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INVITED ARTICLE

## **Inclusive Education: Beyond the Chalkboard or Just another Brick in the Wall?**

**(Inaugural lecture: formal induction as professor)**

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In the formal induction as professor, the author uses two metaphors to equate her research efforts in the field of inclusive education to that of beyond the chalkboard and not as just another brick in the wall. The lecture is partly inspired by Pink Floyd's hit "Another brick in the wall" which deals with the laying of metaphorical bricks. Floyd reflects on how he was demeaned by a teacher and dreaming of rising up against teachers who are "just another brick in the wall." By referring to the dismal reports of the Annual National Assessment (2012) for languages and mathematics the author expresses her concern particularly for learners who experience barriers to learning and resorts to the route of inclusive education where all learners are able to access equitable, quality education. She draws on theories such as Freire, Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner as her theoretical framework for her research and takes an asset based approach to inclusive education. Five research highlights are used to illustrate her research activities, with a detailed exposition of the "Learn not to Burn" research project. Recommendations are made regarding the training of teachers to not just be "another brick in the wall" but to go "beyond the chalkboard" in an effort to ensure quality inclusive teaching practices.

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## Introduction

In this, my formal induction as a professor, I intend to focus on my research as an endeavour to promote scholarship and to celebrate my achievements in the field of inclusive education. With due recognition that a certain amount of controversy surrounds this field, only the most salient issues relating to inclusive education will be addressed. Further, I will present my preferred paradigm for research, highlight certain of my research endeavours and elaborate on one particular project. In so doing, I will relate the outcomes of my research to a sphere of influence and practice which lies ‘beyond the chalkboard’. I shall argue that my research does not form just ‘another brick in the wall’ but constitutes an innovative contribution to the successful implementation of inclusive education in South Africa.

Inclusive education can be described as both a philosophy and a practice which is based on particular theories of teaching and learning. Firstly, the philosophy of inclusive education is based on the right of all people to equal and quality education and their right to develop their potential and to receive due respect for their human dignity. This means that all people should be physically integrated into mainstream education by the provision of accessible classrooms and facilities and instructional support systems such as a flexible curriculum (Peters 2007: 99). Education for All (EFA) has been firmly placed on the international policy agenda; however, current education inequalities and insufficient progress toward EFA with particular reference to people with disabilities can still be seen (Peters 2007: 98). Children with disabilities are still marginalized in society and “reflect the unadorned aims of education and of the international community” (Peters 2007:106). In order to meet the EFA millennium development goal, that is universal primary education, a goal ratified by 152 countries, a commitment is required to ensure effective activation of the EFA framework for people with disabilities whereby countries which make exceptions are not tolerated and all exclusionary policies in education are challenged (Peters 2007: 1-7). Secondly, as a practice inclusive education is defined by UNESCO (UNESCO, Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access for All 2005:13) as “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through inclusive practices in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.”

Both the underlying philosophy and definition of inclusive education bring to my mind the popular British rock band, Pink Floyd, famous for their progressive and psychedelic music and composition of philosophical lyrics, certainly a most successful and musically influential group in the realm of pop music. Their song, *Bricks in the wall*, deals with the laying of metaphorical bricks (or the accumulation of problems) by a character called Pink. Pink reflects on how he was demeaned by a teacher and dreams about the kids in his school rising in protest against their abusive teachers by dragging them out of the school, chanting:

We don't need no education  
We don't need no thought control  
No dark sarcasm in the classroom  
Teachers leave them kids alone  
All in all it's just another brick in the wall  
All in all you're just another brick in the wall.

Pink describes the personal wall that hedges him in and isolates him from the rest of the

world; his teachers are just another brick in that wall. Eventually Pink tears down the wall to once again emerge a caring person. In my lecture I hope to shed light on the murky waters of inclusive education where so many bricks in the wall exist and to emphasise the need to exert ourselves (as teachers) beyond the chalkboard. But first I refer to the literature which serves as a background to this lecture and to offer a perspective regarding the alignment of the two metaphors in the title.

## **Salient Aspects of Inclusive Education**

### **The education situation in South Africa and its implications for inclusivity**

The current education dilemma in our country with particular reference to learners experiencing barriers to learning and its implications for the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa is the driving force of my research. Sadly, in South Africa, The Report on the Annual National Assessments (ANA) 2012 (Grades 1-6 and 9) reflects a bleak situation where the national average percentage mark for mathematics shows a decrease from Gr 1 (68%) to Gr 9 (13%). The national average percentage mark for language is reflected as Gr 1 (58%) and Gr 3 (52%). Mean scores for the Intermediate Phase (Gr 4-6) and Gr 9 is comparatively lower with a maximum average mark of 43% (Home Language) and a minimum of 30% in Gr 5 First Additional Language. It is encouraging, however that the ANA (2012) report states the new curriculum development, Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) “takes learners back to basics in a systematic order”. This is illustrated in Foundation Phase (Grade R – reception year - to Grade 3): Literacy, which emphasises Phonics. In contrast to these national outcomes, I cannot be but awed by achievements abroad. An article entitled “The Great Schools Revolution”, published in *The Economist* (17 September, 2011), alludes to the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores and ranking. In this exercise Shanghai and South Korea topped the ranking list for Reading, Mathematics and Science with exceptional achievements. Why is this so? Of course, cultural factors exercise a powerful influence as Asian parents are known to strongly emphasise children’s test results and insist on optimal school performance. Success in these geographical areas can also be attributed to:

- Educational decentralisation, that is, giving power back to schools;
- A focus on underachieving learners;
- The choice of different types of schools.

Finally, in these societies a deep-seated respect for the teaching profession prevails. In Hong Kong, “the effective teacher is seen as a figure of authority, morality and benevolence”. I have had the privilege to witness these abovementioned features first-hand during my extensive fieldwork in China. Just a touch of the tenets of Confucianism would be welcome in our children’s classrooms (The Economist, 17 Sept 2011)! Chinese teachers are “not just another brick in the wall” of obstruction. Instead they are epitomized by the Great Wall of China - their education system is strong and empowering!

The inspiring examples abroad lead me back to the challenges at home. In South Africa we cannot afford a laissez-faire attitude towards the teaching profession. Good teaching, which includes a dedication to teaching the basics and a commitment to those learners with barriers to learning, is imperative in an effort to promote equal quality education for ALL. Engelbrecht (2011, International research proposal) reports: “It has become increasingly clear



that the South African education system still bears many profound and enduring effects of Apartheid inequalities and that some dominant practises have remained essentially the same and therefore continue to constrain the rights of groups within and through education”. She continues that even though fundamental changes in education have taken place and, as indicators reveal, equity regarding general access has been realised, the right to basic education with particular reference to equitable opportunities, is still problematic. This is evidenced in the huge disparities in basic resources, trained teachers and effective leadership, which persist between formerly advantaged and disadvantaged schools, and in particular schools in rural areas. Poverty and its manifestations are the most salient characteristics in these schools. Thus, to implement inclusive education, the challenge is to ensure that mainstream schools become environments where dialogue (about implementation of inclusive education) and action can take place on different levels and where difference is accepted and dealt with in ways that ensure that the school community experiences a sense of belonging through meaningful participation (Engelbrecht, 2011: 6-18). Engelbrecht posits that “Exclusionary practices in school communities indicate a lack of acceptance of difference and are thus cause for grave concern as they militate against the development of an equitable inclusive education system in South Africa”.

In the light of these challenges, a clear understanding of inclusive education as elaborated by UNESCO (2005) has direct implications for how we as South Africans conceptualise inclusive education in our unique context. In this regard, the *White Paper Six: Special needs education* (DoE, 2001:31) is key. The foundations of this definitive policy which envisages an inclusive education system for all learners (including those with disabilities) (DoE, 2001:11) are the values embodied in the South African constitution: human dignity, equality, human rights and freedoms. Building on the reports of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) of 1997, *White Paper Six: Special needs education* was accepted in 2001 as the legal policy to build an inclusive education and training system. These documents focussed on integrating special and ordinary education by alterations to buildings, development of the curriculum and making the necessary modifications, training of staff and inter-sectoral collaboration (Walton: 2006: 45). In particular, the White Paper earmarked a flexible curriculum to which all learners (including those with disabilities) would have access (DoE, 2001:11). Thus, the White Paper 6 (2001) is the guiding document for the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. Its principles are as follows:

- All children and youth can learn and need support;
- Diversity (including learning needs) is valued;
- Education must meet the needs of all learners;
- Home and community is an important source of learning;
- Attitudes, behaviours and teaching methodologies need to change in order to meet diverse needs;
- Maximised learner participation in the educational process is necessary;
- Learners’ individual strengths need to be encouraged.

Central to the process of inclusive education implementation are the learners with intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning, which is a continuum of factors in interaction. The barriers to learning referred to comprise barriers within the learner, the school, the education system as well as /or the broader social, economic and political context (Swart & Pettipher 2005: 17). The NCSNET and NCESS (1997) identify the following barriers to learning in the South

African context: socio-economic deprivation; barriers as a result of impairments; negative attitudes; an inflexible curriculum; inappropriate languages/LoLT; lack of support services; inadequate policies and legislation and lack of parental involvement and recognition. Although we need to recognise these barriers, we should not sink into the pessimism of a predominantly needs-approach to education. Here I stress the worldwide shift to Positive Psychology, which “focuses on intrinsic strengths, assets and resources and positive constructive intra-psychic domains” and which underlies the asset-based approach to education (Ebersohn & Eloff 2006 in Ryan 2008). The asset based approach should be applied to the development of inclusive policies to change the deep structure of exclusion which affects children worldwide. It calls for effective practices in inclusive education which require community involvement where efforts are made so that all voices are heard: teachers’ voices, learners’ voices, parent’s voices and the voices of authority which “remain[s] at the heart of the inclusion/exclusion discourses” (Mitchel, De Lange & Thuy 2008: 109). This approach moves us away from the needs-based approach which focuses on the deficits/limitations of learners (Du Toit and Forlin 2009: 670). Instead it concentrates on the strengths of learners and the assets located in the different systemic levels (which features later on in this lecture).

In summary, this brief exposition of salient aspects in inclusive education illustrate that inclusion is not only a state but also a process (Ainscow, 2005:15). This confirms the UNESCO definition cited earlier and calls for inclusive education researchers to be actively involved in that process for the betterment of education in South Africa and elsewhere.

The discussion now moves to my preferred theoretical framework with regard to my research in inclusive education.

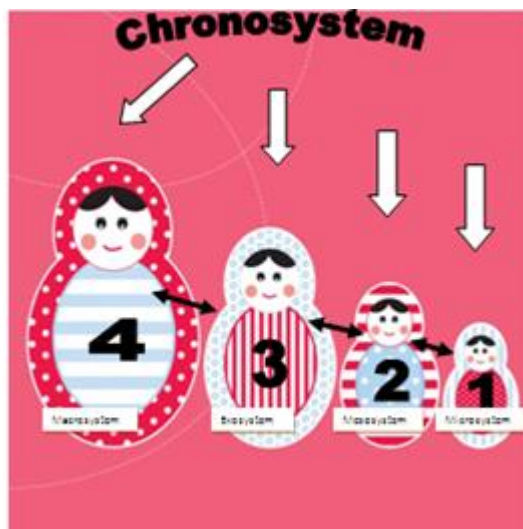
### **A Paradigm for Conducting Research in Inclusive Education**

I am intrigued by critical pedagogy (CP) as a sub-field of critical social theory as it attempts to develop a “pedagogy of critique” as well as a “pedagogy of hope” as my concern is the inflexible curriculum which learners with barriers to learning face. CP encompasses three overarching projects, namely experience, anti-system and inclusion of which the latter is emphasised here. Freire, in *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1972), proposes a ‘problem-posing’ pedagogy to emancipate and democratize education, thus “creating an emancipatory culture of schooling” which aims to empower learners and in particular learners experiencing barriers to learning. The main aim of the project of inclusion is to reform, among others, educational institutions to be more inclusive, based on principles of equality and anti-discrimination. The ultimate goal is equal opportunity and power for the “underprivileged, oppressed, marginalised or subjugated.” Its rationale is rights-based liberalism and multi-culturalism. CP however needs to develop long-term and sustainable transformation in educational structure and practices. Although CP is “couched in abstract and ethical ideals such as hope, love, democracy, utopia, and care”, Cho (2010: 321) cautions against “succumbing to its speculative and idealistic tendencies.”

Keeping the aforementioned in mind, I see inclusive education as having a propensity towards a systems approach which includes the interrelated systems in society, such as the classroom, school, family, community and government. Interaction between these systems is necessary to support learners and to effect their change, growth and development (physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural). Since continuous causal processes are involved in changes (such as from an exclusive to an inclusive education system), all the other systems are



affected by what happens in the one system. I am therefore convinced that researchers in inclusive education should lean on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory developed in the 1970's.



**Figure 1:** Russian dolls epitomizing Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory  
 Acknowledge: B Ben-David (Doctoral graduate, Unisa 2012)

This influential theory epitomizes child development as four nested systems namely the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystem interacting within the chronosystem. Interacting dimensions needed to understand how the levels of systems in the social context interact are person, process, context and time (Nel, Nel and Hugo 2013). Complementary is Bronfenbrenner's recent work (1998) namely the bio-ecological model of development (in the 1970's) where person and process factors and the time dimension were further elaborated upon, as the different levels of the environment which influence one's development (Swart and Pettipher 2005: 10). The interconnectedness of the theoretical frameworks of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological- and Bio-Ecological Development Theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (which focuses on the social and cultural aspects of the learners' development) and critical theory (Foucault and others) influence my research.

The quantitative part of my research, which is characterised by empirical science and post-positivism and which challenges the absolute truth about human behaviour to be discovered, reflects a deterministic philosophy. Yet I also assume that reality can be interpreted. Consequently my epistemology, that is my view of the nature of knowledge, is constructivist and hence I see knowledge as experiential, personal and subjective when gathering information about people. By adopting one paradigm in lieu of the other, I would be failing to pragmatically address those aspects which other paradigms may be able to address (Brannen 2004). Thus, mixed-method design is preferred in most of my research efforts.

### My Research Highlights

In the light of my theoretical and methodological preferences, I would like to highlight five of my recent research projects, which have been influenced by a combination of the inclusive education discourse, the asset-based approach, CP (sub-field of critical social theory), Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, Vygotsky's socio-critical theory and the White Paper 6 policy. All of these projects were collaborative by nature. The aim of mentioning these projects individually and elaborating on one of them, namely the Learn Not

To Burn (LNTB) project, is not only to provide a bird's eye view of my work, but also to demonstrate how I brought all the pieces of the puzzle together to form a holistic understanding of Inclusive Education. In all the projects mentioned above, my personal objective was to challenge teachers, researchers and stakeholders to deal with the complexities of implementing inclusive education in a diverse country such as South Africa.

The five projects are the following:

- i) The birth of an African-university-affiliated early childhood centre of excellence: investing in children, families and communities: the Unisa Centre for Early Childhood Education. This comprises efforts to establish an early childhood education centre as a centre of excellence, where research is in the forefront of a university community engagement project. The research resulted in an article entitled: *The Whisper Test and Checklist as tools for teachers to screen hearing loss in young children as a preventative measure for barriers to learning*.
- ii) An on going, international, collaborative research project directed at a comparative analysis of teachers' roles in inclusive education in Finland, Slovenia, Lithuania, China, England and South Africa. This investigation gave rise to the collaborative writing of five articles of which *Exploring teacher self-efficacy for inclusive practices in three continents* is probably the most important.
- iii) Basic training for facilitators of people with hearing loss. In 2011 I was approached by the National Institute for the Deaf to develop a short learning programme, together with colleagues in the Inclusive Education Department, College of Education as part of a community engagement project, as basic training for facilitators of people with hearing loss to be offered at Unisa in 2015.
- iv) A current international research project in collaboration with colleagues in China, which is investigating the interplay of Early Childhood Development (ECD); English Second Language (ESL) (literacy); Inclusive Education; poverty and education in the rural areas; teaching practice. The research team will explore the theme: *Teaching teachers to teach reading for meaning: A framework for in-service teacher training*.
- v) The implementation of the "Learn Not To Burn" (LNTB) curriculum for learners with barriers to learning.

There is currently limited fire safety training given to learners in South Africa. This limitation and the fact that learners with severe intellectual disability (SID) experience the mainstream curriculum as a barrier to learning, necessitated research regarding differentiated pedagogy as an effective adjunct to inclusive practice. Thus, in collaboration with the Early Childhood Development Institute (ECDI) the programme entitled "Learn Not to burn" (LNTB), a pre-foundation, mainstream burn prevention programme, was adapted and implemented for inclusive education. This LNTB programme consists of ten lessons focusing on fire safety education.

The LNTB programme enabled us to investigate an important research question, namely *What differentiated instructional practices do teachers need to employ to teach a specific curriculum to learners with Severe Intellectual Disability (SID)?* This study was conducted in the context of a public special school (in collaboration with the Early Childhood Development Institute – GDE) in Gauteng which caters for learners with SID, ranging from the age of three up to the age of eighteen years. Although the school primarily caters for learners with SID, many learners have multiple disabilities.

We concentrated on the micro level, that is, the teaching practices for teaching the LNTB curriculum. However, as Bronfenbrenner's theory dictates, we regarded it as important to also take all the other related systems into account. For the sake of brevity, I will only mention the next level, the meso level, which is the institutional level (the school). On this level, the School Management Team (SMT) in collaboration with the rest of the staff were involved in the planning and adaptation of the curriculum, subsequently implementing it on the micro level, that is teaching the ten adapted LNTB lessons.

A qualitative research design was used to elucidate themes regarding teacher implementation of the LNTB curriculum. Constructivist practices, where the social aspect, language, concept formation and scaffolding strategy (teachers and peers offer support by using cues and suggestions) were an integral part of this study. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is where the learner's existing knowledge is a springboard for learning to take place and where the teacher or peer offers some assistance which eventually leads to independent task performance. In this study, however, the target learner group may not have reached this level, despite teachers' efforts to enable the more able learners. The theoretical framework included the Constructivist Theory associated with the works of Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky (Westwood, 2004:22-23).

A pilot study was conducted which formed part of a larger research project (2009-2011). It also served as a Unisa community engagement project. A descriptive ethnographic design was used to address the research question. Furthermore, visual empirical methods were employed to assist with retrospection of lived experiences of participants. Contextual validity by way of triangulation was ensured as photographs and video clips were taken of the children, the teachers and the therapists as they were performing activities. Other forms of data collection methods included focus group interviews with teachers and therapists, completion of questionnaires by teachers and therapists and journal entries were made and recorded by the principal and deputy principal. Data were systematically examined, analysed, coded and as categories emerged they were organised according to themes. These significant findings resulted in the formulation of useful pedagogical praxis recommendations.

The findings focused on the relevance of differentiated instructional practices, such as visual stimulating focused activities, hands on learning and the importance of incorporating music in ensuring access to the LNTB curriculum for the SID population. An adapted version of Smith's (2008: 4-11) *Model of Dynamic Differentiation (MoDD)* was used to allow for differentiating the curriculum to cater for these learners (SID).

The school's staff, together with the multidisciplinary (such as a speech therapist and occupational therapist) team, made the necessary modifications, adaptations and accommodations to the LNTB curriculum (in collaborative forums and referred to as learning circles) in order for all learners in all phases the phases are able to benefit by and have access to it. Teachers made use of a repertoire of teaching strategies as a way of transferring the ten fire safety messages to the learners. By scaffolding, that is breaking the lessons into smaller parts and repetition of the content over a long period of time was effective in ensuring that difficult concepts were grasped. Teachers concentrated on the learners' senses, particularly the visual modality in combination with play activities. Practical and hands-on activities assisted the learners in remembering facts easier and to apply the skills and knowledge they had learnt.

During the research, the teachers were afforded the opportunity to be innovative and creative in an effort to develop appropriate and effective ways to differentiate the curriculum enabling



learners with SIDs to benefit by the curriculum. They utilised the learners' senses and made the lessons very practical, starting from the concrete (using real objects) then to the semi-concrete (using pictures) accompanied by frequent verbalisation and engaging in play and music activities. It was noticeable that when making use of differentiating teaching methods, that support materials; assessment procedures; learner interests, learning styles and strengths (assets) need to be taken into consideration to ensure that they have grasped all the concepts.

By reflecting on the efforts that the teachers and the multidisciplinary team had made to differentiate the curriculum (by way of appropriate adaptations and accommodations and being mindful of the learners with SIDs assets and weaknesses) proved to be successful as learners were able to demonstrate what they had learnt. They understood and could apply the ten core messages of the LNTB curriculum (Nel, Kempen & Ruscheinski 2011: 191-208).

The outcomes of the project included an article published in an accredited journal; the principal of the research school completed her doctoral thesis, based on an aspect of the project; the adapted LNTB curriculum has been included in the Birth to Four Curriculum of the Early Childhood Education Institute of the Gauteng Department of Education.

Emerging from this project, the teachers and therapists trained teachers from six schools and ECD Centres in Soweto (2011) where I acted in an Inclusive Education advisory capacity.

### **Implications of My Research: From a Brick in the Wall to Beyond the Chalkboard**

Finally, as envisaged at the beginning of this lecture, I shall relate the outcomes of my research to the catch phrases in the title: 'beyond the chalkboard' or 'just another brick in the wall'. In this manner I hope to contribute to the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa.

Researching education with various lenses encapsulates and refines the various educational practices. I believe that I belong to the community of inclusive education researchers who are endeavouring to reach consensus on inclusive education practice. This lecture was an effort to reflect on the nature of my work during the 11 years I spent at Unisa (of my 41 years in the service of education) and to determine whether they indeed have had an impact on those involved in inclusive education. I needed to know whether these efforts have moved beyond the chalkboard or were they just another brick in the wall?

The undeniable answer to this question, is yes: I have taken a systems stance on how I look at inclusive education. In this way I was, for example, able to look at the learner in the LNTB project holistically. I have observed that experiential learning and co-operative learning were facilitated; that staff was enabled to make the necessary modifications, adaptations and accommodations; that by learning the 10 fire safety lessons, learners with SID were equipped and that they were able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills regarding fire safety. Also, the outcome of the *Whisper Test* research project proved that the *Whisper Test* can be used successfully by teachers as a tool to identify learners with hearing loss at an early age in order to prevent developmental and learning problems. This certainly goes beyond the chalkboard.

In addition, the short learning programme, *Basic training of facilitators of people with hearing loss*, empowers teachers to enable learners with hearing loss to access the mainstream curriculum. This is not just merely another brick in the wall; rather bricks are dismantled by the implementation of this programme and teachers become part of a learner empowerment process.



Furthermore, the *Comparative analysis of teachers' roles in inclusive education in Finland, Slovenia, Lithuania, China, England and SA* evidenced that teacher roles in inclusive education are emphasised and collaboration is the determining factor in ensuring curriculum access for learners experiencing barriers to learning. What was brought to the fore was teachers' training needs, especially their need to be equipped with the ability to implement multi-level teaching, differentiation, Universal Design for Learning and evidenced-based pedagogy. Teachers also expressed a dire need for support in terms of smaller classes; training and planning time; teacher support and assistance to adjust the curriculum. As academics it is incumbent upon us to ensure that teachers are trained in these areas and that teaching practice provides them with the necessary experience. We have to make sure that the teachers we train do not become part of a wall that hems learners in to the narrow sphere of their disabilities. Teachers should be equipped to open the vistas beyond the chalkboard.

All in all, we need to become acquainted with the micro system that the learners belong to, the assets/strengths that they bring to the meso system (i.e., the classroom and the school environment) and the barriers that they are faced with in this system. We have to become familiar with the other systems that influence education. By moving away from a needs-based approach of inclusive education located within a deficits paradigm to an asset-based approach, I believe that we recognise and give expression to the phrase, "Education for All". As inclusive education in South Africa is a human rights issue, it also constitutes a pursuit of equity and a non-discriminatory, non-oppressive world. Inclusive education is undoubtedly concerned with social justice for ALL. It is concerned with breaking down walls, not building them.

In view of the fact that theory influences practice, I have adopted Bronfenbrenner's Ecological- and Bio-Ecological development theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the critical theory of Freire, Foucault and others. By doing so, the voices of people with disabilities have been heard as they cry: "Nothing about Us without Us!" In order to avoid being another brick in the wall of mediocrity, I have been motivated by the burning issues in the field of inclusive education and by the theoretical frameworks that inform and underpin research that provides innovative answers.

Finally, in an effort to transcend the chalkboard and tear down the metaphorical wall, I wish to offer the following suggestions concerning the College of Education's work. It is incumbent upon academics at this university to infuse within their courses, from the initial teacher education courses to postgraduate level without exception, with the values of equity, social justice, non-discrimination and inclusivity. The College of Education should primarily be a place where diversity is recognised and catered for and where exclusionary practices are eradicated. In addition, a signature module which converts all students into change agents, which includes all these values and which advocates a way of thinking about curriculum and pedagogy that suits ALL learners irrespective of their intrinsic or extrinsic barriers, is desperately needed. Teachers need to be immersed in classrooms where there are learners with disabilities and to learn about them. Teachers require good content knowledge of the subjects they teach; simultaneously they need to be well versed in curriculum differentiation as part of their role as curriculum developers. They need to be tutored on how to engage in research on interventions, modifications, accommodations and adaptations that can or should be made to the curriculum and how to implement multi-level teaching, particularly in the South African context. In addition, they need to be skilled in forging collaborative partnerships on all levels so that the learners become the responsibility of the nation as a whole. If teachers can do this, they will not just be bricks in an imprisoning wall; they and their learners will move far

beyond the chalkboard. It is my heartfelt desire that every school subject in all the teacher education programmes offered in the College of Education should be characterised by a Universal Design for Learning. I dream about programmes that cater for all learners and which will equip teachers from the onset to adopt a diversity/inclusivity ethos and pedagogy and as such cater for ALL learners.

If, as the title of this lecture implies, inclusive education goes beyond the chalkboard and if it is to be not just another brick in the wall, we, as academics, need to become serious change agents in society, particularly in education where Unisa is purported to be training approximately 55% of South Africa's teachers. I thus concur with Dunn (in Lacy 2002: 50) who professes that "If children do not learn the way we teach them we must teach them the way they learn". "A one-size-fits-all education won't work any longer, if it ever did ... [we should] search for ways to teach smarter, not harder" (Wormeli 2007:3-4) and it is our responsibility to ensure that teachers do just that.

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