1. TERRITORIES OF FAILURE

Inclusion has been attacked from a number of directions, making it seem an even greater impossibility than ever before. As well as the complaints from the teachers unions about the physical and psychological strain on teachers and the damage done to children and young people by inclusion, it has also been assaulted by special educationists who have dismissed it as ideological and an unproven bandwagon (Kauffman and Hallahan, 1995; Kavale and Mostert, 2004). Parents have expressed concern about the adequacy of support received by their children in mainstream schools and even parents of ‘other’ children have questioned the impact of inclusion policies, especially where there are disruptive children. Now Warnock’s denunciation of the whole idea of inclusion threatens to see it off. There is little doubt that inclusion has a troubled existence and that it is being written off, at least in some quarters, as an abject failure. This chapter considers the territories of failure associated with inclusion – the confusion, frustration, guilt and exhaustion – and examines the doubts raised about whether inclusion will ever become a reality.

CONFUSION

The first territory of failure concerns the confusion which reigns over the inclusion ‘project’ and what it is supposed to do. The intention that inclusion should replace integration, brought in with the Warnock Report (Department of Education and Science, 1978) and the subsequent legislation, was welcomed by those who were critical that integration had been little more than calculus of equity (Slee, 2001a), concerned with measuring the extent of a student’s disability, with a view to calculating the resource loading to accompany that student into school. Slee describes the crude mathematical formula which is used: Equity [E] is achieved when you add Additional Resources [AR] to the Disabled Student [D], thus E = AR + D. Inclusion, formalised and to an extent mandated by the Salamanca statement, was supposed to be about more than placement in mainstream schools and was presented as the twofold activity of increasing participation and removing barriers (Barton, 1997). Suspicions have been voiced, however that inclusion is no better than integration and has merely replicated exclusionary special education practices.
Dyson (2001) suggests that tensions within the inclusion movement have led to a ‘recalibration’ (p. 27) of inclusion which amount to pleas for ‘old fashioned integration’ (ibid).

There appears, however, to be deep uncertainty about how to create inclusive environments within schools and about how to teach inclusively. The failure to consult with children and young people and their families means that there is little notion of the kind of inclusive practices that are acceptable to them. Whilst we continue to be ignorant about the features of good inclusion, we are assailed with advice about effective inclusion, all of which is appallingly meaningless and likely to entrench the sense of failure among teachers. As Booth et al (2003a) note, inclusion is understood differently by scholars, or at least they start from different positions, and as Garcia and Metcalf (2005) point out, there is a continuous invention of new terminology and nomenclature, aimed at being more neutral than what previously existed. The attempt by Booth and his colleagues (2003a) to produce a composite view of inclusion from contributors to their edited collection seems only to add further confusion. By their own admission, their composite definition ‘glosses over differences of view’ (p. 167), but it also plunges us into essentialism and distracts us from concerns about what inclusion might do for individuals and their families. Inclusive education, the preferred epithet for some, is used without recognising its oxymoronic nature and without considering that schools were never meant to be for everyone (Slee, 2003) and must, in order to function, position some individuals as failures.

According to Warnock (2005), who has come out against inclusion, the confusion is one of which ‘children are the casualties’ (p. 14). She acknowledges her own part in creating confusion and admits that the 1981 legislation ‘contained the seeds of confusion which, I fear, can be traced back to the 1978 Report of the Committee of Inquiry’ (p. 20). Although she never argued, in that report, that all children and young people should be educated in mainstream and indeed maintained that there would continue to be a place for some special schools, the report came to stand for mainstreaming. In what has been received as a dramatic about turn, she pronounces inclusion, to be ‘the most disastrous legacy of the 1978 report’ (Warnock, 2005, p. 22) and one which she now regards as difficult, if not impossible, to challenge:

Like an inheritance that grows and becomes more productive from one generation to another, this concept has gained a remarkable foothold in our society (p. 22).

In her defence she claims that two major ‘warnings’ (p. 25) were given to the Warnock committee by the Department for Education. The first was that dyslexic students should not be taken into account by the Committee, since at the time this was ‘banned from the civil service vocabulary’ (p. 26). The second warning concerned social deprivation and the Committee was urged to exclude children in such circumstances, including those for whom English was a second language, from its deliberations. Warnock claims this ‘embargo’ (p. 27) set up much of the confusion about inclusion which reigns today. This may well be the case, but her solution