The SAGE Handbook of Inclusion and Diversity in Education
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Notes on the Editors and Contributors

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NOTES ON THE EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Disorder in Schools (with Valerie Harwood and published by Routledge); and the 2017 Routledge World Yearbook in Education: Assessment Inequalities (with Alfredo Artiles).

Ann Cheryl Armstrong is the Associate Dean, Research and International, at the Faculty of Arts, Law and Education at the University of the South Pacific. Over the past 21 years, she has worked in several countries across the world and has contributed to the transformation of many education programmes and systems. She has published widely on inclusive education, professional learning in education and education in developing countries.

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Danielle M. Cowley is Assistant Professor in Special Education at the University of Northern Iowa where her teaching focuses on inclusive education, disability studies in education, creating and sustaining positive learning communities, and post-school transitions. She has published several book chapters and her articles have appeared in journals such as the Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies and PowerPlay: A Journal of Educational Justice. Currently her research focuses on whole-school inclusive reform, critical transition for multiply-marginalized youth and inclusive teacher preparation.

Scot Danforth is Professor of Disability Studies and Inclusive Education at Chapman University in Orange, California (USA). His books include: Becoming a Great Inclusive Educator; Foundations of Inclusive Education Research (with Phyllis Jones); and The Incomplete Child: An Intellectual History of Learning Disabilities. His most recent research focuses on the history of the Rolling Quads, a student disability activist group at the University of California, Berkeley, in the 1960s and Ed Roberts, Rolling Quads’ leader and father of the American disability rights movement.

Sheelagh Daniels-Mayes is a Kamilaroi woman originally from north-western NSW. She joined the Sydney School of Education and Social Work in 2017 as a Fellow in the Wingara Mura Leadership Program. In 2016, Sheelagh completed her doctorate, titled ‘Culturally Responsive Pedagogies of Success: Improving Educational Outcomes for Australian Aboriginal Students’, at the University of South Australia. Her thesis infused Culturally Responsive Pedagogy with Critical Race Theory. Sheelagh teaches and researches in the areas of Aboriginal education and Indigenous studies, predominantly for pre-service teacher programs.

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Paula Frederica Hunt is owner and principal researcher of DED – Disability, Education and Development, Lda., and has been an expert consultant on Inclusive Education with UNICEF for the past eight years. Paula is also a senior technical consultant on inclusive education as part of the global team with the Catalyst for Inclusive Education network. Paula has provided capacity development support related to inclusive education and children with disabilities in various countries, and supported the conceptualization, development and implementation of work related to inclusive education and children with disabilities in various contexts and regions. She is engaged in work related to inclusive education policy development, curriculum development/revisions, pre-service and in-service teacher education for inclusion, accessible digital technology, situation analysis of children/adults with disabilities, as well as monitoring and evaluation. Paula was a teacher of students with special educational needs, both in special and inclusive classrooms in the USA, for close to twenty years and lectured in undergraduate and Masters levels courses in regular teacher education programmes on subjects related to students with learning needs.

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Kate Lapham is the Deputy Director of the Education Support Program of the Open Society Foundations. Her work focuses on overcoming barriers to education for communities facing exclusion or discrimination. Based in New York, Lapham has worked with communities, civil society groups and education policymakers in Eurasia, Eastern Europe and Mongolia for more than twenty years. Lapham has developed initiatives to strengthen civil society through the exploration of common interests and challenges, including research for evidence-based advocacy, support for organizational development among start-up NGOs, and direct work with teachers and schools. She leads the Education Support Program’s grant making in support of the right to education in fully inclusive settings. Lapham holds a PhD in comparative and international education from Lehigh University and an MPA from Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs.

Maria Dolores Lasso is currently Head of Curriculum Design and a full-time Professor at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito-USFQ, a Liberal Arts university in Ecuador. She has been a teacher in Ecuador for more than two decades, focusing, in the last decade, on teacher education and educational improvement. As a curriculum expert, Maria Dolores currently provides academic advice and continuous improvement and innovation advice to all the different academic areas at USFQ. She teaches in USFQ’s Education undergraduate (face to face and online) and graduate programmes. Maria Dolores obtained her PhD in Education at New Mexico State University, where her dissertation focused on educational leadership and teacher education. She obtained her Master in Education from Boston University and an Elementary Education undergraduate degree from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador.

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**Helen Longlands** is a lecturer at the Centre for Education and International Development (CEID) at UCL Institute of Education. Her research interests are interdisciplinary and centre on issues relating to gender, inequality and social justice. She has a particular interest in masculinities and transnational relationships of power and the ways these are experienced, embedded and challenged in international and local contexts, as well as international policy and discourse on education and gender equality.

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**Anthony McKnight** is an Awabakal, Gumaroi and Yuin Man. Anthony is a father, husband, uncle, son, grandson, brother, cousin, nephew, friend and cultural man. Anthony is currently a lecturer in the School of Education, Faculty of Social Science at the University of Wollongong. Anthony respects Country and values the knowledge that has been taught to him from Country, Elders and teachers from the community(ies). He continuously and respectfully incorporates Yuin ways of knowing and learning with a particular interest in contributing to this area to validate Yuin approaches in academia and schools. Anthony has recently completed a PhD entitled ‘Singing Up Country in Academia: Teacher Education Academics and Preservice Teachers’ Experience with Yuin Country’, in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Wollongong. He holds a Masters of Education (HRD) from the University of Sydney and a Bachelor of Education, Health and Physical Education from the University of Wollongong.

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**Cor J. W. Meijer** is Director of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education since 2005. In his former position as staff member of the Agency he was responsible for major European-wide projects such as special provision and inclusion in Europe, Financing of special needs education in Europe and Classroom Practice studies. He has acted as consultant on special needs issues to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and various other national and international bodies (European Union; UNESCO). He is the co-editor of New Perspectives on Special Education (Routledge, 1994), Inclusive Education: a Global Agenda (Routledge, 1997) and Implementing Inclusive Education: Issues in Bridging the Policy-Practice Gap (the Emerald Publishing Group, 2016).

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**Elizabeth J. Meyer** is the Associate Dean of Students in the School of Education at the University of Colorado Boulder and is an Associate Professor in Educational Foundations, Policy and Practice. She is the author of *Gender, Bullying, and Harassment: Strategies to End Sexism and Homophobia in Schools* (Teachers College Press, 2009) and *Gender and Sexual Diversity in Schools* (Springer, 2010). She is also editor of the Gender and Sexualities in Education series for Peter Lang Publishing. She completed her M.A. at the University of Colorado Boulder and her PhD at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. She blogs for Psychology Today and you can follow her on Twitter: @lizjmeyer.

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Daniel Mont is the Co-President of the Center for Inclusive Policy and an international expert in disability measurement and the monitoring and evaluation of inclusive development programmes, especially in the areas of education and social protection. He was a Senior Economist with the World Bank for 10 years and is currently an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at University College London. He has worked as a consultant with many UN agencies, including UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, UNDP and OHCHR, and has published extensively in the area of disability and development. While at the World Bank he chaired the Analytical Working Group of the UN Statistical Commission’s Washington Group on Disability Statistics. Previously he was the Director of the Worker’s Compensation Project at the National Academy of Social Insurance, a Principal Analyst at the US Congressional Budget Office and an Assistant Professor at Cornell University. He received his PhD in Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has a BA from Swarthmore College.

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Nyssa Murray is a proud Dunghutti woman who is the Project Manager for the ARC Future Fellowship project ‘Getting an Early Start to Aspirations: Understanding how to Promote Higher Education in Early Childhood’ at The University of Sydney and a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Business at the University of Wollongong. Her PhD explores best practices to increase Aboriginal employment outcomes and improve the understanding and acceptance of Aboriginal Australian culture through organizational policy. Nyssa continues to contribute her time, skills and knowledge to consult with Australian corporations that can help make a difference and create opportunities for Aboriginal Australian people.

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Louis Olander is a doctoral candidate in the Urban Education programme at the CUNY Graduate Center. His research ties together universal design, appreciative inquiry and critical participatory action research in order to explore new ways in which students in urban special education settings might be more meaningfully included.

Michael J. Orosco is an Associate Professor in Education specializing in bilingual special education at the University of Kansas. He was a bilingual special education teacher in Colorado for five years before earning a PhD in Education from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Interdisciplinary research includes developing a theoretical model of learning for English Learners (ELs) that includes the socio-cognitive mechanisms that moderate mathematical and reading performance. The research programme includes designing interventions to facilitate socio-cognitive processes related to mathematical and reading comprehension in ELs. Finally, his research programme also includes enhancing the sustainability of socio-cognitive mathematical and reading interventions through professional development.

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Introduction: Scholarship for Diversity and Inclusion in Education in the 21st Century

Matthew J. Schuelka, Christopher J. Johnstone, Gary Thomas and Alfredo J. Artiles

The Sage Handbook of Diversity and Inclusion in Education is a representation of a point in history of the diversity within inclusive education scholarship itself. From this perspective, we argue that any Handbook that claims to be a definitive source is suspect. We present this book as an attempt to take stock of scholarship on diversity and inclusion in education in the first two decades of the 21st century, and to look forward to future trends and new directions, but it is by no means comprehensive nor summative. In this book, we seek to understand, encapsulate, and re-imagine inclusive education scholarship from the work of a diversity of scholars, disciplines, and contexts. In this introductory chapter we first sketch a conceptual history of inclusive education scholarship. The second section will wrestle with the terminological dilemmas and debates that have ensnared inclusive education scholarship, and advance our own solution and ‘way out’ of the terminological complexity. The third section of this Introduction discusses research for diversity and inclusion in education and argues for a re-envisioning of scholarship.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPTUAL ROOTS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The field of inclusive education did not emerge de novo in response to egalitarian, desegregative concerns rooted in social justice. Rather, it emerged out of special education (Richardson & Powell, 2011; Slee, 2011). This positionality has had consequences for the development of the field, for certain strong expectations and beliefs reside in the precepts and processes of special education. While our recent concerns have been desegregative, the parent field of special education has a long history of segregation, and in that history we can see an instinct principally to identify and ‘treat’ difference and disability. So, much of the discourse of the field often reverts to deficit and within-child explanations.

In this book we try to move away from ideas about deficit, taking a resolutely positive approach to learning and to education. We eschew the deficit-based explanations of failure to thrive at school which characterized much of the discourse of special education in the 20th century. We see the difficulties which many children face at school to be complex and multi-layered and little to do with the dispositional issues once at the center of special educators’ deliberations.
If one could distil a single theme from the literature of the last fifty years – literature, that is, on inclusion and special education – it would surely be that there are no simple definitions of the field. The idea of disability, particularly where the ‘disability’ refers to difficulties in learning, is itself plural and disputed. There is recognition now that there are no simple contributory factors leading to the problems that young people or adults may experience in schools and colleges. Gone are the days when we saw problems emerging from some singular cause (usually imagined to be organic in origin), or some simple combination of causes (such as child’s organic problem + school’s poorly attuned pastoral system). As our picture of what happens in educational failure becomes more detailed and more clearly colored we begin to see less in the way of special ‘needs’ (although some youngsters clearly do need something special), and more in the way of altered kinds of education for all.

Gradually, and against much resistance, the plurality of disadvantaging factors and situations facing children and young people is making itself understood, and this is the leitmotif running through this book. The inevitable intersection of multiple factors in producing disadvantage is recognized more widely now, though it has taken one hundred years for thinking to move forward comprehensively. At the beginning of the 20th century, assumptions about what constituted ‘special’ rested almost entirely, and singularly, on ‘within child’ factors. It was only pioneering work, such as Gordon’s (1923) studies of canal boat children in the UK, or Wheeler’s (1970) findings about ‘mountain children’ in the USA, that recognized that it was the socio-cultural milieu rather than any inborn characteristic that principally determined a child’s success at school through its structural marginalization. As Leyden (1979) has pointed out, it was the endemic constructs of special education (and latterly what has gone under the name of inclusive education) that promulgated the belief that it was ability (and disability) – not poverty, difference or life experience – that was the principal force at play in determining success or failure.

Epidemiological work at the turn of the 21st century began to confirm these changing ideas about failure. The work of Blane, White, and Morris (1996), for example, looking at the link between school performance and deprivation, showed that the relationship is so close that the two variables appear to be simply alternative measures of the same thing. In the same vein, Singer and Ryff (1997) countered the hereditarian Bell Curve arguments of Herrnstein and Murray (1994) by showing how closely ethnic and class inequalities connect to differences in education, money, and power. These inequalities controlled and defined exposure to adversity, and, in turn, how a person wins or loses.

One of the lessons that has emerged from these changing ideas about children’s difficulties at school is that there is no clearly defined population for whom special provision should cater, even though assessment procedures, with all their supposed precision, had implied (and still imply) that those who are identified have discrete ‘within-person’ problems. The reason that within-person deficits have been found from assessment procedures, of course, is because we expect to find them. If one defines an issue and then sets up an instrument to identify the defined issue around its defined parameters, one is certain to find evidence of its existence.

This problem of finding what one stereotypically expects to find occurred in diagnostic-prescriptive teaching – one of the best-known (and most discredited) examples of the deficit-identify-cure syndrome that has occurred in the field of special education. The process reached the zenith of its popularity in the 1960s and rested on the appealing notion that if specific within-child deficits were the principal cause of a child’s difficulties, these could be tested for and the assessment would then suggest a targeted program of help. The approach spawned a rash of specialized assessments – such as the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA) – and associated remedial program-writing. Unfortunately, the evidence from the research that was done at the time showed that this assessment and program-writing proved to be an elaborate
waste of time. Evaluations undertaken in the mid-1970s and since show that help based on this kind of approach was no more effective than help based on the teacher’s own informal assessment of the difficulty and his or her own solution to it. For the evidence, see Newcomer and Hammill (1975), Arter and Jenkins (1979), and Brown and Campione (1986).

Children fall behind at school for a host of reasons, most of them having little or nothing to do with deficits or ‘dysfunctions’ in the workings of their brains, as Coles (1978, 1987) pointed out with some highly detailed analyses. Artiles (2003) has extended these understandings to today’s position in the US. Indeed, analyses reveal that it is minority populations of various kinds who were (and still are) identified as having learning difficulties or behavior difficulties and who were (and are) disproportionately selected for special provision: Raffo et al. (2006), Smith and Kozleski (2005), Artiles (1998), Patton (1998), Artiles and Trent (1994), and Tomlinson (1982) all tell essentially the same story. The evidence shows that notions of specialness – of learning difficulty, or, worse, learning disability – are constructed as much as anything out of the disadvantage created by minoritized status.

The focus is now on the intersections of a range of personal and cultural characteristics: disability, ethnicity, gender, class, income level, care status, and others. Understandings based on such intersections transcend the limits of disability studies and medical and socio-cultural studies of disability, moving outside a social constructionist perspective. An intersectional perspective eschews the theoretical explanations offered by social constructionist and materialist accounts, seeing the experiences of excluded children and adults as discontinuous and ungroupable. Practitioners and scholars now are looking at the ways in which identities interact and are created, not only through ability and disability but also, most notably, through gender, race, and class. Identities not only interact with each other, but also dialectically interact with structural and historical forces.

In the 21st century, socio-cultural and historical structures are not self-contained in any one locality. Rather, flows of understanding, discourse, and structuration move betwixt and between actors and institutions. One of the major themes of this book is the emphasis on an international perspective – an international consciousness about inclusive education and its place in contemporary societies. But if scholars and practitioners intend to ‘think global’ the onus is on them also to ‘act local’ – to act, in other words, with a view to the contexts, cultures, and traditions of the locales within which education is being considered. Globalization of commerce may indeed mean homogenization, but in thinking about the global impact of improved communication we need to be wary about an almost neo-colonial attitude to policy and practice, and the inappropriateness of imposing forms of policy cultivated in one culture on others where these may be inapt. Some countries of the South (possibly encouraged by international NGOs) appear to be imposing on themselves a form of cultural imperialism as they make presumptions about the appropriateness for them of what they take to be the cutting-edge inclusive education of the North. Harber (2004) reveals the damaging consequences of this in sub-Saharan Africa – that is, copycat educational ideology, with policy and practice typical of the North often shoe-horned into contexts for which it is alien. The argument we put in these volumes is that inclusive education is meaningful only when embedded in understandings about community and communality; only when seen as both reflective of, and as creating, inclusion in society.

Not only this, but if scholars and practitioners are thinking about inclusion in schools, they need to observe a gestalt with regard to the wider societies in which schools are embedded and take lessons from what we can discover about differences and comparisons between those societies. For example, Bronfenbrenner (1979) looked at the macro-level of inclusion and at the consequences of inequality in society generally. It is clear now that many of the troubles, psychological and physical, that we once took to be dispositional or located in some maladaptive relationship can be located in inequality (Thomas, 2013).
More than twenty years ago, in looking at relative poverty and inequality internationally, Keating and Hertzman (1999, p. 3), summarizing a range of epidemiological research, identified a phenomenon they called the ‘gradient effect’. By this they meant the extent to which social differences exist between members of a population. They put it this way, ‘Particularly striking is the discovery of a strong association between the health of a population and the size of the social distance between members of the population.’ They proceeded, ‘… this gradient effect [obtains] not only for physical and mental health but also for a wide range of other developmental outcomes, from behavioural adjustment, to literacy, to mathematics achievement’.

In reviewing the literature on the topic, Willms has suggested why this might be so. One of his central conclusions was about inequality: ‘… when students are segregated … [those] from disadvantaged backgrounds do worse’ (Willms, 1999b, p. 85). He notes that such segregation may come from many and varied directions: from special programs for ‘gifted’ children to phenomena such as charter or magnet schools.

Chiu and Khoo (2005) confirmed the importance of inequality and its significance for a range of measures of achievement: students’ achievement is worse in countries with larger distribution inequalities, and students in countries with greater ‘privileged student bias’ have lower overall achievement. Countries distributing funding more equally (such as Finland and South Korea) perform best on a range of achievement outcomes. Chudgar and Luschei (2009, p. 626) also confirm the phenomenon, noting that schools are ‘a significant source of variation in student performance, especially in poor and unequal countries’. The consequence of inequality, taking an internationally comparative perspective, is now incontestable: in societies with greater inequality there is lower achievement at school and there are more casualties of the school system.

FINDING A PATH THROUGH THE TERMINOLOGICAL AND CONCEPTUAL COMPLEXITY

Taking into account the section above on the conceptual history and discourse on inclusive education, we now move on to address these self-perpetuating disagreements and edge closer towards a re-imagining of inclusive education scholarship for the 21st century. Scholars in the field of inclusive education have long debated whether it is more important to focus on inclusive education reforms at the systemic level or focus on the specific inclusion of particular populations within such systems. As early as 1994, UNESCO’s Salamanca Statement called for a global movement of inclusive education, targeting both systems-level reform and special attention to populations that have been traditionally marginalized. The more recent United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2016) called for ‘inclusive and equitable quality education’ and later mention specific populations for whom attendance and achievement data will need to be tracked in order to provide evidence of such quality (Johnstone, Schuelka, & Swadek, in press). The SDGs highlight the current landscape of inclusive education. To be specific, systems-level policy approaches may be framed as ‘inclusive reforms’ and targeted school-based activities may be framed as ‘inclusive interventions’. However, as current literature and the chapters of this book indicate, there is a large grey area where systems and population-specific approaches interact.

What, then, does it mean to be ‘inclusive’? Education is not the only field wrestling with this question. Johnstone’s (2018) research focuses on how international organizations use the term ‘inclusive development’. Scholars and practitioners in the field of inclusive development have a
similar wide-ranging approach to inclusion as those in inclusive education. The discourse of inclusive development alludes to everything from wide-sweeping redistributional economic reforms to platforms for participation by populations typically excluded from development programs (e.g. women, persons with disabilities, rural populations, etc.). Despite great diversity in understandings of ‘inclusive development’, there appears to be at least some agreement among proponents of such development on one topic: development practices that focus on growth alone are not effectively inclusive. These scholars (i.e. Asongu & Nwachukwu, 2017; Berdegué, Escobal, & Bebbington, 2015; Raheem, Isah, & Adedeji, 2018; Rauniyar & Kanbur, 2010) have holistically rejected the idea that policies and interventions that create aggregate economic growth in a society will ever reach societies’ most marginalized populations. As noted above, there are a range of proposed solutions to the deficiencies of ‘trickle down’ development that are too numerous to list in this chapter. However, the field of inclusive development appears to have one feature that is missing from inclusive education: a fundamental starting point for further debate.

Within the field of inclusive education, there is still not a baseline point of agreement that distinguishes exclusive and inclusive education. In the field of education in general, debates around policy provisions related to where and how students should be educated are still relevant at the current time. For example, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in the United States calls for students to be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Some scholars contend that inclusionary classrooms, as they currently exist, may create a more restrictive environment for students with disabilities than segregated classrooms (Crockett & Kauffman, 2013). Therefore, inclusion itself is not necessarily unanimously agreed upon. Inclusive education scholars themselves lack a common understanding of the term and its consequences. Ainscow and Miles (2008) describe inclusive education as a ‘process’. Such processual framing opens the door for interpretations of when it may be appropriate to exclude children from particular opportunities (as does LRE), although Ainscow and Miles would not agree with such an interpretation. Further, on a global scale, inclusion goes beyond the education of students with disabilities, although this population appears to be most frequently addressed in this book and in the broader literature. It is our hope that this book will further the discourse of inclusive education so that an eventual baseline of understanding can be attained. Chapters in this book highlight a key conclusion that frames the pursuit of contemporary inclusive education knowledge: that education as it stands now does not meet the needs of all children in any society. Further and constant reform is needed to adjust systems to the diversity of children who will inevitably call upon their right to education.

How will this be accomplished? Inclusive development innovations such as the redistribution of resources to marginalized groups and platforms for equitable participation may inform the next generation of inclusive education policy and practice. Espinoza (2007) noted that international education policies, through the 1990s, focused on equality of opportunity for all students, but did little more. The Sustainable Development Goals and its scholars have now begun to call for equity in practice in education. Inclusive education once focused on access alone. Contemporary scholarship has begun to focus on provisions that ensure equal opportunities to participate through equitable practices that are population-responsive.

The dilemma, then, of whether inclusive education should focus on systemic change or the specific needs of populations within such systems may be moot. Contemporary inclusive education may mean different things to different scholars, but a common commitment to removing barriers for all and processual supports for some appear to be common themes in the chapters of this book. Like inclusive development, inclusive education may not need a common definition as long as there is a common commitment to continuous reform that addresses social injustices and supports specific groups that have experienced such injustice.
In inclusive education scholarship, a feature of many introductions to books, chapters, and articles is a discussion on the definition of inclusive education—both conceptually and operationally. We argue that this is, at best, tangential to the work of inclusive education and, at worst, an esoteric scholarly distraction from the work of inclusive education in schools. This is not to entirely discount the fruitful and interesting conversations occurring around ‘inclusive education’, particularly if they come from, or advocate increased collaboration with, participants themselves (e.g. Messiou, 2017; Timmons & Thompson, 2017); but children in classrooms around the world want to experience a positive sense of belonging, identity, safety, learning, and societal contribution and—anecdotally from our collective fieldwork in schools around the world—could not care less what adults call it. Many scholars of inclusive education frame these desires within a framework of inclusion dilemmas, but to us it is very simple: We advocate moving beyond the term ‘inclusive education’, as well as beyond the terms ‘special education’, ‘special needs’, and ‘integration’. Rather, what we seek is an expanded definition of what we simply refer to as quality education.

Evidenced by the title of this book, as editors we made a deliberate choice to advance ‘inclusion and diversity in education’ rather than ‘inclusive education’. We also made a deliberate choice to include a very wide lens and perspective on what a diverse and inclusive education looks like. While it is true that many chapters have a specific focus on including what is termed ‘students with disabilities’—which seems to constitute the biggest conceptual barrier for school systems to work towards inclusion—we’ve also made sure to remind readers that ‘inclusive education’ is a reconceptualization of education for a diversity of children in schools. In other words, it is both a systems focus and a focus on specific marginalized and/or disadvantaged groups. They do not need to be mutually exclusive in our definition of ‘education’.

The question then becomes what such a definition of ‘education’ is and what it looks like in practice. There are some particularly promising and inspiring models out there for understanding and advancing how education can function with the incorporation of inclusive principles built within it. We particularly support the scholarly and practical work of those that promote the quality of education through the inclusion of a diversity of learners (i.e. CAST, 2018; EASNIE, 2011, 2018; Forlin & Loreman, 2014; SWIFT, 2018; UNESCO, 2017). At the risk of promoting one single way of thinking about inclusion in education, we nonetheless would like to highlight the longitudinal work of Save the Children in Laos as an exemplar. From 1993 to 2009, the Lao PDR Inclusive Education Project not only ensured that all students participated and achieved in school, but that the education they received was of high quality (Holdsworth, 2003; Grimes, 2010). It is notable that the project focused not only on children with disabilities, but also on girls, children from economically disadvantaged families, and children from marginalized ethnic and linguistic groups. As an evaluative tool for the success of the project, a set of indicators were developed that we believe presents an effective and concise means to expand our definition of ‘inclusion and diversity in education’:

- All pupils feel welcome in the school.
- All students support each other in their learning.
- All students are well supported by school staff.
- Teachers and parents cooperate well.
- All students are treated equally as valued members of the school.
- All students feel that their opinions and views are valued.
- All students can access learning in all lessons.
- All students can access all parts of the school building.
- All students enjoy lessons.
- All students are engaged in all lesson activities.
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- All students achieve their learning in all subjects according to their individual ability.
- All students learn together.
- All students have access to appropriate health services as necessary.
- The school ensures that all students are admitted to the school.
- All vulnerable children are successful in their learning. (Grimes, 2010, Appendix B)

The list above is a set of headline indicators with many sub-questions located underneath. Additionally, a Quality Standard for education was used to frame an aspirational – but nonetheless ‘point-at-able’ – set of quality education principles (Grimes, 2010, Appendix A).

Given our affinity with and endorsement of Save the Children’s Laos project, we do also advocate a contextually driven understanding of education informed by local history and socio-cultural understanding, and are very wary of macro-universal applications of ‘inclusive education’ – particularly as transferred from the Global North to the Global South (Artiles, Kozleski, & Waitoller, 2011; Kamenopoulou, 2018; Phasha, Mahlo, & Dei, 2017; Singal, Lynch, & Johansson, 2018). However, what makes the Save the Children Laos project laudable is its locally driven initiative and framing, albeit inspired by the discourse at the global level. As Schuelka (2018) argues, it does no good to solely focus on the micro- or the macro-levels in isolation from each other; but the dialectic interaction and discursive flow of ideas in and between levels is what is important in terms of understanding and analysis. The Save the Children Laos project indicators are an exemplary place to start the conversation, but must be altered and contextualized to meet the needs of any one place and time. In the next section, we will further the conversation on research for diversity and inclusion in education.

RE-ENVISIONING RESEARCH FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

The scholarship reviewed in this book makes visible at least three fundamental conceptual and methodological limitations in the study and practice of ‘inclusive education’, which have major implications for the future of this movement. First, inclusive education progressively reduced its focus from an engagement with the whole range of bio-social-cultural human diversity to an exclusive concern for students with disabilities. As noted above, it has been argued that inclusive education has become the new iteration of special education. We, of course, wish to push this further into eliminating ‘inclusive’ and a simple re-framing of what we call ‘education’.

Second, the evidence suggests that the idea of inclusive education lacks clarity and consistency. Definitions cover an extensive conceptual landscape, extending from placement in general education classrooms to the systematic and sustained transformation of educational systems. The former stresses a superficial understanding of this complex construct as merely moving students from one setting to another, with the attendant assumption that sitting alongside non-disabled learners equals inclusion. The latter vision of inclusive education represents an ambitious social change project in which the very premises of what counts as education, its purposes, and means, are altered to expand access, offer empowering modes of participation, and enhance the outcomes of all student groups.

It should be noted that inclusive education’s lack of conceptual clarity and multiplicity of implementation approaches – as discussed above – is not only evident in North American and Western European contexts. Indeed, geography matters. Nations of the South seem to be
appropriating and contextualizing inclusive education in disparate ways. This is likely mediated by the particular socio-historical, cultural, and economic circumstances of these countries where inequities are rampant (Artiles, Mo, & Caballeros, 2015; Artiles et al., 2018; Singal & Muthukrishna, 2014).

Third, an implicit message in this body of work is that inclusive education around the world is grounded in equity projects that range from individualistic to communitarian visions of justice (Artiles, Harris-Murri, & Rostenberg, 2006). This fragmentation of justice discourses adds to the lack of clarity in this literature. Consequential questions have been raised about this lack of conceptual cohesion in the visions of social justice embedded in this literature (Artiles et al., 2006). To wit:

What will be the future if inclusion discourses and how should then coexistence of multiple views of social justice be addressed? Should we strive to reduce the multiplicity of inclusion discourses and social justice strategies? Do some social justice perspectives offer fewer trade-offs for oppressed groups? Which social justice model can help transcend the tensions special education has created between special treatment of students through intensive individualized interventions and access to educational opportunities in the general education system? (Artiles et al., 2006, p. 266)

Although all of these shortcomings have been identified for some time, research communities, particularly in North America and Western Europe, have been largely indifferent. We argue that researchers have the obligation to tackle these limitations through the questions they pose, the theories they privilege, and the methods they choose. For instance, researchers have played fundamental roles in the narrowing of study samples that limit participation to students with disabilities. Further, researchers have contributed to the conceptual ambiguity of this knowledge base by ignoring the need for consensus building from the accumulated evidence. Of significance, the models of justice that underlie inclusion research have remained largely invisible in this literature. In short, researchers ought to craft a new generation of investigations that correct these inadequacies, and focus not only on individual access and participation but also on how political and socio-cultural structures shape the meaning of education writ large. This is a profound challenge with important implications for future inclusive education research. We briefly comment on two such implications.

First, future inclusion research will benefit significantly from a socio-cultural historical mindset. This means that future studies will be required to account for the histories of exclusion that have affected groups that could benefit from inclusive models, and to recognize the socio-cultural systems and structures that exist to inform what and whom education is for and against. This will make visible the institutional and structural barriers that block these groups’ access to educational opportunities and outcomes. Equally important, attention to these histories and systems will enable researchers to make visible how attributes have intersected over time with other markers of difference such as disability, race, gender, social class, and immigrant and language status (Artiles, 2017; Baynton, 2001). After all, the idea of difference is relational and has power implications – there is always a tacit reference in the construction of difference – different from whom? (Christensen, 1996; Minow, 1990). In this way, future inclusive education research will be compelled to broaden its analytic lens beyond disabilities and examine identity intersections in socio-cultural historical systems.

Second, the conceptualization of disability must account for its dual nature as an object of protection and a tool of stratification (Artiles, Dorn, & Bal, 2016). We can no longer assume that educational responses to disability and other forms of difference are always benign. Researchers should be open to understanding how inclusive education and other interventions can advance educational opportunity as well as reproduce exclusionary practices. This is a key reminder
given the global exacerbation of inequality, particularly in the United States (Darity, 2011). A corollary of this challenge is that researchers will be required to increase the precision of their definitions of inclusive education and not get stuck in a terminological discussion that does not advance systemic improvement. As we argued above, we believe that the way out of this entanglement is to re-imagine and reframe the very concept of ‘education’ itself without qualifiers. Moreover, given the dual nature of disability and other forms of difference, it is imperative that future research generates collages of interdisciplinary representations of the groups served in these programs and the consequences of inclusive education for various subgroups. Borrowing from Clarke and McCall (2013), the goal of these alternative research representations is to document ‘different interpretations of the same facts’ about inclusive education (p. 350).

CONCLUSION

Given all that was said above, and the wide diversity of chapters prepared for this book, it is pointless to present a unified summary of the themes of the book or a singular message that readers should take away. Each chapter in this book represents a different perspective and comes from a different place, both conceptually and geographically. There is no use here in taking the reader through the organizational ‘road map’ of the book, because there are a variety of narratives that one can come away with. We have tried to roughly organize the book into three parts, which we will explain below.

Part I, ‘Conceptualizations and Possibilities of Inclusion and Diversity in Education’, is a compilation of chapters that primarily emerge from sociological, anthropological, and critical fields of study. There are several established scholars from the field featured here, as well as some exciting new voices. The overall purpose of this section of the book is to establish the wide variety of perspectives and conversations that are occurring at this moment in time, but it certainly cannot claim to be comprehensive.

Part II, ‘Inclusion and Diversity in Educational Practices, Policies and Systems’, groups together a set of chapters that have a slightly more specific focus on school or system-level practices. Most of the chapters offer some practical application of ideas and use specific evidence and examples to build their narratives. There is a diversity of contexts presented in these chapters, as well as a diversity of learners and responses to that diversity. As with the first part of this book, Part II offers a mix of established scholars and new voices to the conversation.

Part III, ‘Inclusion and Diversity in Global and Local Educational Contexts’, in many ways is a combination of Parts I and II as presented through specific contextual cases. In most of the chapters, there is a focus on how the global and local interact in forming a contextual understanding of inclusion and diversity in education. In moving between continents and cases, both similarities and differences can be traced. We, as editors, are particularly happy about the diversity of scholars, organizations, and contexts offered in this part of the book.

In summary, this introductory chapter has served to briefly reflect on the conceptual history of ‘inclusive’ education by highlighting its trajectory from ‘special’ education and the dilemmas and terminological confusion that has ensued. In recognizing this history, but also in eschewing its entanglements, we then advanced the notion that we should simply be utilizing the term education to mean heterogeneity, diversity, and inclusion. Third, we argued that research on diversity and inclusion in education can and should move in new directions to broaden the conceptualization of ‘inclusive education’ in the 21st century. Throughout the three sections of this chapter, we stress that the experience and voice of the student is paramount to
any conversation or project on inclusion and diversity in education. Unfortunately, there are still far too many children that encounter marginalization and segregation in educational settings.

What conclusions, then, may be drawn about the multi-layered difficulties some young people encounter with school? One is that these difficulties are not their difficulties: they emerge from the structure and mores of the societies in which the young people live, and the forms of inequity imposed directly or indirectly by income and status. Another is that these difficulties are intersectional in origin and to a large extent uncategorizable. We hope that the contributions in this book reflect and demonstrate an intersectional perspective and will offer readers a backdrop against which a critically reflective stance about existing forms of ‘inclusive education’ may be seen. We hope also that we have been able to turn a lens onto the ways in which respect, understanding, and a sense of community may interact to make the school experience of students who differ from the dominant culture (by race, class, gender, or disability) more successful.

REFERENCES

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