusion

underpinned funding and inspection, to increase the participation of underrepresented groups and a centrally coordinated programme of staff development.

This policy was implemented (though not commissioned) by the New Labour Government under Prime Minister Tony Blair. In 1997 they swept into power on a tidal wave of rhetoric, most notably '*education, education, education*' and a commitment to reform (Hodkinson 2012). They aligned the English education system, and therefore FE, with the international movement towards inclusive education. Rapid implementation of policy and the positioning of inclusion within these policies enabled New Labour to portray itself as a political party at the forefront of thinking within the field (Dyson 2005). Throughout New Labour's time in office, education was seen as both a valuable economic driver and an important vessel in delivering social justice. FE found itself at the nexus of the New Labour government's social and economic policies through a stampede of initiatives and policies that attempted to draw more people into education, and to standardise and control what they learned there (Orr 2008). There was however, no clear, standardised approach to inclusive practice across the sector, ensuring discreet provision continued as the default position and the '*impetus and previous motivation for a more integrated model started to wane*' (Wright 2006, 36).

A more in depth analysis of New Labour policy on FE alongside the policy of the UK Government since 2010 would provide further detail but it is not the intention of this article to explore policy in depth. It is however important to identify a key policy development of the UK Government from 2010-2017 and how this has increased the complexity and difficulty for the college and its implementation of inclusive practice. The most significant report into the Further Education and Skills sector under the coalition Government was entitled '*A Review of Further Education: The Wolfe Report*'

(DBIS 2011). The focus of the report was in transforming vocational programmes to meet the contextual needs of young people. In the foreword, the Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning, John Hayes, stated that the reforms recommended in the report would *'deliver economic growth with all that means for standards of living and communal wellbeing'*. Within the document there is no mention of key terms that would impact on the communal wellbeing of all students, namely: inclusion, inclusive, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). This was the flagship report of the coalition government and raises serious questions as to the commitment to inclusive education across the sector. The cabinet office stated in 2010 that it wanted to *'remove the bias towards inclusion'* and whilst this did not silence the terminology of inclusion from government rhetoric it did undermine the continued development of inclusive practices within education (Runswick-Cole 2011). By criticising an inclusive approach, government policy was moving away from the social model of disability, impairment and difference was brought back into social and economic policy, leaving people at the mercy of an ideologically driven government (Oliver 2013).

Methodology

The adoption of case study methodology enabled a broader understanding of the threat towards the continued development of inclusive practices on the course and within the college. The process was a holistic and empirical enquiry. Observations were based upon findings within the field, considering the relationship between the 'bounded phenomenon' (Merriam 1998) of inclusion, its implementation on the programme, the college and its impact within social, political and economic contexts (Stake 1995). The article is informed through a constructivist epistemology with the understanding that the

participants have effectively constructed meaning from the reality that surrounds them. This reflects the experiences of the participants through embracing words and perspectives materialised through their own experience, enabling them to develop a nuanced view of their own reality.

Data Collection Stage 1 – Analytical Auto ethnography 2004 -2014

The research focused on a ten year period between 2004 and 2014 in order to gain a shared understanding of people's views and experiences of developing the Level 1 sport programme in an inclusive way. Selected past and current employees (3 Lecturers, 2 Curriculum Support Co-ordinators (CCSC), 4 Additional Learning Support Workers (ALSW), and 1 Curriculum Area Manager (CAM) were sent a series of questions via email and asked to respond to them in depth. These data are presented through the production of collaborative texts, responses from the participants have been intertwined with my own auto ethnography to create a cohesive and collaborative narrative.

Research was undertaken within an interpretive paradigm with the understanding that there is value in research that is grounded in personal experience and promotes an understanding of specific issues from a complex and evocative time (Ellis and Bochner 2000). This enabled the exploration of layered accounts, allowing the opportunity for multiple telling's from more than one point of view (Spry 2011), focusing on practice through displaced boundaries between individuals and the college. This privileges an individual's experiences yet *'simultaneously registers the social, cultural and institutional narratives within which such experiences are shaped and enacted'* (Naraian and Khoja-Moolji 2016, 1132). The key element in understanding the broader experiences within the phenomenon is through dialogue with participants beyond the self. One lone voice cannot tell the full story; the significant others involved in the

process all have their own story to tell. Through participants being employed within an inclusive college the auto ethnographic narrative is directly influenced by their experiences in forming, developing and delivering inclusive practices through being part of a specific culture or through possessing a particular cultural identity (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011). It is a socially just act (Holman Jones 2005) that promotes ideas to engage and to affect the world around us, connecting the personal stories of the participants to the social phenomenon of inclusive practice in the college. The sharing of experiences affects the world around us enabling enquiry and knowledge to move further along an emancipatory path (Clandinin and Connelly 1994) with the aim to open a door to a world for those who exist outside it; to offer a human perspective that embraces the reality of lived experiences (Peseta 2005).

Data Collection Stage 2 – 2014 – 2017

This stage focused on a three year period between 2014 and 2017. This timeframe was chosen as it represents a transitional period in the course as there was now a new course leader alongside the fact that during this time frame austerity started to be experienced in practice. Individual interviews were undertaken with the Curriculum Area Manager for Sport and the manager of Additional Learning Support (MALS). Alongside this focus group were undertaken with the current course team for Level 1 Sport programme including one course leader and two lecturers, three Curriculum Centre Support Coordinators who coordinate support for students and two Additional Learning Support Workers who provide support in class. The focus on the course teaching team and members of the ALS team provided a broad and balanced view of the current issues facing inclusive practice within the college alongside developing an understanding of the challenges that the course and the college will face in the future. Permission was

granted by the research and scholarship committee at the college where the data was collected. All participants were voluntary and were fully aware of the aims and objectives. The primary data was analysed thematically through an exploratory approach, the data was read and re read to look for key words, trends, themes or ideas to inform the discussion. Within the analysis the focus was on the interpretation of that data through participant's perceptions, feelings, knowledge and behaviour. Two key areas emerged from the analysis; the current challenges facing the Level 1 Sport Programme and the future of inclusive practice within the college. Under these broad headings a number of sub themes emerged which were: funding and resources, staffing, continued professional development and a lack of consensus in defining inclusion.

Findings

Stage 1 - Narrative 2004 - 2014

November 2004, a phone call, a job offer, and a move to the North. I had completed my PGCE and teaching practice the previous year and this was my opportunity to start my career; to put into practice what I knew and what I thought I knew. My enthusiasm tempered by the reality that the Level 1 sport programme was set up with the intention of ticking the widening participation box for the college, no love for the students and no room available on campus. The course was to be run off-site from a crumbling old building, a walk through the estate and far enough away to ensure that social exclusion was inevitable. Communication was poor, no additional learning support provided; it was going to be a complex process of trial and error. The students were never fully accepted in the college either; the attitude of staff from outside of sport was dismissive. The lack of respect for these young working class students was palatable, *'we do not*

want them mixing with nice middle class girls'. There were however clear benefits to the role. That no one seemed to care what the students got up to I had almost complete autonomy and independence to do what I wanted. Although 'banished' to the outskirts of the college and away from prying eyes, the opportunity existed to develop something new and exciting with the students; they were a great bunch of characters, full of challenge and complexity. Relationships were built through having the time to develop them; individuals were instilled with a belief in themselves. There was a lot of laughter to get you through the day; smiles are a definite memory. There was a personal reward in supporting the young people to grow and develop both academically and personally. This cannot be quantified in a tangible way but you could see you'd made a difference, however small, and there was no greater reward than that.

After a year the course was accepted into the beating heart of the college. The 6th Form (the academic department of the college) was just one element of one of the biggest further and higher education colleges in the country, a college with inclusive practice as a key ethos. I was introduced slowly to the workings of the wider institution, with the largest budget for additional learning support of any college in the country. I had first been sceptical about inclusion, there was however, no myth. It was about treating all students as individuals and working without prejudice. Certain members of ALS staff enlightened me about the notion of inclusion, the value of support for students and staff and the provision of a fair opportunity for all students. Through this offer of time, guidance and support the course started to take on the key elements of an inclusive programme. All students were educated together in the same class, they were supported by well qualified and experienced additional learning support workers, treated as individuals, given the opportunity to be fully involved in the sports department and

collectively supported to help them achieve their potential. I had maybe always been inclusive in my natural actions, but now I understood it in practice. I and many others were proud of the college. Whilst some ideas and individuals inevitably failed within this process there were numerous successes, both collaborative and individual, for both staff and students. The inclusive approach of the programme was successful in changing attitudes of staff and students alike. There was a recognition of, and conversations about how achievement looks very different for different people and how inclusion and achievement are fundamentally linked. People were confronted by the process of inclusion, highlighting how limited / restrictive we are as a society in defining what we mean by achievement. Achievement does not have to be a direct outcome of inclusion.

The course continued over a number of years and as the reputation grew people wanted to work with us, aware that the environment was a positive one with the best interests of the students at heart. Collectively we started to understand how to make the system work for the students, how to get the best staff, to have the best timetable, to get more practical slots and tutorials, to build relationships and to guide and support. To be part of collaborative and forward thinking planning processes gave everyone the opportunity to be involved and feel part of a team, working together towards a shared outcome.

Many battles were fought with tutors, management and students throughout this time. I have been lucky enough to work with many dedicated members of staff who fought alongside each other to enable students with additional support needs the right to access and be a valued member of the college. I was able to use the argument of what was clearly 'right' to persuade people, to adopt the moral high ground and fight for social justice. The path chosen was a difficult one, developing an understanding amongst staff

of the value of inclusion within a sports department, and promoting the view that all students have a right to the same education as their peers. Watching students with additional support needs develop confidence, become more independent and gain the respect of their peers enabled all stakeholders to see the value of inclusive practices. It brought students and staff together that would otherwise not have interacted and, in the process, prompted conversations, reflections and learning that would otherwise not have happened for all concerned. There were many examples of individuals who had previously been in special schools or low aspirational environments that thrived within the environment and from being with people who had high expectations for them. Students were able to grow independently through the inclusion model in a way that young people of their age do, it became a 'normalised' environment. The inclusion of students with additional needs brought many additional elements of learning to the experience of others in the group that outweighed any negative issues that were caused. If teaching is essentially the facilitating of people being in a situation in which they can learn for themselves, then a diverse group of people with which to do so is often an asset. For many people, both staff and students, it was the first time they had spent time with someone with a disability. They developed their capacity to see through a disability, to recognise the individual – be they someone who they liked, enjoyed or found annoying. Values and mind sets change, but must be seen within the context of the wider community. Non-supported students left with a little more understanding and tolerance of difference. There were certainly many examples of students with disabilities developing relationships with those without disabilities yet many others socialised mainly with support staff or other supported students. Whilst an inclusive approach to their education was beneficial to all students...social inclusion was in many

instances sadly lacking; few students walked out of college with a group of non-supported friends.

With many successes there were also those who fell by the way side, those who were too challenging; it was just not their time. This was not solely about disability and inclusion; it was the inclusion of the marginalised in the mainstream. Yet it felt like it was not enough, more must be achieved; sit them in front of a computer make them type, make them work. In six years we went from five modules to ten, from a certificate to a diploma. There was less and less time for building those relationships that were so desperately required. There was a performative need to make them achieve, a flawed agenda that increased the difficulty of providing what these young people truly required. Success and achievement, defined by those who fail to understand its value or know what it looks like. During this time we lost sight of our purpose, what we stood for. I have no doubt of my compliance in these developments, caught up in my own internal and external praise until it was too late; these changes were irreversible. Frustration was inevitable and perhaps I too had moved on. Patience once so obvious was disappearing fast. It was time to move on, to pass the baton to some fresh blood, with new enthusiasm and creative ideas. The support was still in place and the funding still there, the cuts were yet to take their largest bite. Had an inclusive legacy been left, the strength of an idea is the belief that others have in it. Will they see it through or will the challenge prove too much? It was time to leave it in their capable hands and hope that they can both develop and protect it against the inevitable economic and political challenges. A final question remains: does inclusion still define the programme or has it moved on, to a new reality where inclusion is an idea whose time has passed; no place in this competitive world. We will see.

Stage 2 - 2014 -2017 - Current challenges facing Level 1 Sport Programme

The key challenge to emerge throughout the data was funding. This will be addressed as a stand-alone theme, yet it must also be taken into consideration as a key driver in other sub themes that emerged. All participants highlighted that the approach of austerity undertaken by previous and current governments has had a major impact on developing inclusive practice. A comment from lecturer 2 on the sports programme was typical of views expressed within the data:

It has now become almost impossible to have the same impact due to not providing the necessary support to both the learners and the staff”

Colleges are allowed to determine their own approach to the utilisation of their resources as there is no standardised guidance as to how the college implements an inclusive policy. The strategic approach of the college is however defined in relation to the resources at its disposal. There is a significant gap between what government ministers and civil servants plan and what actually happens in FE colleges (Orr 2008). Policies are reduced to their financial imperative with decisions at an institutional level often taken on the basis of funding. This point was reinforced by the CAM from sport who highlighted the financial parameters in which they are working:

We are in an environment where funding is very limited and it is very difficult to maximise those funding streams. This is especially true within a college of this size, in certain areas we have absolute maximum resource.

A key element in relation to funding is the way in which support is utilised with regard to changes in staffing. The staff headcount for the ALS Department has dropped from a high of 135 in 2013 to its current position of 104. Support Tutors (who work in

partnership with lecturing staff) and CCSC's have been reduced from eighteen staff to six. This particular issue was raised by both teaching and support staff with regard to their capacity to deliver in a collaborative way. CCSC 2 stated that:

We do not have the time to develop and support staff in the way that we used to. In the past we would have developed resources, differentiated tasks, and team taught but we no longer have the time to do it.

This was reinforced by the current Course Leader for the level 1 programme in sport who stated that:

We used to have a support tutor for the curriculum area of sport and now we have one for the whole centre. That tells you everything that you need to know.

To put this into context, the curriculum area of sport has nine teaching staff and 121 students and the Health, Wellbeing and Society Centre where the sports department is based has 74 teaching staff and 1187 students.

To implement inclusive practices and positive change requires staff to have time, energy, capacity and motivation to enable it to succeed. This is reinforced by high staff turnover, the employment of temporary and part time staff, changes to which staff have to adjust and their lack of involvement in the formation and evaluation of those changes (Edward et al. 2007). ALS workers are being selected and appointed to work alongside college lecturers to support students with disabilities and / or learning difficulties, with limited knowledge about inclusive practice or teaching (McLachlan 2012). The majority of new employees to the role of ALS worker are employed on part time contracts. This is a trend that is highlighted by ALS worker 2 who remarked that: *'This*

is just what it is these days, it is the future'. However this is not the full story as the manager of the ALS department highlights that:

We have our core of staff who are permanent, the mission critical roles of hearing impaired, visual impaired and dyslexia tutors are permanent. It is the note takers and support staff who are more likely to be part time.

She does however state that the situation would be far better if she was able to recruit more permanent staff, whilst also being realistic in her outlook:

I would much rather have permanent staff but in the current climate I can't really change that now can I. That is one I really can't fight.

ALS worker 1 spoke about how he does not have the time to liaise with ALS colleagues and curriculum staff to discuss students and issues.

Often after a lesson we are moving straight on to another lesson with a different student in a different area so you don't even have time to discuss what happened in the session or reflect.

The impact is felt far beyond staff within the ALS department, impacting upon collaborative working, dialogue and the quality of support that students receive. ALS workers require the opportunity for discussions and dialogue with each other and / or with the lecturers, and this should form the basis of how they support their students (McLachlan 2014). Individuals with differing levels of power such as lecturers and ALS workers can connect in a mutually beneficial way developing reciprocal relationships with each viewed as being in a position to both give and receive (Doughty and Allan

2008). For example, lecturer 1 from the sport programme stated clearly how this is affecting learning support in practice:

Continuity of support goes out of the window and the professional relationship between support staff, curriculum areas and the teaching staff is obviously affected.

If the level of support is being reduced then a greater level of responsibility lies with the subject tutor to ensure inclusivity in delivery. The ALS manager believes that there has been a change in expectation with regard to who is responsible for ensuring sessions are inclusive for all learners:

Inclusion is an expectation, the teachers are responsible for all students in their classroom and they should have support in place for all students through their practice.

The responsibility for differentiation and inclusion lies with the tutor.

The position of a lecturer is pivotal: from the perspective of policy makers, lecturers are seen as the last link in the policy chain, the implementers whose behaviour they seek to change, if the experience of the students is going to change (Edward et al, 2007). As stated in the SEND Code of Practice (DFE 2015) colleges are responsible to ensure that all staff interact appropriately and inclusively with students and ensure that the workforce have the appropriate expertise, skill development, awareness of effective practice and to update their knowledge (DFE 2016). This would appear to be the opinion of the CAM for sport who also agreed that if it was to be the responsibility of lecturing staff then there is a clear need to develop the lecturers to deal with this development:

If the support is going to be reduced in the class then we need to upskill and develop tutors to be able to deliver to a group of students with challenging needs, and that is not happening.

Whilst the point was made that the responsibility for inclusion should reside with the lecturer, the reality is that inclusion is everybody's responsibility; it is an institutional responsibility. Lecturers are but one element in a broader assemblage of inclusive classrooms, as a practice teaching is heavily influenced by numerous factors outside the control of lecturers and beyond the space of the classroom (Naraian and Khoja-Moolji 2016). Developing a collective approach to support and academic development for students enables lecturers and ALS workers to work flexibly and collaboratively to meet the needs of the students (Robson and Bailey 2009). This provides clear implications for the training and development of both roles. People in different positions have differing perspectives on both the purpose and the nature of CPD, formed in part by the different 'worlds' in which they operate (Broad 2015). Yet to meet the needs of students accessible and collective professional development is required that focuses specifically on inclusion issues (Brown 2002). Developing staff together increases the likelihood that student support meets the needs of the students themselves.

The future of Inclusive Practice at the College

There are a number of factors to consider with regard to how an inclusive approach will continue to develop, or not, in the future. The key issue is whether or not support will be properly resourced. Given the situation in which the college finds itself politically and economically it is not a surprise to see the CAM for sport question whether or not an inclusive approach will continue to be supported:

I think anything (inclusion) is under threat when you remove a resource, it has got to be. If there is no funding then we cannot resource it; the level of intervention, the level of support cannot possibly be maintained.

There are more positive viewpoints being expressed but even they come with caveats such as this comment from lecturer 1 in sport:

We are definitely still inclusive but at the same time we are definitely not as inclusive as we used to be or could be in the future.

One of the major concerns raised by participants, particularly from the ALS Department was the potential return to a perceived discreet model of provision. The idea that is being proposed is the development of a specific course that will have a core of eight students who will be educated as a core group entitled 'Personal Development'. This new programme will be designed on an individual basis with students able to access different pathways across the college. The perception is that disability policy and funding models have changed and therefore the continued development of full inclusion within the college is not engaging practically with the realities of education (Norwich 2014). The manager of ALS understands that this proposed new programme is not a popular development for those who believe that full inclusion is the only approach that should be applied:

The new model that I am proposing is not going down particularly well with some people. They perceive it to be a discreet model of provision, I don't see this as discreet provision, I see this as meeting the needs of those students.

The key concern for participants who criticised this development was that it is a return to a model that they had worked so hard, over a number of years, to remove from the college. CCSC 2 expressed her view on what she sees as a regressive step:

They are trying to move the service back as to how it was years ago. The people planning this believe that this is inclusion but in reality it is going back in time twenty years.

The conflict derives from the belief that one approach, one solution (inclusion) does not fit all. Those who believe fully in the value of inclusion refuse to make the paradigm shift away from this belief, whereas others no longer believe that the old paradigm satisfactorily solves the problem or explains the current reality. They believe that they have cogent reasons for opposing inclusion as the answer for complex, multifaceted issues (Watkins 2009). There are clear concerns as to the future of inclusion as within the college a conflict exists that creates a complex and “*highly problematic phenomenon characterised by considerable ambiguity*” (Dyson 2005, 66). Those who are in a position of greater authority are the ones who believe that a paradigm shift is required. This raises the question as to whether or not an ethos of full inclusion will be at the heart of any future approach of the college. This was addressed by comments from the course leader in sport:

From a professional level it does not feel like inclusion is a priority anymore.

This was reinforced by the ALS manager:

As to whether the institution is still looking to move towards full inclusion; that is debatable.

These are key admissions and raise concerns with regard to the continued development of inclusive practice within the college. This was further reinforced by high levels of staff turnover, once key members of staff leave it is difficult to maintain a college wide ethos. The landscape has changed and there are not enough staff left who understand the value of inclusion to the students, the staff, the college and the community as whole. This point was raised by CCSC 1 and highlights the difficulty of maintaining this ethos in times of change.

People who are fully inclusive are few and far between if we are being honest. The new staff don't really know about the ethos of inclusion within the college, they are not even aware that it existed. The more people that leave the smaller we become as an inclusive department.

This point is captured by ALS worker 2 who was relatively new to the department. He understands that inclusive practice was fundamental to the approach of the department but was also aware of the current issues being faced within by staff within the department stating that:

I am aware of how hard people worked, we listen to people saying we fought so hard and this is now just a waste of time, they are getting rid of what we created. They say this is not why we did this; this is not how it is supposed to be.

It is suggested that by returning elements of provision to a discreet model the college has the capacity to provide more appropriate opportunities in relation to the limitations of policy, funding and increased local competition. However the exclusion of students through promoting a discreet learning environment for students with disabilities and / or learning difficulties is a form of social closure designed to protect and serve the interests

of the included. Any desire for inclusion is complicated through a process of exclusion where certain characteristics of those who seek inclusion are seen as undesirable by those already included (Hertzberg 2015). This issue is resolved by selling the idea of inclusion through educating 'inclusively' whilst undertaking exclusionary practice, such as delivering curriculum in a discreet environment, within the confines of its structure.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to analyse the ways in which a particular course over the last fourteen years developed inclusive practices in teaching and learning. This particular case was analysed as it was within a college that was seeking to create and implement a college wide ethos of inclusion. The aspiration of increased social justice through inclusion and inclusive practices within the college was borne from a continual engagement with difference as a political and politicised project (Wetherley et al. 2017). The ALS Department and the college management were genuinely committed to this process, ensuring that all students were educated as a collective with no discreet provision of any kind. It has been demonstrated through the presentation and analysis of primary and secondary data that key socio – economic, political and pedagogical issues have impacted upon this process and continue to do so today. The key issues include policy developments, austerity and its impact on resourcing, staffing and provision of support, the ambiguity of the term and the capacity for sharing knowledge and collaborative working within the college. The analytical auto-ethnography provided evidence that showed how the programme was well supported, how collaborative working was hugely beneficial, how staff and students were enabled to increase their awareness of issues around disability and how inclusive practices can be applied within a specific vocational programme. The course had its flaws and struggled to develop

social inclusion outside of the classroom and due to increased performative pressure progressively focused on outcomes rather than process. The course was however committed to the process of inclusion at all times.

The Level 1 sport programme currently being delivered in the college has the belief that it remains inclusive yet there is a conflict between the personal values held by staff and institutional values. The college is in a very complex situation with regard to the deliberate, destructive economic and political approach of austerity. This creates a situation where the college is limited as to its potential to develop appropriate CPD, employ staff on permanent contracts and ensure that there is enough time for collaborative discussions around the needs of individual students. The College is operating within an increasingly competitive and uneven educational market that offers very little ethical space with the focus on the accomplishment of short term goals (Dennis 2016). The vagueness of the current position on inclusive practice within the college has allowed financial imperatives to determine policy within the college. Policy is reduced to its financial imperative; the institution has reached 'max resource'. This lack of resources puts the process of full inclusion under threat, as the reality of performativity reinforces the complexity of implementing idealised principles in the context of institutional demands (Naraian and Khoja-Moolji 2016). This creates conflict for the college in managing the responsibility of attracting maximum funding alongside the need to provide appropriate opportunities for all students (Wright 2006).

This article identifies the complex social, economic and political factors in the development of inclusive practice within a specific FE college in England. An example of this is the proposed move back towards a model of discreet provision for a specific group of students. Through teaching in a discreet way the financial commitment for

each of those students will be reduced. This approach is no more than a ‘gesture of inclusion’ where the structure reinforces and reproduces inequalities with the college acting as a site of social reproduction rather than as a transforming agent (Simmons and Thompson 2008). It is argued here that the college is no longer a site of resistance, there are pockets of resistance but at an operational level it is in a place of compliance. This justification of this is that for the college ‘compliance is the reality of survival’ yet this paradigm shift away from inclusion requires collective resistance to reinforce a belief in a democratic, emancipatory and subversive world (Hodkinson 2013). Ensuring the continued development of inclusive practice at the college requires an understanding of, and reconnection with the past, a desire to resolve the present and to develop the future. Working towards a more socially just and inclusive college requires an *‘interrogation of the discourses, perceptions and practices which might militate against the aim of full inclusion’* (Atkins 2016, 16).

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