



An introduction to disability, inclusive education and special educational needs

Pre-University Summer School

Geoffrey Lewis

**School of Education, Communication
and Learning Sciences (SELCS)**

**UNIVERSITY
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Welcome!



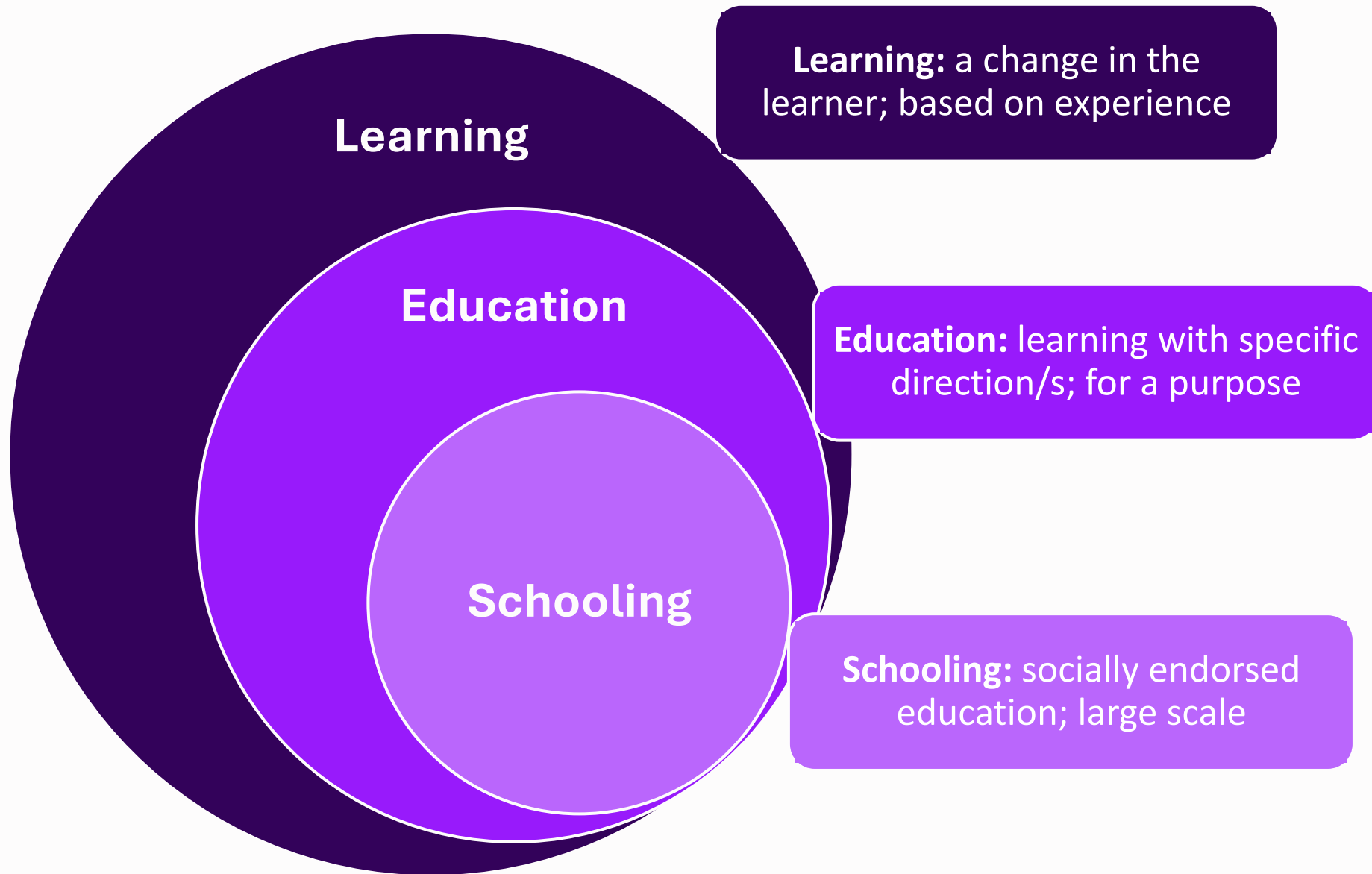
- Geoff Lewis
- Postdoctoral Fellow in Department of Education Studies
- Social scientist, interested in inclusion, professional development, and evidence-informed teaching .
- Worked in schools for 15 years



What is:
Learning?
Education?
Schooling?

What is the difference
between them?

How are they related?





Features of schooling...

Think about your own educational journey. With a partner, write a list of the defining features of school-based education.

Critical perspective might ask:
To what extent is a practice...

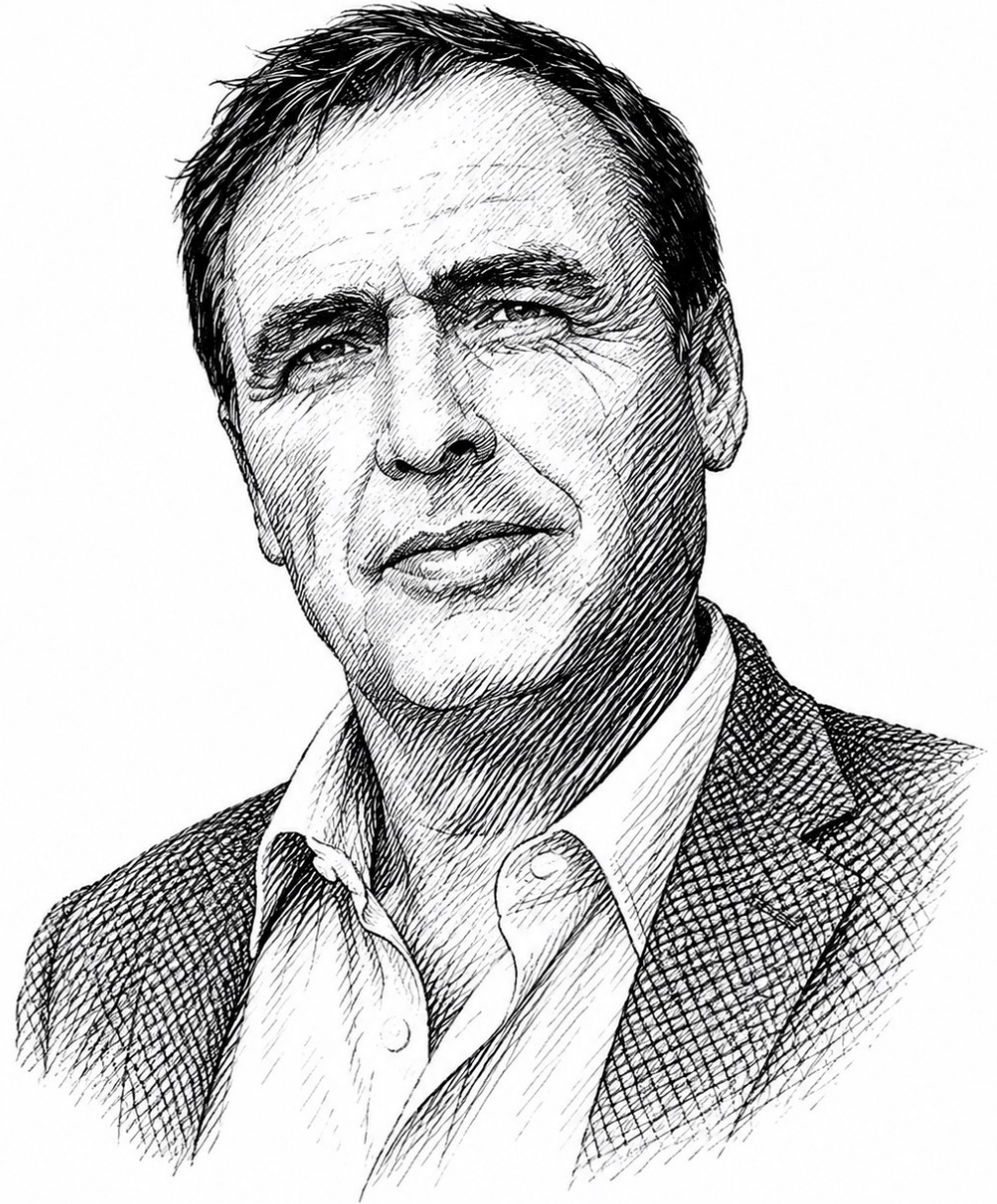
reasonable	↔	unreasonable
productive	↔	unproductive
sustainable	↔	unsustainable
just	↔	unjust
inclusive	↔	exclusive

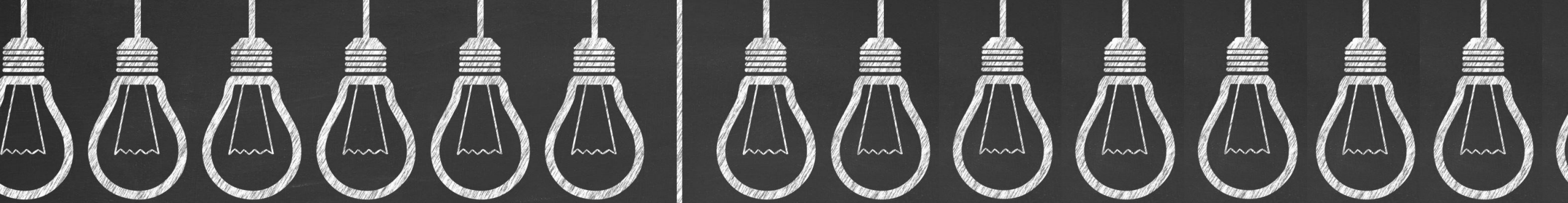
The crucial *critical* question:

In whose interests does X happen?

Pierre Bourdieu (1930 – 2002)

“[T]he social world is the site of continual struggles to define what the social world is...In academia, people fight constantly over the question of who, in this universe, is socially mandated, authorized, to tell the truth of the social world...To intervene...carries the temptation of claiming for oneself the role of the neutral arbiter, of the judge, to distribute rights and wrongs.”





Disability & difference



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What thoughts or words
come to mind when you
hear the word ‘disability’?

Models of disability

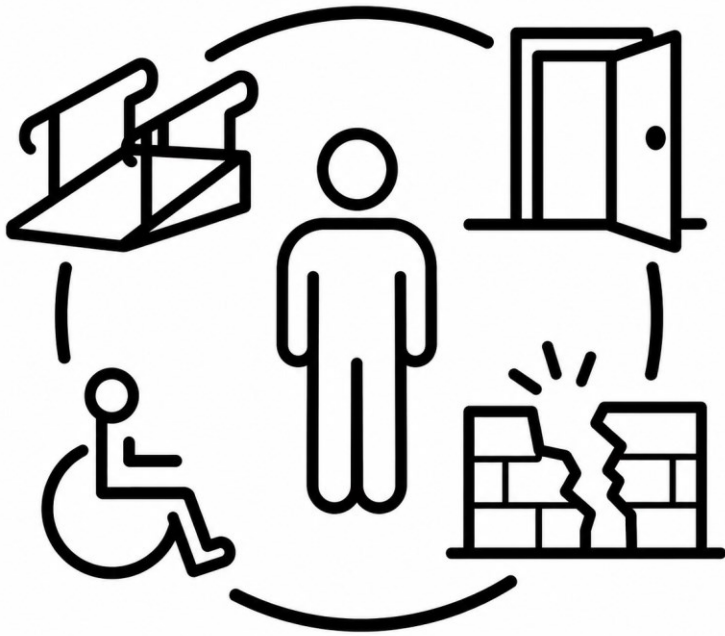
- A model is a set of assumptions about what disability is and how it occurs.
- Each model has an alternative perspective on what constitutes disability and provides differing reasons for how it occurs.
- They provide a 'lens' to help us to think about the social world, but can lack important contextual details.

Medical model



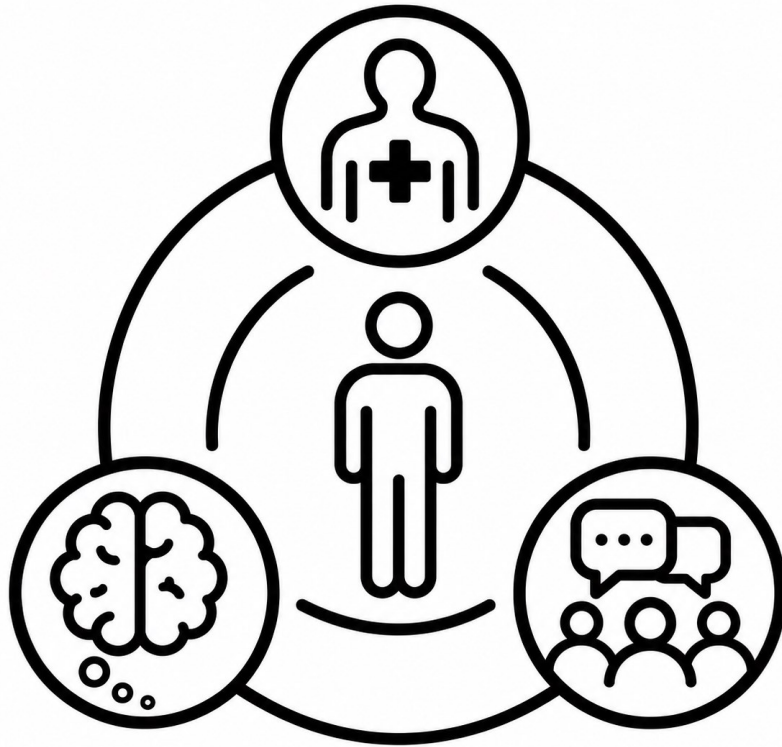
- Disability is seen as something which is different from the “norm” – whether that is something different within a person’s physical body, cognitive processing or behaviour
- Symptoms that are ascribed a label to become a condition or disorder which can be diagnosed
- Cause of the disability ‘within’ the person
- A focus on how the disability can be managed, fixed or even cured by medical intervention

Social model



- Disability is caused by barriers that society has intentionally or unintentionally created towards people with different abilities to ‘dis-able’ them
- Barriers prevent someone from participating fully and having equal access to services
- Individuals are disabled by external environment
- Responsibility of society to change, not the individual

Bio-psycho-social model



- Developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO)
- Recognises the interaction between biological, psychological and environmental factors
- Help us to understand a person's needs but also how we can adapt the environment within which they live

“Previously, disability began where health ended; once you were disabled, you were in a separate category. We want to get away from this kind of thinking. We want to make International Classification of Functioning a tool for measuring functioning in society, no matter what the reason for one's impairments. So it becomes a much more versatile tool with a much broader area of use than a traditional classification of health and disability.”
(WHO, 2002:2)

Affirmation model



- Challenging the ‘tragic’ view of disability (i.e., the medical model)
- Disability as positive identity
- Incorporates the lived experiences of disabled people
- Embracing difference, challenging ‘normality’
- Nothing that needs to be “fixed”
- Questions what it means to be ‘human’ or a ‘full’ member of society

(Swain & French, 2000)

Comparing models

Medical model	Social model	Bio-psycho-social model	Affirmation model
Blame is placed on the individual	Blame is placed on societal structures surrounding the person	Disability is understood through interaction between biological, psychological and social factors	Rejects deficit-based ideas and affirms disability as part of identity
Focus is placed on assessment and intervention	Focus is placed on ensuring the individual has a say on what interventions are available	Focus is placed on holistic assessment, wellbeing, environment and relationships	Focus is placed on pride, self-definition, rights and lived experience
Individual needs to change to fit into society	Society needs to change to accommodate diversity	Both support and environments may need to change to improve participation	Society should value disabled people as they are, not treat disability as tragedy
Professionals' voice dominates – individual's voice is silenced	Voice of the individual is heard	Individual, family and professional voices are brought together	Disabled people's voices lead: "nothing about us without us"
Segregated education system/provision	Inclusive education system/provision	Co-ordinated education, health and social care provision	Rights-based, participatory and empowering education/provision
Labelling and ability-grouping	Acknowledge and celebrate natural human variation	Recognise diverse needs, contexts and strengths	Celebrate disability identity, agency and difference



Access to a school via steps

Timed examinations

**Expectations of pupil conduct in the
classroom**

How does each model help us think
about what happens next?

Can you think of other scenarios from
your own experience?

A wheelchair user cannot access a classroom because it is upstairs and the lift is broken.

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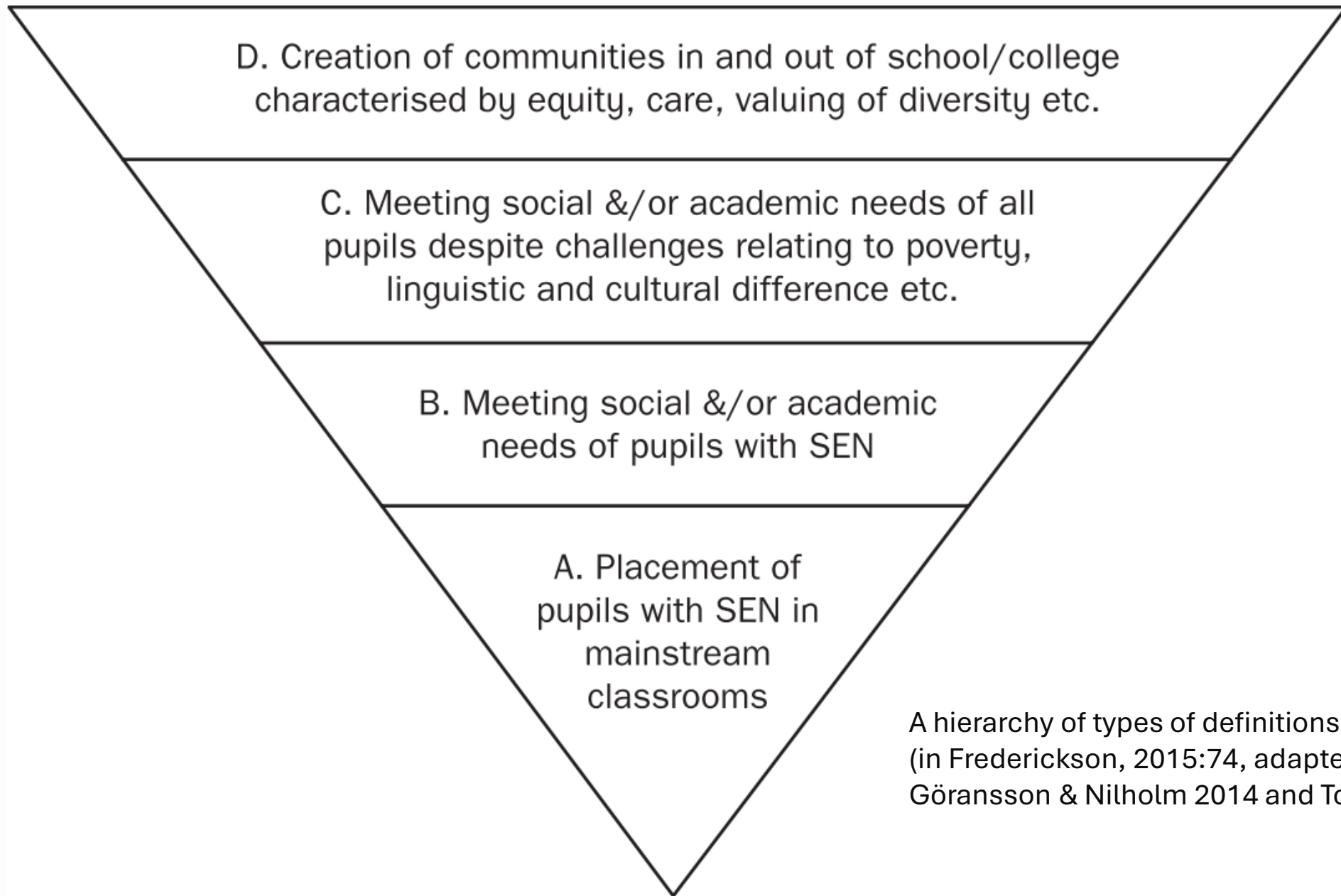
Inclusion



The UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994)



- One of the most **important pieces of international policy** about inclusion.
- 92 global governments called for inclusion to be the **norm** for CYP with disabilities.
- The **Salamanca Statement** argued that schools should educate **all children together wherever possible**, regardless of disability, learning difficulty or difference. It presented inclusion as a matter of **rights and equal opportunity**, not simply as an educational technique or optional form of support.
- It shifted attention from “fixing” the child to **changing schools**, so that mainstream education becomes more flexible, accessible and responsive to learner diversity.

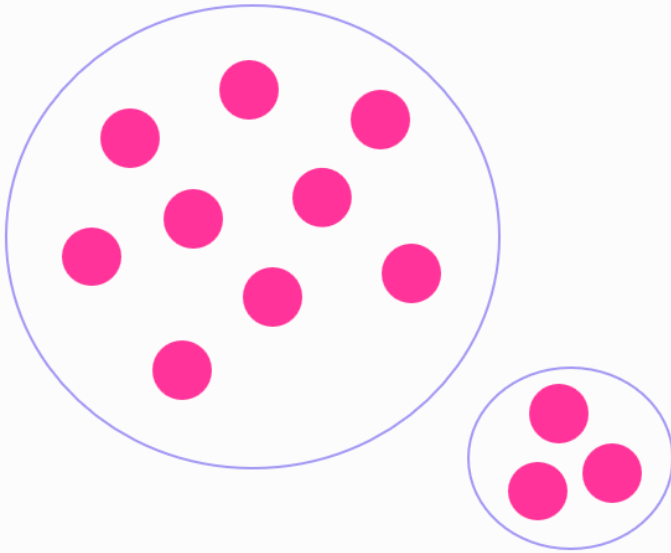


A hierarchy of types of definitions of inclusion
(in Frederickson, 2015:74, adapted from
Göransson & Nilholm 2014 and Topping 2012)

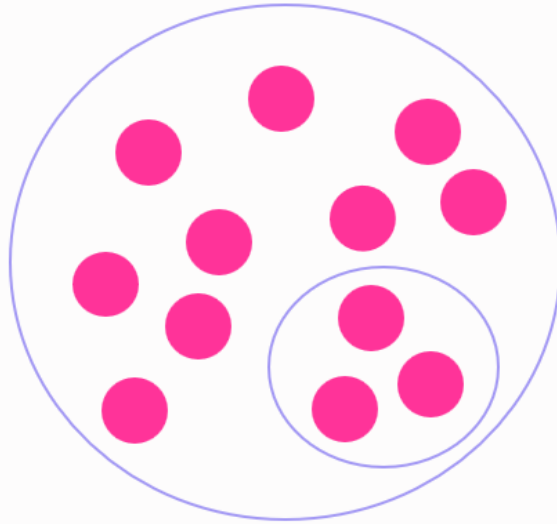
Special needs, special educational needs (SEN), and disability



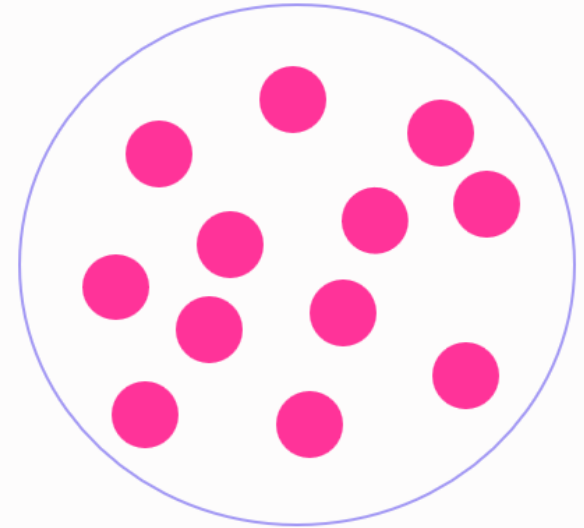
Segregation



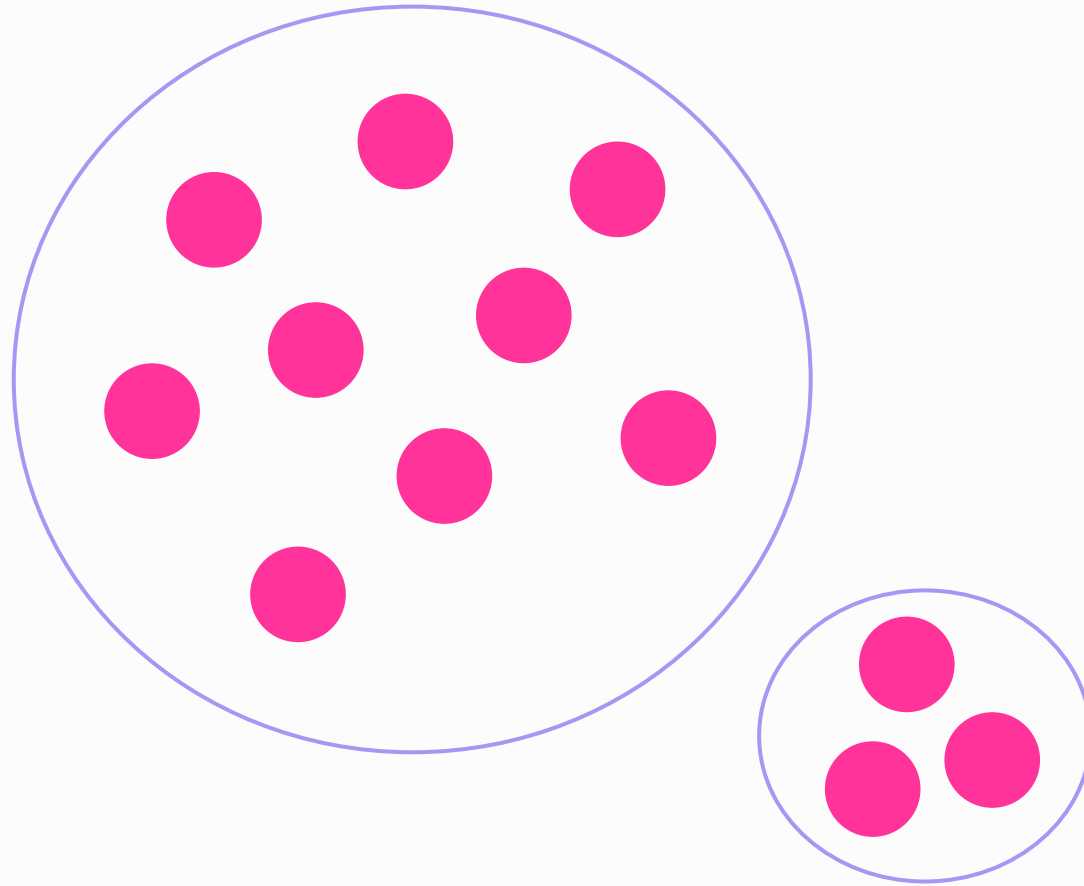
Integration



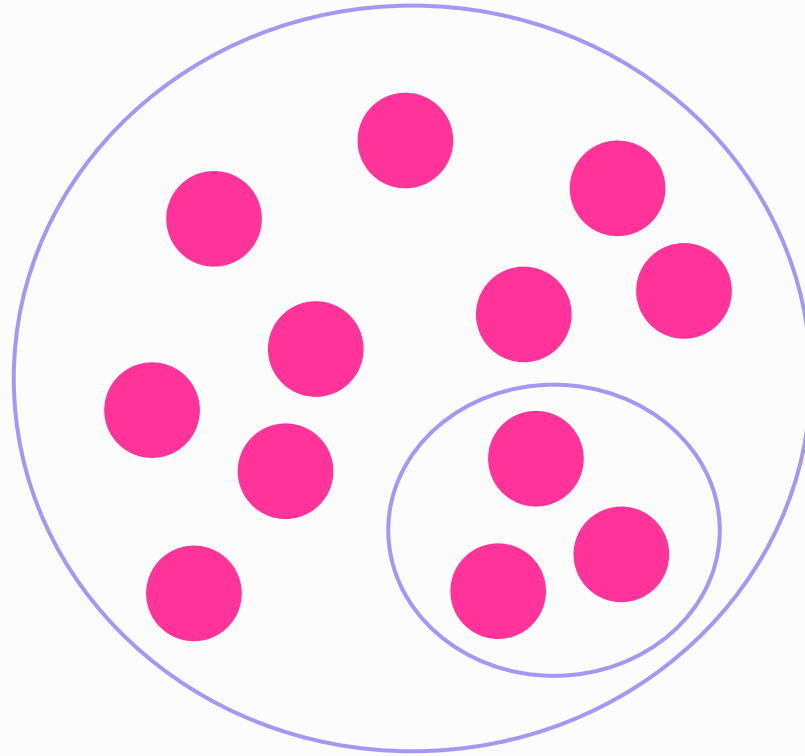
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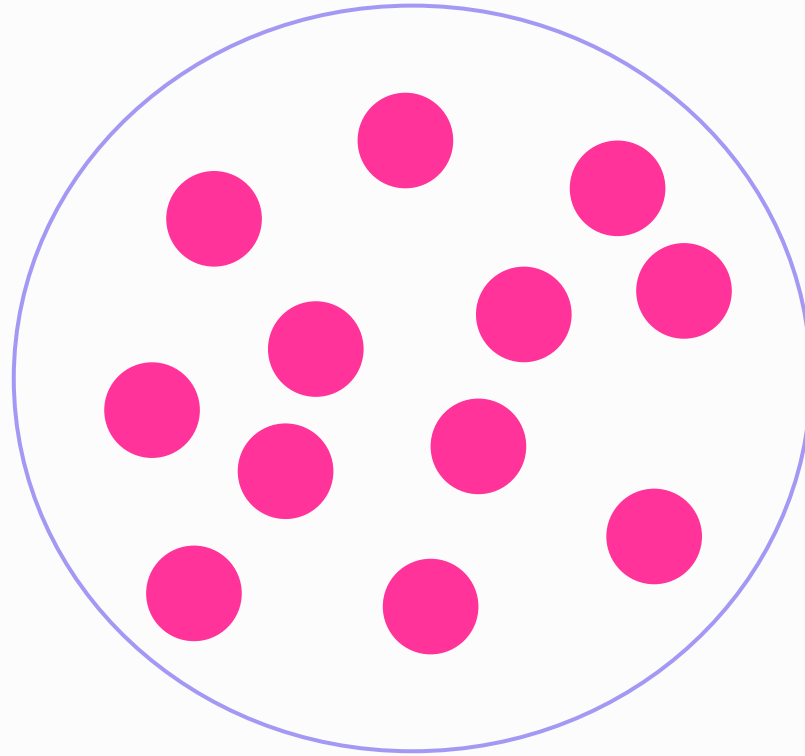
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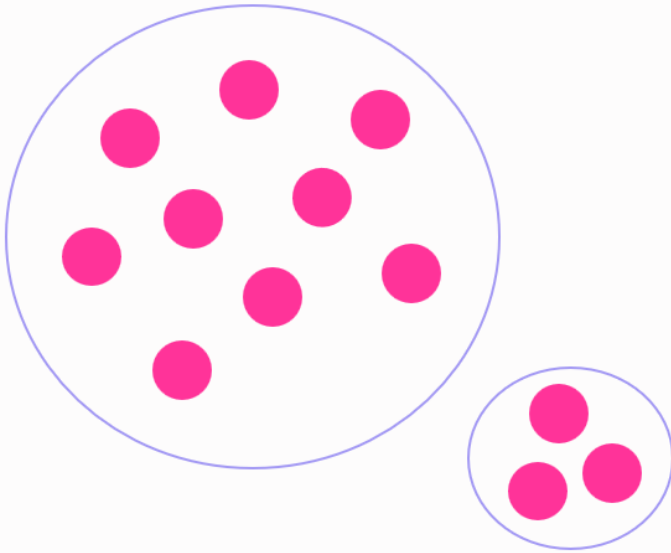
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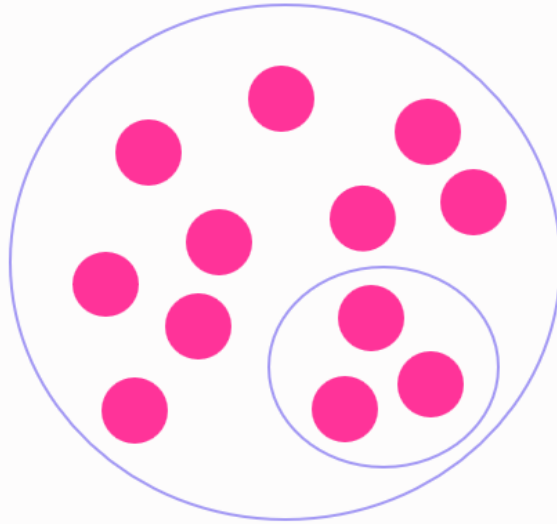
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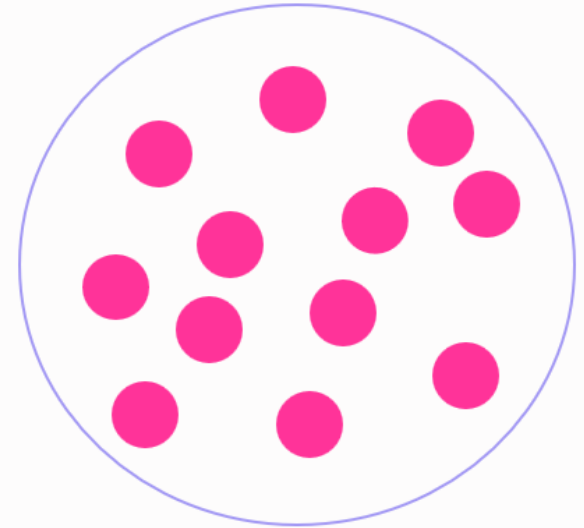
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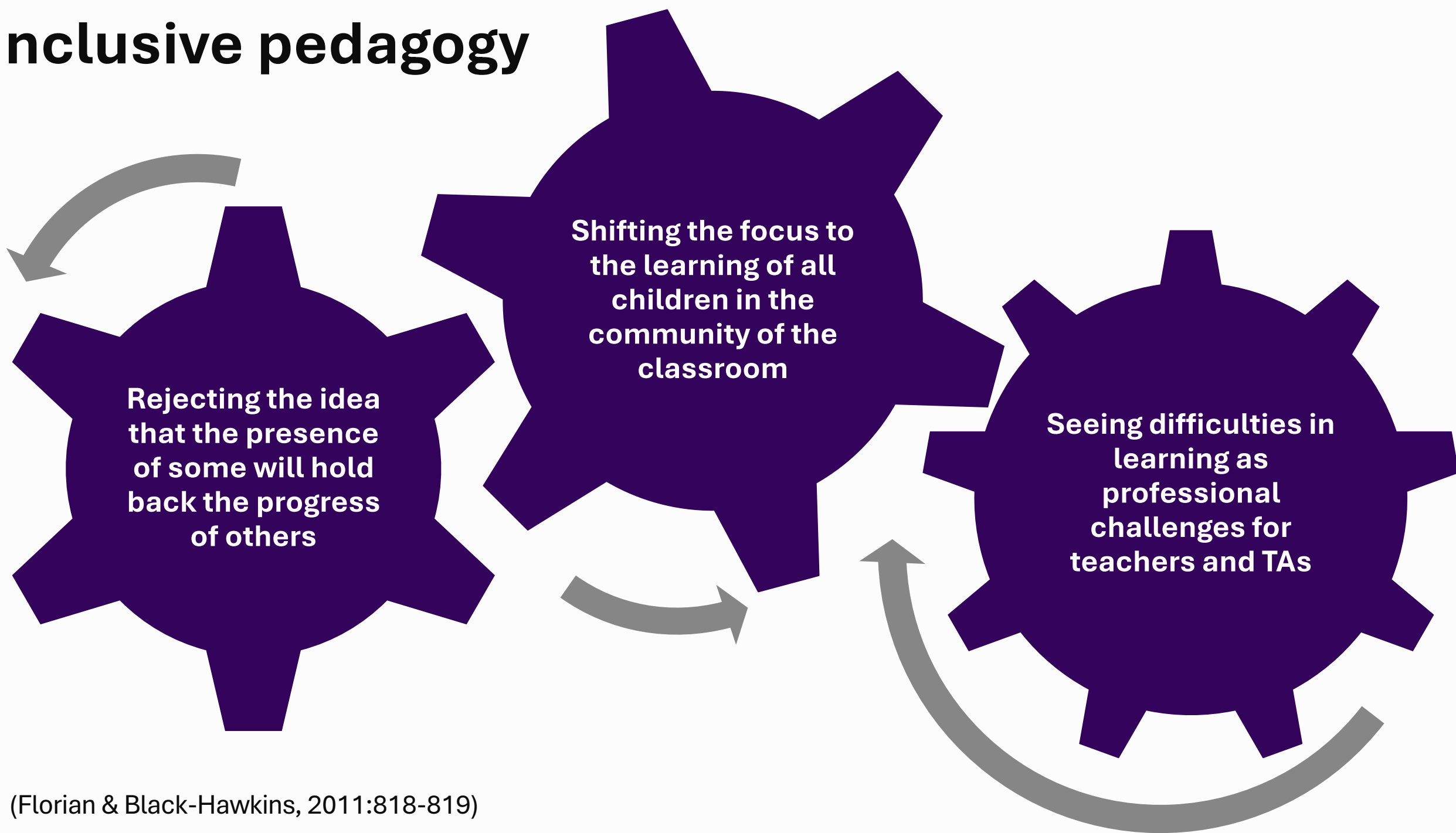
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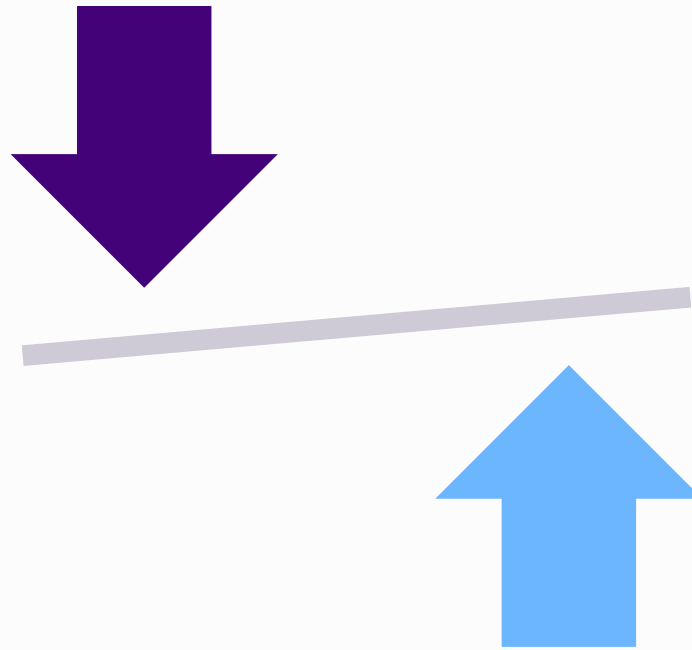
Inclusive pedagogy



(Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011:818-819)

Dilemma of difference

Providing something additional or different to pupils with SEN, with the risk of labelling and dividing



Offering common provision, with the risk of not making available what is relevant to, and needed by, individual children

(Terzi, 2005:444)

“Consider, for instance, dyslexia. Dyslexia may considerably affect the achievement of basic functionings such as reading and writing, and hence it may result in a consistent limitation of immediate functioning achievements and of future capabilities. In this sense, dyslexia is an individual disadvantage in certain aspects of education—namely, all those related to literacy where the individual may experience ‘learning difficulties’. Yet when the educational environment is appropriately designed to address the learning modalities of a dyslexic individual and the individual is receptive to it, this potential restriction in functionings may not become a disability and thus not be a realised functioning restriction. The capability framework looks precisely at this relational aspect of how the individual child interacts with her schooling environment and how she converts resources into functionings whilst at the same time considering how the environment is designed. In this sense, no emphasis is placed on within-child factors over educational factors, or vice versa, since the focus of the framework is on the interaction between the two elements”

(Terzi, 2005:454-455).



How might the models of disability we explored earlier relate to these ideas?



Harder than it sounds?

Meadowbrook



Harriet, Linda, Maria

Background information

- Meadowbrook is a half-form primary school located in a rural village in England.
- Harriet is a first-year ECT who teaches the Year 1/2 class at the school. Prior to becoming a teacher, she ran her own business.
- Maria is relatively new to the TA role and her current employment with the school is through an agency.
- Linda is an experienced HLTA who has worked at Meadowbrook for 5 years.
- The Year 1/2 class Harriet teaches has 22 pupils, 2 of whom have been identified by the school as having SEND.

Harder than it sounds?

Can you identify some of the **barriers** to, and **opportunities** for, **inclusive practice** at the following levels:

- Within the individual (e.g., knowledge, skills, beliefs)
- In the classroom
- In the school
- Beyond the school

Inclusive schools



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A thought experiment: the Veil of Ignorance

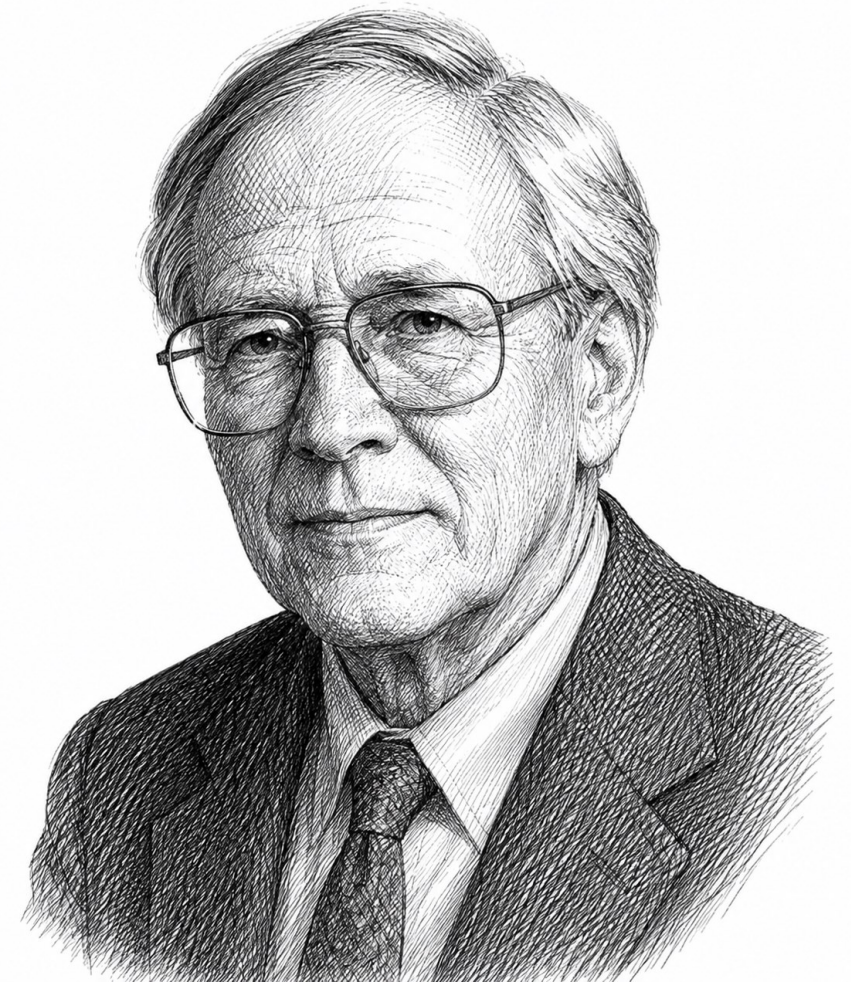
Imagine you have been asked to design a new school system from scratch. You will decide how schools are organised, what they teach, how students are assessed, how teachers support students, how behaviour is managed, and how resources are distributed.

But there is one condition.

You must design the system **from behind a veil of ignorance**.

This means you do **not** know who you will be in the school system you are creating.

From this position of ignorance, design a school system that you would still consider fair.



John Rawls (1921 – 2002)

7 System-Level Barriers to Progress Towards Inclusive Schools

(Ainscow, 2024:172)

- 1** National policies that encourage schools to narrow the educational diet.



- 2** Local area administrative structures that limit the freedom of practitioners to experiment.



- 3** The tendency to prioritise certain groups of students.



- 4** Fragmentation within education systems that limit opportunities for sharing expertise.



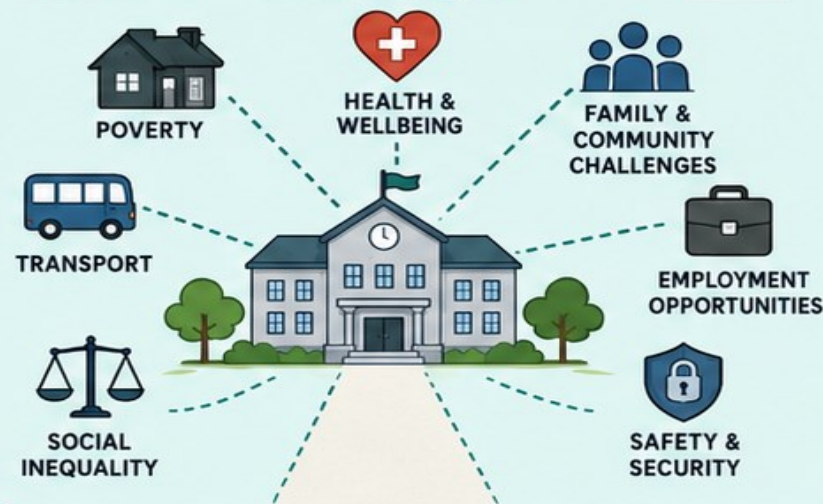
- 5** Competition between schools that discourages the sharing of expertise across institutions.



- 6** Varied levels of practitioner confidence regarding inquiry methods and the use of evidence.



- 7** Factors beyond the school gate.



Choose some common features of school-based education and think about how they could be redesigned to make them more inclusive of all learners:

Area of school-based education	Changes proposed	Who will benefit?	What are the risks or trade-offs?

Reflective task

**A child can be in the class,
but not *of* the class.**

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Justify your answer with relevant reasons and examples.