Institution: University of Worcester

Unit of Assessment: 23 Education

Title of case study: Enhancing inclusive practice in educational settings

Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2003-2020

Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:

Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Richard Woolley	Professor of Education & Inclusion	2011-present
Sean Bracken	Principal Lecturer	2008-present
Valerie Chapman	Principal Lecturer	1992-2014

Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020

Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N

1. Summary of the impact

A body of research focused on inclusive approaches to education has influenced the design and delivery of Initial Teacher Education in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), increasing trainee teachers' understanding of inclusion; it has changed pedagogical practices in HEIs and other educational organisations thus enhancing support for disabled students; it has informed Continuing Professional Development for teachers relating to controversial issues; and it has re-shaped understanding of bullying in a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the eradication of bullying in schools.

2. Underpinning research

The School of Education at the University of Worcester has a longstanding focus on research exploring and developing inclusive approaches to education both in school settings and in Higher Education. Three interrelated areas of research, under this broad banner of inclusive education, are elaborated here:
- Supporting students with disabilities and learning needs
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Exploring teachers' perspectives on addressing controversial issues in school settings

Supporting students with disability and learning needs

Chapman examined the barriers to learning embedded within HE Subject Benchmark Statements (Grant 1, Reference 1) and developed a web-based resource called SCIPS (Strategies for Creating Inclusive Programmes of Study) to support teachers in UK Higher Education to develop strategies for inclusive teaching, learning and assessment. This resource has been evaluated, developed and adapted through a series of EU funded projects led initially by Chapman (Grants 2-4) and then Woolley (Grants 5-6) with partners from across Europe, extending its reach beyond the UK, but also beyond HE into Adult Education and Vocational Education & Training. These projects have in common the aim to enable disabled students to participate more fully in post-16 education through supporting teachers and trainers to develop their practice.

Universal design for learning

Bracken's research is driven by the imperative to enhance educational experiences and learning outcomes for students that have been systematically marginalised by normative practices in course design and assessment in Higher Education. Thus, his research has developed a typology for

higher education policy makers and practitioners articulating what might be done to advance a concept of socially just assessment praxis (Reference 4). His research has a significant international focus and he has worked closely with colleagues in the USA, Brazil and South Africa to explore differing cultural perspectives on Universal Design for Learning and the increasingly important issue of inclusive access to online learning (Reference 5).

Exploring teachers' perspectives on addressing controversial issues in school settings

Woolley's research in this area has examined trainee teachers' concerns with teaching "controversial" issues, including sexual orientation, religion and belief and how well-prepared they are to promote equity, pupil voice and inclusive structures in the classroom. Two studies, almost ten years apart, have examined the extent to which teacher training courses equip student teachers with the skills to explore these issues. The first study (Reference 2) highlights potential areas for development in Initial Teacher Education: increasing student understanding of the professional parameters of their role, including their duty to promote equality, diversity and inclusion; and more explicit exploration of controversial and challenging issues within ITE. The second study (Reference 6) suggests that whilst there has been an increased focus in ITE on developing skills for teaching relationships education, it highlights the continued concerns of trainee teachers in addressing challenging issues more broadly.

Woolley has also examined teachers' perspectives on bullying (Reference 3). The study undertaken in 16 schools across a local authority explores sector definitions of bullying and draws parallels and contrasts with teachers' views on and experience of bullying within their schools. It consequently proposes the development of and articulates a more inclusive definition of bullying that recognises the impact on all parties, including the perpetrator, promoting a broad understanding of inclusion.

3. References to the research

1. Chapman, V. (2006) "Academic Standards and Benchmark Descriptors" in Adams M. & Brown S. (eds.), *Towards Inclusive Learning in Higher Education: Developing Curricula for Disabled Students*, London: Routledge, 44-55.
2. Woolley, R. (2011) Controversial Issues: Identifying the Concerns and Priorities of Student Teachers. *Policy Futures in Education*, 9 (2), pp. 280-291. https://doi.org/10.2304%2Fpfie.2011.9.2.280
3. Woolley, R. (2018) Towards an inclusive understanding of bullying: identifying conceptions and practice in the primary school workforce. *Educational Review,* 71 (6), pp. 730-747. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2018.1471666
4. Hanesworth, P., Bracken, S. and Elkington, S. (2019) A Typology for a Social Justice Approach to Assessment: Learning from Universal Design and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 24 (1), pp. 98-114. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2018.1465405
5. Bracken, S. and Novak, K, (eds.) (2019) *Transforming Higher Education through Universal Design for Learning: An International Perspective*. London: Routledge.
6. Woolley, R. (2020), Tackling Controversial Issues in Primary Education: perceptions and experiences of student teachers. *Religions*, 11(4), e184. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11040184

Grants

Cognitive Impairment, European Commission, Comenius Programme, 12/12-07/14, £70,350.
6. Woolley (PI), SCALE - Student Centred Adult Learning Engagement in Higher Education, Erasmus+, 10/18-08/21, £207,692.

Reference 1 can be provided on request. Reference 2 was submitted to REF2014 as part of the University's submission to UOA23 Education; references 3, 5 and 6 are included in the University's REF2021 submission to Education; references 3-6 were all identified as of at least 2* quality through the peer review process set out in the University's REF 2021 Code of Practice.

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4. Details of the impact

The research outlined above has influenced the design and delivery of the curriculum in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), changed pedagogical practices in HEIs and other educational organisations, informed Continuing Professional Development for teachers, and re-shaped understanding of bullying in a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the eradication of bullying in schools.

Influencing design and delivery of the curriculum

Woolley's research on teaching controversial issues in primary education has fed into the development of the University's own Initial Teacher Education programmes. The most recent Ofsted report highlights the impact of this, stating that: "trainees understand and promote inclusion well which, in turn, is enabling them to overcome barriers to pupils' learning and physical development"; they are very aware of how to support pupils from different backgrounds including single parent, step-parent, and LGBT parent families; and they show a "determination to overcome potential barriers to pupils achieving well" (Source A).

It has also fed into the development of the ITE curriculum at other UK HEIs (Sources B and C) and at Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (Source D). Specifically, Woolley has presented his research on controversial issues and on bullying to students on FdA, BA and PGCE programmes at these institutions. To quote one testimony: "you have contributed to the development of our curriculum…[and] your exploration of the new Relationships Education curriculum in primary schools provided our students with current and cutting-edge information about the new statutory guidance for the subject" (Source B).

Changing pedagogical practice

SCIPS, developed over a decade and a half, provides a suite of resources for lecturers to enable them to effectively support learners with a variety of disabilities and learning needs. The resources are embedded in both the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in HE (PG Cert LTHE) for new lecturers and into the disability and learning support advice offered by Student Services. Testimony to the value of the resource, in terms of developing pedagogical practice, is provided by the Course Leader on the PG Cert (Source E).

SCIPS is an open-access resource. It is widely accessed nationally and internationally, there were 34,829 users between January and December 2020 engaging in 40,436 sessions and 56,7134 page views with access from across the world including the USA (42%) and India. SCIPS is linked from many other HEI student support pages. In 2020, 2,226 users accessed SCIPS for at least 28 days in the year. An Australian user from TAFE New South Wales (the leading vocational education and training provider in the state) notes: "As a resource used daily in my work practices to provide teachers of students with learning and mental health disabilities strategies to implement, SCIPS provides inclusive, and most importantly, workable suggestions to enable teachers to adopt practices that potentiate students' success" (Source E).

The resource is being further developed through the SCALE project (Grant 6). An e-learning course and toolkit are currently being trialled with academics in four European countries to inform curriculum design and pedagogical approaches in HE and beyond. There is already evidence of

impact of the pilot in terms of user's awareness of student learning needs (Source F).

Bracken's research has informed pedagogical praxis on inclusion in HE, nationally and internationally. A PG Cert LTHE course leader from a UK HEI identifies how the research has created a "paradigm shift" in HE pedagogy at their institution, and "is part of the core reading for the course, so not only it has impacted on my own practice but it will also have a much wider impact on the professional development of all those taking the course, many of whom are in leadership positions" (Source G).

Bracken also established an international community of Universal Design professional practitioners. INCLUDE (International Collaboratory for Leadership in Universally Designed Education) in October 2019 at the third trans-Canadian Conference for UDL (RRU, Vancouver Island). It has become a transnational hub for developing an evidence base for inclusive, culturally sustainable trans-global learning and teaching (Source H). The work of INCLUDE has impacted curriculum design and development for initial teacher education in Brazil (Source I).

Informing CPD

Woolley's research on controversial issues has informed the development of an online course for teachers which introduces the new guidance for Relationships Education in primary schools, which is statutory from September 2020. It makes a case for an inclusive approach to the subject, including Sex Education in age and stage appropriate ways. The value of the course to students in light of the new legislation has been highlighted by institutions that have used this resource (Source C).

Changing organisational perspectives on bullying

Woolley's research on bullying has had an impact on the sixteen schools (2,487 children) in the local authority involved in the research but also on the organisation that commissioned it. The CEO of GR8 AS U R, a not-for-profit organisation set up to combat bullying in schools articulates how the research has helped them to articulate their mission more forcefully and was instrumental in securing a further tranche of funding (£459k) from the Big Lottery Fund (Source J). She also emphasises that Woolley's expert advice persuaded the local authority to go ahead with the organisation's planned interventions.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

A. Ofsted Initial Teacher Education inspection report 2014:
   https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2366201
B. Testimonial from Dr Sacha Mason, Head of Programmes for Education and Lifelong Learning, Bishop Grosseteste University, outlining contributions to curriculum content and design
C. Testimonial from Dr Roger McDonald, Associate Professor in Primary Education, University of Greenwich, outlining contributions to curriculum content and design
D. Testimonial from Janet Limberg, Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL), Somerset County Council, outlining contributions to curriculum content and design
E. Testimonials from users of SCIPs
F. Testimonial from Aforisma, Social Cooperative focused on lifelong learning based in Naples, Italy
G. Testimonial from Virna Rossi, PG Cert in Learning and Teaching in HE Course Leader Ravensbourne University London
H. Testimonial from Professor Richard Jackson, Boston College
I. Testimonial from Elizabete Costa Renders, Sao Paulo, Universidade Municipal de São Caetano do Sul
J. Testimonial from Jacqueline Daisy Hitchcock-Wyatt, Founder and CEO, GR8 AS U R