New Frontiers of the Capability Approach

F. Comim, S, Fennel and P. B. Anand (Eds.) (2018). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

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Other People's Adaptations

Teaching Children with Special Educational Needs to Adapt and to Aspire

Cristina Devecchi and Michael Watts

Introduction

Both Sen and Nussbaum view education as a basic capability. It has instrumental and intrinsic value because it can be valuable and can also be an instrument for the development and broadening of other capabilities. It is therefore pivotal to the achievement of socially accepted valuable functionings and functionings that the individual has reason to value. Education, in its instrumental sense, affords the individual both the basic tools of literacy and numeracy, and the higher order skills of making informed decisions through the ability of thinking critically about one's situation. In this latter sense,

education forms the basis for self-determination and the fulfilment of what each individual has reason to value in the life they want to lead.

Yet education can also be a barrier to the broadening of capabilities and the achievement of functionings. Barriers can take many forms: they can be of a curricular nature; they can be ingrained in the structure of schooling and the ways in which setting by ability and assessment procedures marginalise students; they can be determined by changes in policy; and finally, through the process of education, students can learn to adapt their preferences and rationalise and justify the very barriers to their own well-being.

The adaptive preference problem is central to the critiques of utilitarian approaches to well-being put forward by Sen and Nussbaum in their justifications of the capability approach (Sen, 1992, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000). They argue that people tend to adapt their preferences under unfavourable circumstances and that the utilitarian concern with preference satisfaction therefore fails to account for the distorted interpretations of well-being framed by deprivation. In this sense, adaptive preferences can be seen as the salience of what people are made to prefer over what they actually prefer. The capability literature typically considers adaptive preferences as self-abnegation (Sen, 1992, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000) and resignation (Teschl and Comim, 2005) rather than the sour grapes phenomenon described by Elster (1983). Educational structures can generate adaptations, leading young people to accept and internalise external constraints that limit their potential to choose and lead the educational good life (Walker, 2006; Unterhalter and Walker, 2007; Watts, 2007, 2013). The capability approach engages with this problem by addressing not only what individuals value but what they have reason to value. Nevertheless, although education can

play a critical part in challenging adaptations, the processes of schooling can discipline students into self-denial and the renunciation of aspirations for a better life.

Respect for human diversity is fundamental to the capability approach and so care must be taken when considering adaptive preferences (Nussbaum, 2000; Watts and Bridges, 2006; Clark, 2009; Watts, 2009). We recognise that many teachers strive to raise the aspirations of their students, often in the face of considerable difficulties (not the least of which may be the indifference of those students to their education). However, the part that teachers can play in producing and reproducing environments in which students adapt their preferences are generally well-recognised. Think, for example, of the teacher who, directly or indirectly, constantly undermines the student, perhaps (using a phrase common in schools in England) by telling her that she, the teacher, has low expectations of her. Under such circumstances, the student may well come to adapt her educational preferences, internalising the restrictive externalities and resigning herself to those structural limitations. In this chapter, we seek to extend this argument by suggesting that such circumstances not only lead to the adaptation of the student's educational preferences but to those of her teachers as well. We presume that raising the aspirations of their students is a central aspect of teachers' professional identities. That is, it is something they should value and have reason to value or, in the language of the capability approach, a professional capability. It follows from this that resignation to circumstances inhibiting that professional capability to encourage the educational flourishing of students constitutes an adaptive preference that detracts from the well-being of the teachers as well.

We consider this argument here in the context of educational provision for children and young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN) in England.

Nussbaum observes that prejudice against children with disabilities can prevent an accurate understanding of what they can achieve (2006: 189) and is unequivocal in her defence of human flourishing as the metric for all people, including – or, perhaps, especially – those with disabilities:

> using a different list of capabilities or even a different threshold of capability as the appropriate social goal for people with impairments is practically dangerous, because it is an easy way of getting off the hook, by assuming from the start that we cannot or should not meet a goal that would be difficult and expensive to meet … Treatments and programs should indeed be individualised, as indeed they ought to be for all children. But for political purposes it is generally reasonable to insist that the central capabilities are very important for all citizens (2006: 190).

Elsewhere (2000) she suggests that a certain wariness is required when dealing with children's capabilities and argues that well-being assessments should be concerned with the achievement of those functionings – including educational functionings – that will enable the mature individual to make her own choices. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to posit a counterfactual question at this point: Would children with disabilities and/or SEN opt for a reduced education if they had the freedom to choose a more complete one?

Deneulin notes that '*human* freedom and choice cannot be separated from *history* and *community*' and so attention must be paid to the 'collective and historical processes which underpin all human choices and affect the conditions in which human well-being can be promoted' (2006: 209, original emphases). We therefore begin this chapter with an overview of the SEN agenda, noting that it tends to reify the distinctions it was intended to

negate, and address the part that pedagogic structures play in producing and reproducing potential adaptations. We then consider how the construction of SEN provides a frame of reference for trainee teachers and address the ways in which they can become resigned to operating within such restrictive structures and so contribute to the adaptive preferences of their students. The third part of the chapter extends this argument by considering how the expectations of teachers can inhibit their own capabilities. That is, we question how the teachers' resignation to the reduced capabilities of their students can lead to processes of adaptation that reduces their own quality of life as they come to terms with an impoverished interpretation of teaching.

The Bumpy Road towards Inclusion as Fertile Grounds for Sowing The Seeds of Adaptive Preferences

At the international level, the concept of inclusion is enshrined in the Salamanca Statement which states that 'all children should learn together, whenever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences that they might have' (UNESCO, 1994: 11). The Statement does not refer specifically to disabilities, special educational needs or any other form of classification and labelling. Instead, it makes a universal appeal to the right of every child to have access *to* and to participate *in* education. However, the validity of the Statement presumes a distinction between those children who have difficulties in learning and who are therefore, for whatever reason, 'different' and those who are not. The underlying discourse – which we argue below is at the heart of how teachers adapt their preferences

and rationalise their choices – is one of normal distribution of ability (Gould, 1981) which, as Florian and Rouse argue, 'is informed by a hegemonic belief in bio-determinism' (2009: 595) and which has been supported by professional and medical interests (Tomlinson, 1982; Thomas and Loxley, 2007).

Although critics and supporters alike have pointed out that there is still a lack of agreement on what the practice of inclusion should be like, it is broadly concerned with the idea that all children, regardless of any disabilities or other discriminating factors, have the right *to* education (that is access to educational provision), but they are also entitled to a meaningful and successful participation *in* education. The latter notion of inclusion stresses both the quality of the educational offer and its equity in terms of educational outcomes (Devecchi, 2010). Both principled goals have been factors in the development of the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015) and in particular Goal 4, that is, 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

Yet, the road to inclusion has been, and still is, not a smooth one. Focused on the notion of access, in the 1970s the movement for inclusion in the UK set itself in opposition to the practice of educating children with disabilities in special schools or other segregated settings. Rather, it was argued, all children had the right to be educated together. In the beginning, then, inclusion was fought on behalf of children with disabilities and the movement argued for the children's right to be educated in mainstream school alongside their peers. Alongside the notion of access, inclusion also challenged the quality of the educational offering by arguing that access to education was necessary but not sufficient because having access to education rested on the notion of integration. While integration

assumed that the child had to adjust to the mainstream practices, inclusion supported the idea that it was the responsibility of schools to adjust in order to include the child. As a corollary to inclusion, the two notions of participation and celebration of diversity became part of the conceptual bases of inclusion.

Starting with the Warnock Committee Report (DES, 1978) and following a number of policies and guidelines (DfE, 2001; DCFS, 2006) all the way to the most recent *Special Educational needs and disability code of practice: 0–25 years* (DfE, 2015), the English system has utilised a multi-track approach to the provision of education for children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) which intends to offer a variety of services to bridge the polarised alternatives of the mainstream and the special needs systems. Although this multi-track and multi-agency approach has the appearance of a viable and effective response, in reality it is marred by a strong positional contraposition between those who believe that inclusion offers the best solution to the dilemma and those who, on the other hand, claim that children's special and individual needs are better served in special schools and through specialised pedagogical responses. The polarisation is not a new phenomenon and it can be traced to the Warnock Committee Report which, premised on the common aims of education for all children, introduced the concept of 'special educational needs' (SEN). Radical for its time, the concept aimed to counteract the negative consequences of classification and labelling by asserting that at any point in their educational life any child might have educational needs which are different from those of the majority of other children. The report also used the concept of SEN to argue that children with disabilities were entitled to be educated in mainstream schools and that it was the responsibility of schools to adapt to the needs of every child. Yet, what seemed then a radical move in favour

of a social model of disability – that is, a model which shifts the cause of difference from within the child to the way in which social arrangement creates barriers – preserved the status quo by adding two important caveats, reified in the present legislation: children with disabilities and SEN are entitled to mainstream education only if: (i) their education does not prevent the education of other children; and (ii) adequate support and provision is made for the purpose of meeting the children's needs.

Current legislation (DfE, 2011, 2015) not only firmly reasserts the special nature of some children, and therefore the need for specialised education, but it also undermines the project of inclusion by (mis)-appropriating its principles while declaring the end of the 'bias toward inclusion' (DfE, 2011). While such confusing ideological back-stepping has been cast as providing more parental choice and better provision, its consequences have been a return to a more medicalised and discriminatory approach. A number of factors have led to the present situation, amongst which the simultaneous and interrelated rise of academies, and the diminishing power of the local authorities. However, one of the most problematic turns has been the major changes to teacher training. First came the decision to allow unqualified teachers into academies and to remove teacher training powers from universities by placing it into schools (DfE, 2010), followed by the decision to remove the need for 'any' teacher to have teacher qualified status (DfE, 2016). The impact a lack of training and opportunities for professional dialogue can have on the quality of the provision and on the inclusion of children can be great.

Thus, the road toward inclusion has been fought along a series of entrenched dichotomies such as ability/disability, mainstream/special education, integration/inclusion and so on. Central to the debate is a series of ideological

contradictions and practical obstacles (Terzi, 2005, 2007a; Nussbaum, 2006; Norwich, 2008a). Predicated on the basis of the 'dilemma of difference' (Minow, 1990), inclusion, and the provision which has to be made available to ensure its viability and success, rests upon how conceptions about difference determine the amount, level, quality and, according to Wiebe-Berry (2008), the perceived fairness of the provision. Following Judge's (1981) analysis of dilemmas in education, Norwich summarises the nature of the inclusive dilemma as one in which 'there is no choice between alternatives when neither is favourable' (Norwich, 2008a: 288). Norwich's preoccupation with the dilemma of difference is indicative of more recent questioning of the validity and practicality of inclusion. The dilemma is one which stalls ethical decisions about appropriate pedagogy: if neither inclusion nor special education is a favourable option, how are teachers to decide on the good and right support for all children? On what basis would their decisions be made? We contend that the unavailability of favourable option, as Norwich puts it, challenges the very premise of rational choice theory in which rationally perceived individuals can make choices concerning their self-interest; or, in the case of teachers, what would be the in the interests of the children. We contend, therefore, that the dilemma so conceived is fertile ground for other forms of post-ad-hoc rationalisations that generate adaptive preferences.

One of such form of rationalisation, which can lead to the adaptation of children's and teachers' preferences, is the manner in which their needs are diagnosed, identified, and, ultimately, classified. Much has been written on the issue of classification of disability, the identification of special educational needs and the labelling of students in general (Corbett, 1996; Florian and McLaughlin, 2008; Norwich, 2008b). It is important to note that

although the terminology is problematic, especially inasmuch as it can frame a lazy essentialism, and that various terms are at times used interchangeably, the three issues of classification, identification and labelling are closely linked. In various measures, and dependent upon contextual factors such as social, school organisation and individual norms and expectations, all three modes of designating individual ability, cognitive competence and potential to perform can have a bearing on how children and teachers structure their own identities in relation to their expected and assumed roles and responsibilities. However, it is also important to recognise the distinction between how children perform and what they are competent to perform. For example, they may not perform well in examinations but this does not mean they are not competent in other educational contexts.

Moreover, the need to rely on an effective system of identification is predicated on the assumption that equal educational opportunities for all children can be ensured. However, in practice, as Florian et al. (2006) suggest, the system of identification aims to fulfil the following intentions: to diagnose children in order to devise appropriate medical, educational or social intervention programmes; to meet parental expectations; to fulfil children's legal rights; to ensure equity in the fair distribution of limited resources; and to ensure accountability. As conceived by the Warnock Committee Report, the label of SEN was supposed to eliminate the negative connotations of the 1944 Education Act disability categories. Yet, over time, the very label that aimed to eliminate all labels has become a way of separating children between those who have needs and those who do not (Corbett, 1996). The Foucauldian disciplinary power of the SEN label is such that, rather than signifying the acceptance of human diversity as something that is normal, it reifies the assumptions that some children are outside what is expected to be normal, while

simultaneously, as Graham and Slee contend, it provides 'the means by which we make judgements about the character, ability and future of different school children' (2008: 280). Labels, thus, define sets of assumptions which have implications for how teachers and children adapt to specific regimes of truth (Foucault, 1977, 1980) which, together with how the National Curriculum is structured and the assumptions about age-related attainment results, regulates beliefs about ability, potential and the capacity to succeed.

Although education has the potential to challenge adaptive preferences, the way education has been systematised and standardised indicates how educational structures can generate and sustain such preferences and lead the individual, without necessarily being aware of it, to accept and even appreciate the limits of a reduced life. As Rose states:

> Although an increased understanding of the needs of individual pupils and the characteristics associated with some form of disability can be helpful, where this has led to stereotyping and a lowering of expectations such an approach has done considerable disservice to the very individuals that our education system has identified as being in need of support (Rose, 2010: 2).

The 'considerable disservice' can be construed as the consequence of a process of adaptation which is similar here to the Bourdieusian notion of habitus which is concerned with the internalisation of external circumstances that delimits the individual's worldview. Socialisation processes typically delimit the realisation of particular capabilities as specific functionings – such as valuing one form of education over another (Watts and Bridges, 2006; Watts, 2009, 2013) – and it is important to distinguish between adaptations to a particular form of education and to education altogether. If the aspiration of the capability approach is to enable individuals to lead a truly human life, the danger is that the

educational structures within which students with disabilities and/or SEN are located

generate an adaptation to the intrinsic and instrumental aspects of education, reducing

them, in Sen's phrase, to 'happy slaves' (1999: 62) content with their lot. Moreover, basic

capabilities are interrelated so whilst they can lead to mutual enhancement, they can also

lead to mutual adaptations. Being different may, for example, cause those with disabilities

and/or SEN to adapt to the capability of appearing in public without shame, thereby further

restricting their freedom to enhance educational capabilities.

The unintended consequence of SEN policies has been to mark the children out as

different; and this highlights the complexities of education and educational systems that

Sen (in particular) and Nussbaum tend to gloss over. The capability to be educated (Terzi,

2007b) requires more than the input of educational resources. It requires conditions that

enable the conversion of those resources into functionings and so enhance capability. The

failure to acknowledge the importance of conversion not only means that the resources

may be redundant but that their redundancy reifies the disadvantage of difference (Watts

and Ridley, 2012; Ridley and Watts, 2014). The integration argument signals the problem

of conversion factors; the inclusion agenda seeks to redress them. The classificatory system

leads to separate education (whether in special schools or through additional support in

mainstream schools) and/or the mark that these children are different. It offers the

potential for enhanced educational capabilities – the freedom to move beyond self-

abnegation and to aspire to the better life – by ensuring both the resources and the

conditions necessary for their conversion. Appropriate educational structures can enhance

aspiration and challenge what Sen terms 'social discipline' (1992: 149). This social

discipline may be explicit (for example, the teacher who constantly tells the child that she is

no good) but it may also be implicit (as suggested here where the social structures do the 'telling').

There is, then, a dilemma in the classification of disability and SEN. Although intended to promote inclusion, it may simply reproduce the conditions that rendered it necessary. If, as Norwich (2008a) asserts, there is no good option when it comes to educational provision, then the system itself predicates resignation to the reduced educational life: the better options are all out of reach. Furthermore, the very need for additional resourcing may taint those resources with the 'dirty mark' (Schostak, 1993) of their need (Watts, 2011; Watts and Ridley, 2012; Ridley and Watts, 2014). Put another way, the presumption that those with disabilities and/or SEN are second class students may lead to all attempts to do something about it merely reifying the belief; and, with educational structures foreclosing better alternatives, those students may come to accept what they have as the best they are going to get. Yet, even within such limited and limiting structures, individuals can make a difference and teachers can encourage their students to aspire beyond the confines of social discipline.

Teacher Expectations and Training

The capability to be educated is essential in order to avoid disadvantage and implies considerations about the design of social arrangements (Terzi, 2007a: 30). Challenging adaptations may not necessarily lead to greater freedoms because the social structures that generated the adaptations may well remain in place. Nonetheless, the individual's recognition that she has become resigned to her unjust circumstances and her reflection

upon those circumstances are typically the first steps towards the enhancement of capabilities; and, given the nature of adaptive preferences, this is likely to require some external prompt. However, Nussbaum (2006) argues that where children are concerned, the focus should be on the achievement of functionings rather than the capability – that is, the substantive freedom – to achieve them. Ensuring that minimum thresholds are met (in the sense of achieved functionings rather than the poor proxy of, in this educational context, examination results) may therefore be sufficient to ensure that adaptations are challenged. This need not require recognition of and reflection on reduced circumstances because of the change in social structures: appropriate change has the potential to disrupt production and reproduction of the social discipline that generates adaptations. Teachers may, therefore, negotiate the adaptive preferences of children with disabilities and/or SEN in their care by enabling the conditions that allow thresholds to be reached – although we contend that teachers should not stop at the threshold as this can become another rationalisation of adaptations signified, for example, by the oft-heard comment about children reaching their potential. This is likely to include the conversion of appropriate resources such as pedagogical, technological and human resources. As those resources may already be in place, albeit tainted with the mark of their need, this requires belief in and respect for the diversity that follows the inclusion (rather than the integration) agenda. It therefore requires engagement with the structural issues that signify the differences that need to be engaged with if they are to be nullified. It touches upon training and, in particular, how teachers are taught to construct and interpret disability and SEN.

Three main models – medical, social and ecological – are interpretative lenses used to describe the nature of disability and/or SEN. The medical model locates disability within

the individual and thus promotes rehabilitation as the main intervention. The social model posits that impairment (that is, a departure from human normality) causes disability (a restricted ability to perform tasks) which generates handicap (disadvantage) and so considers disability as the way in which societies create barriers that exclude individuals. The ecological model views the individual as part of a complex structure of relationships between different providers and thus pays more attention to how different stakeholders can work together to prevent exclusion and support inclusion. In practice, all three models are typically used in combination and this gives rise to further complexities and the need to revise old assumptions about the validity of such models. Nonetheless, they still serve as heuristic tools that teachers use to rationalise their decision-making processes when asked to validate their pedagogical interventions (Jordan and Stanovich, 2003).

This state of affairs has led to confusion, misinterpretation and, in some cases, the over-identification of children with SEN (OFSTED, 2010). The present mood has been one of revision and overhaul of the system of identification which has seen the creation of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan for every child identified as having SEN (DfE, 2015). As stated in the Children and Families Act 2014 and in the SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 Years (DfE, 2015), the Plan should simplify the identification of SEN, reduce bureaucracy and empower parents in making better choices for their children. The justification for an overhaul of the system is partly located in the need to reduce costs and partly in the argument that the present system does not seem to be fit for the purpose of establishing effective provision. However, the purpose of the present 'radical' and 'innovative' reform agenda (DfE, 2011) is far from clear: on the one hand, there is the need to ensure the appropriate and justified distribution of resources; on the other, there is the need to devise

pedagogical strategies that not only ensure children with SEN are able to access and participate in education but that they are able to use that education to live what Nussbaum calls the 'truly human life' (2000). As Florian et al. note, 'For children who are the recipients of special education, classification can have material consequences in terms of where and how they are educated, which professionals they encounter, and what life courses are mapped out' (2006: 37). Therefore, how teachers make sense of the interplay between classifications of disability and models of disability and how trainee teachers, whether through traditional university routes or directly in schools, are educated to understand the complexity of classifying disabilities and identifying SEN are at the core of how they devise suitable and appropriate provision.

   As shown so far, questions about how best to support children with SEN are at the nexus of multiple and complex contexts and paradigms. Although research on inclusion and the efficacy of SEN provision has mainly focused on in-school responses, there is now a growing interest in the role Initial Teacher Education (ITE) plays in preparing new teachers for inclusion. As Norwich (2008a) explains, the 'dilemma of difference' offers two possibilities for action and neither of them is favourable. If we accept this portrayal of what lies at the core of providing all children – and, specifically here, children with disabilities and/or SEN – with equal educational opportunities, how are we to devise training opportunities for would-be-teachers? Related to this, there is the problem of how we are to provide training that will educate would-be-teachers to face the dilemma and to come to terms with it. In both cases, providing such an education requires a shift from the present concern to ensure the accomplishment of top-down regulated targets to an embrace of

Peters and Reid's (2009) call for resistance and discursive practice that challenges pre-set assumptions and beliefs about ability and disability.

There are a number of routes by which students can enter the teaching profession in the UK but the predominant model consists of a combination of school placements and lectures at a Higher Education Institution (HEI). This model is the result of a longstanding debate as to whether a university-only based provision truly equips trainee teachers for the complexities of the job. However, it is also important to acknowledge that the debate is also located in the dispute about changing modes of teachers' professional practice and a persistent conservative critical view of the role of higher education in educating teachers. While both sides of this debate stem from the understanding that teaching is not just about theory, but also about experiencing the everyday nuances of practice, the present policy agenda (DfE, 2010, 2011) of making teacher education the sole responsibility of schools is as much about the need to train the school workforce as it to devolve funding from HEIs.

All trainee teachers are required to meet the Professional Standard for Qualified Teacher Status (TDA, 2007) which set benchmarks around three headings: professional attributes; professional knowledge and understanding; and professional skills. While such standards are wide ranging and written in a positive language which reflects the notions of inclusion, McIntyre argues that current ITE provision is:

ill fitted to prepare student teachers to engage with inclusive pedagogy. The English system is obviously inadequate for that purpose, being aimed only at preparing beginning teachers to the *status quo*, and very deliberately being planned to avoid them being encouraged to think critically on that *status quo* (McIntyre, 2009: 603, original emphasis).

Recent interest in the dynamic relationship between what is taught in HE-based courses and what students face and have to come to terms with during their school placements has revealed a number of key issues. Students receive different and, at times, contrasting messages at HE and in-school about inclusion (OFSTED, 2008; Florian and Rouse, 2009). The present focus of standard-based reform on attainment and behaviour management (DfE, 2010) leaves little space in the crammed ITE curriculum to expose students to the complexity of working with children with SEN, although the government has pledged to 'Give a stronger focus on support for children with additional needs, including those with SEN, in the standards for qualified teacher status' (DfE, 2011: 59).

While this is a welcome development, the Green Paper's predominantly medical model of disability does not bode well for inclusion. The messages student presently receive at HE, and the ones they might receive as the result of the proposed changes, might reinforce the idea that some children learn differently because of their disability or SEN. HE lecturers and teachers in schools might explicitly or unconsciously hold the belief that specialist knowledge is required to teach some children, thus unwittingly passing on the message that children with SEN are the class teacher's responsibility.

By far the most interesting area of research has focused on the nature of teachers' and trainee teachers' beliefs, values, assumptions and ideas about disability and SEN and how these can impact on the ways in which they view their professional roles and responsibilities. Yet, there is a certain degree of epistemological confusion and therefore the array of issues above are used interchangeably to define the set of notions used to conceptualise teachers' mental maps. Nevertheless, there is widespread agreement that trainee teachers 'tend to use the information provided in course work to confirm rather

than to confront and correct their preexisting beliefs' (Kagan, 1992: 154). In so doing, their pre-existing beliefs form a powerful conceptual map that can lead to the formulation of rational justifications for their future choices as teachers.

So the design of the ITE curriculum in England (which includes pressures of time and the limitations of the tutors) tends towards the reification of the social structures that mark out those with disabilities and/or SEN as different. This can go one of two ways: the orthodox reproduction of the status quo, which tends to inhibit capabilities and generate adaptations; or a heterodox challenge to it which can give students the substantive freedom to achieve the functioning of being educated. Sen and Nussbaum repeatedly emphasise that individuals are influenced by the actions and values of those around them. This is typically not a reflective process (again, it shares much with the Bourdieusian notion of habitus) and leads to what Sen refers to as putting identity before reason (Sen, 1998). That is, to being rather than thinking about being. That being is mediated by social environments and the wider social environments tend to limit opportunities for those with disabilities and/or SEN to lead the truly human life. They may retreat from appearing in public, unable to do so without a sense of shame. The inclusion agenda is intended to challenge this but the classificatory systems tend to act as heuristic short cuts: the label becomes the limitation of the individual, bypassing opportunities to help raise her aspirations beyond her adaptations.

Gasper suggests that aspirations can be 'socially fostered or socially stifled' and so the positive benefits of education can be more effectively realised through a focus on groups rather than individuals (2000: 998). Group aspirations can enhance collective capabilities (Ibrahim, 2006) and collective capabilities generated by social capital can lead

to the achievement of functionings that individuals may not be able to reach alone (Ballet et al., 2007: 198). Conversely, however, group adaptations can inhibit collective capabilities and the capabilities of individuals within groups (Watts, 2011). The influence of others on individuals typically presumes a power arrangement whereby those with more power influence those with less; and our concern so far has been with the ways in which the powerful act of labelling can frame the adaptations of children with disabilities and/or SEN. However, we want to take this further and consider the potential adaptations of their teachers and their resigned acceptance of the limitations pressing upon their professional capabilities.

Other People's Adaptations

Mills and Ballantyne (2009) address the concern with preexisting beliefs with reference to the notion of three hierarchical 'dispositional factors': 'openness' in terms of being receptive to other peoples' ideas and diversity; 'self-awareness and reflectiveness' as the ability to be critical and self-critical about belief systems; and 'commitment to social justice'. Their research concludes that preexisting dispositions are hard to shift unless ITE lecturers spend more time and commitment in creating the learning opportunities for students to confront their initial views (although they leave unanswered the question of what impact the dispositional factors of lecturers have on their students). Another way of addressing the conceptual maps of trainee teachers is that of drawing a relationship between attitudes, pedagogical behaviours and value systems. For example, Pearson (2007, 2009) applies a sociocultural model to ITE provision and argues that the language of

classification and identification 'allows schools to pathologise students' difficulties thereby reducing the schools' sense of responsibility' (2009: 560). Her findings show that trainee teachers' preexisting beliefs range from a categorical approach to disability to an interactive social model and that, while ITE can have an impact on changing their views, such initial beliefs are hard to challenge. Whilst illuminating, Pearson does not explain what she means by 'value systems' besides reproducing the widely accepted differences between the medical and social models of disability. Yet, what each individual has reason to value is central to how the capability approach evaluates social arrangements. Thus, a discussion about trainee teachers' adaptive preferences requires us to consider what such values might be.

Wiebe-Berry (2008) and Jordan et al. (2009) attempt to do just that. Starting from the principle that 'effective inclusion is akin to effective teaching practices overall, and that enhancing inclusive practices will benefit all students,' Jordan et al. (2009: 536) develop their research agenda around the notion of 'epistemological beliefs' (see also Jordan and Stanovich, 2003) and define them as 'beliefs about the nature of ability, of knowing and knowledge, the process of acquiring knowledge, and therefore about the relationship between teaching and learning' (2009: 536). Their research is important inasmuch as it makes explicit the connection between beliefs and the process of learning. While their research focuses on how trainee teachers assume children learn, the same can be applied to how trainee teachers learn about becoming teachers of all children.

This last point is a rejoinder to concerns that trainee teachers might find themselves in different epistemological contexts of learning in HEIs and learning in schools. The point is important because becoming a teacher is not about the acquisition of knowledge but also

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the application of that knowledge in practice. Such applications do not occur in a vacuum but in the specific and (as far as we know) highly idiosyncratic environment of schools. This is to say that beliefs, value systems and attitudes are based on past and present experiences of and in practice and that that practice shapes not only epistemological beliefs about the nature of knowledge and its acquisition, but shapes also the formation of personal and professional identities.

The notion of 'figured worlds' (Holland et al., 1998; quoted in Naraian, 2010) may be useful here. Premised on the sociocultural principles of activity theory, the 'figured worlds' construct acknowledges that whilst identities are shaped by the cultural environment, they cannot be fully determined by it. Thus, a 'figured world' is a:

> socially and culturally created realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognised, significance is attached to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others (Naraian, 2010: 1678).

In such a world, identities are both *imagined* through the interpretation of the rules of a specific cultural environment and *positional* in that they are actively defined by the lines of powers within the environment. For Naraian, the figured world construct helps the analysis of the collaboration between teachers and special education teachers. More research applied to how trainee teachers might figure their worlds between HE and schools is needed but, in the meantime, Naraian's work shows that we cannot assume an existentialist nature of beliefs. That is, the system of values which underpin the conceptual maps trainee teachers use to negotiate disability, inclusion and SEN is more complex and dynamic than previous research might argue.

However, if this goes to some way in facilitating an understanding of how beliefs are shaped through the interaction of different forms of identity and practice, it does not go far enough in explaining how value systems are constructed. That is to say, that if we leave out of the equation the notion of value, we may fail to recognise the insidious intrusion of adaptive preferences. More specifically, we fail to make a link between adaptive preferences and the pursuit of equality and justice (Sen, 2009). We also run the risk of reifying the notion that teaching is a matter of craftsmanship, of learning 'what works' and forgetting that teaching is about making moral and ethical decisions about what is good and right and is fundamentally concerned with what is fair and just for all children (Devecchi, 2010).

In this respect, the work of Wiebe-Berry (2008) frames the notion of beliefs within a value system based on teachers' conceptions of fairness and how they can use these to rationalise decisions about their educational practice. Wiebe-Berry focuses principally on fairness as a matter of justice; that is, justice in the distribution of resources. She quotes Barrow's definition of fairness according to which: 'it is morally wrong, in itself, to treat individuals differently without providing relevant reasons for so doing' (Barrow, 2001: 1150). One of the rationales for classifying children's needs as 'special' was to determine the amount and distribution of resources so that all children have equal opportunities. Yet once children are classified, the label tends to define teachers' beliefs about children's abilities, learning needs and whether or not teachers feel they can be responsible if they lack the 'special' knowledge required.

For Wiebe-Berry, this complex dynamic can be explained and understood by working out whether teachers (and trainee and newly qualified teachers in her case)

believe in a needs-based principle of distributive justice or whether they believe in a 'decent level' of minimum distribution. The decent level argument is necessarily based on a consensus of what is the minimum required to equalise opportunities, beyond which the distribution of surplus resources becomes unfair. The needs-based argument is appropriate when, as she argues, the 'wellbeing of the individual if of chief concern' (2008: 1150). However, this can lead to teachers becoming frustrated when resources are scarce. Research by Devecchi (2007) shows that the construct of fairness is indeed used by teachers as they make decisions about the distribution of resources, including the attention they give, among all the children in the classroom. However, unlike Wiebe-Berry's findings, Devecchi's inquiry shows that, once again, teachers have to deal with the dilemma of difference and in so doing they are caught in the impossible task of accomplishing justice for each individual child.

Adaptive preferences can become manifest as a delimitation of choice that restricts the opportunities of teachers to think differently and to examine their actions in relation not just to the availability of resources – including training and time – but in relation to how resources can be used differently to develop the well-being of their students. As such, teachers' beliefs about ability, disability and the nature of special educational needs can be barriers not only to the well-being of the student but also to their own professional competences and professional development. Seen thus, they can inhibit the possibility of even envisioning the possibility of better educational lives for students and better professional lives for teachers. This consideration of the adaptive preference problem can offer a new way of looking at teachers' beliefs, attitudes and pedagogical choice making; and that this can open up new ways of preparing teachers to teach all children.

Wiebe-Berry notes that teachers can become frustrated when resources are scarce. Our concern here is with the potential for them to reduce the cognitive dissonance this generates by adaptation. Elster (1983) argues that the tension caused by a mismatch between what the individual wants to do and what she is able to do can be reduced by the adaptation of preferences. This is the sour grapes phenomenon which causes the individual to non-consciously conclude that the object of her initial and unattainable desire is not really worth having and to revise her preferences. Here, this downgrading of the inaccessible may cause teachers to revise their professional preference for the inclusion agenda and focus instead on the more accessible goal of simply getting through the day with what they have. However, Elster's formulation presupposes an initial desire for that which has proven to be inaccessible. The capability approach extends his definition of adaptive preferences to include the self-abnegation that arises from habitual impoverishment and post-hoc rationalisation. Under such circumstances, there may not have been an initial preference to downgrade. The construction of ITE provision in the UK suggests that teachers may be schooled to have low expectations of students with disabilities and/or SEN. Moreover, the classificatory system (intended to promote the inclusion agenda by identifying the special needs of students) provides a heuristic framework that enables the rationalisation of those low expectations. Elster's interpretation of adaptation does not necessarily apply to such habitual circumstances but the self-abnegatory definition of adaptive preferences used in the capability approach is pertinent.

We asked at the outset whether children with disabilities and/or SEN would opt for a reduced education if they had the freedom to choose a more complete one. We now pose

that same counterfactual question of their teachers: would they opt to deliver a reduced education to children with disabilities and/or SEN if they could deliver a more complete one? This frames the issue of teachers' adaptive preferences. We assume that teachers value and have reason to value the delivery of appropriate education to all their students and that this is constitutive of what we might refer to, in capability terms, as their professional well-being. As indicated above, educational and social structures tend to inhibit the inclusion agenda. Several authors (Ibrahim, 2006; Ballet et al., 2007) have tackled the question of collective capabilities, arguing that individuals are more likely to bring about social change if they work together for a common cause. The corollary to this is collective adaptations and traces can be seen in the provision of education for children with disabilities and/or SEN: the adaptations of the teachers, generated within the same wider structures that generate adaptations in their students, further limit the aspirations to a better educational life for those students. However, this should not be seen as a collective adaptation as it implies shared responsibility and so contributes to the pathologising of disability and SEN. Significantly, addressing the educational adaptations of any child or young person (whether or not they have disabilities and/or SEN) without acknowledging the potential adaptations of their teachers can contribute to this process of pathologising difference and therefore distort well-being assessments.

It may therefore be considered appropriate to locate this professionalism in what Sen refers to as the agency dimension of capability: that is, doing something for others which is not obviously conducive to one's own well-being, doing something extra. For Ballet et al. (2007) this concept of agency is the basis of responsibility for others and collective well-being. Nussbaum refutes Sen's distinction between the well-being and

agency dimensions of capability. Whilst acknowledging that this distinction can be useful in assessing choices between equally valuable functionings (Watts, 2011, 2013) we side here with Nussbaum because making appropriate educational provision for children and young people with disabilities and/or SEN should not be seen as something extra for teachers to consider. The 'social discipline' (Sen, 1992: 149) that is the unintended consequence of the classificatory system frames this potential for teachers to become resigned to the socially constructed limitations of their students. Such adaptations may incorporate the frustration at the heart of Elster's interpretation of adaptive preferences but the sour grapes phenomenon does not go far enough in accounting for the resignation to reduced circumstances that can pervade the provision of education for children and young people with disabilities and/or SEN. The internalisation of external circumstances, including the heuristic of labelling, may lead teachers to presume that the better educational life is out of reach for students with disabilities and/or SEN. Accepting this can and should be seen as adaptation of their professional preferences. To do otherwise is to risk the complacent acceptance of the unjust *status quo* and to deny the significance of teachers' professional capabilities.

Conclusion

Adaptive preferences signal the difference between what people prefer and are made to prefer and the part that other people play in generating the circumstances under which individuals adapt their preferences is generally well-recognised. Focusing on the example of children with SEN and/or disabilities, we have shown how students can come to

internalise restrictive externalities and accommodate their aspirations to the realities of the structural limitations operating upon them, including those that may be produced and reproduced by their teachers. However, we have sought to extend the debate on adaptive preferences by arguing that these limitations do not only inhibit the well-being of the students but of their teachers as well. We pursued this argument through an examination of the origins of the SEN and inclusivity agendas, initial teacher education (ITE) in the UK and the notion of teachers' professional capabilities. The latter, we suggested, should incorporate a pedagogical commitment to providing the opportunities for their students to flourish educationally. However, ITE provision – or the lack of it – tends to reify the marks of difference the SEN agenda initially sought to erase. Teachers may, therefore, presume their students are incapable of such flourishing and so perpetuate the circumstances under which they adapt their preferences. This, though, denies their professional commitment to the education of all and so leads to the adaptation of their preferences. That is, it can lead to their resignation to an impoverished professional life.

In her defence of universal human values, Nussbaum (2000: 34–110; 2006: 9–95) highlights the importance of 'Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason – and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education' (2006: 76). Teachers can encourage their students – including and especially students with SEN and/or disabilities – to aspire beyond the confines of social discipline. Yet teachers are also taught; and, just as they may teach their students to become resigned to an impoverished educational life (and so, given the interconnectedness of capabilities, to become resigned to the impoverishment of life more broadly) so their ITE may teach them to reproduce these delimiting structures. That the inclusivity agenda has

become widely accepted does not detract from this as labelling provides a heuristic shortcut to the pedagogic assumptions and expectations that foreshadow the experiences of teaching and learning. Moreover, as 'there is no choice between alternatives when neither is favourable' (Norwich, 2008a: 288), teachers may be frustrated at the circumstances under which they teach. They may then reduce the cognitive dissonance this generates by adapting their preferences through the sour grapes phenomenon (the less-than-conscious mental adjustment that allows the self-deceptive reassessment of what is perceived as desirable) that Elster describes. They may also rationalise their circumstances and become habituated to them through the broader interpretations of preference adaptation described by Sen and Nussbaum in the capability literature.

Focusing on the education of children with SEN and/or disabilities illustrates the highly social nature of capabilities and adaptive preferences. Viewed through the utilitarian lens of self-reported happiness, education can reduce students to 'happy slaves' (Sen, 1999: 62) who are content with their impoverished lot. It can do the same to their teachers. We tend to think of the adaptive preference problem acting upon less powerful members of society. Whilst teachers are not exactly empowered, they are more powerful than their students. Yet they, too, can adapt their preferences by internalising the socially constructed limitations of their students and downgrading the value of the better educational life which is out of reach. We are not advocating a state of permanent frustration but calling attention to the pervasiveness of adaptive preferences (Bridges, 2006) because it can so easily be overlooked. Our focus on other people's adaptations, particularly as we have constructed it through the distinction of Sen's evaluative spaces, highlights the importance of agency: that one's own well-being extends to a concern for others (especially when, as here, there is a

professional commitment to that well-being). Yet if other people's adaptations can reduce one's own well-being, then enhancing other people's capabilities can surely enhance one's own well-being. In the meantime, and following Nussbaum, we do not want to offer the system an easy way of getting off the hook (2006: 190).

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