

## **Title: Special Educational Needs and Art and Design Education: Plural Perspectives on Exclusion**

### **Abstract**

Education policy proposals by the UK Coalition government appeared to be based on a process of consultation, participation and representation. However, policy formation seems to prioritise and confirm particular ways of knowing and being in the world. This paper recognises the ontological and epistemological invalidation at work in education policy by examining the shared context for policy formation in Special Educational Needs (SEN/D) and art and design education. There is value in recognising plurality, acknowledging the ways in which apparently singular policies relating to special education are understood through subject or disciplinary perspectives. The neoliberal aim to foster an economically productive 'subject' is evident in policy formation relating to art and design education as well as SEN/D. Both subjects, the disabled child and art and design education, are defined as excessive and are excluded where they do not conform to particular notions of productivity. The paper explores theoretical frameworks that are essential for recognising meaning in education when subjects cannot be put to work.

**special education, art and design education, disability studies, ableism, Neoliberalism, cripistemology**

### **Introduction: Making an argument for a plural analysis of policy formation**

This paper presents an argument for a plural reading of policy formation in art and design education and Special Educational Needs (SEN/D) in order to understand the ways in which concerns with economic productivity have dominated recent policy formation in education. The paper makes use of theoretical frameworks from disability studies in order to examine the ways in which the disabled child and art and design education are 'excessive' and therefore excluded if they do not conform to 'typical' notions of the productive subject. The paper begins by outlining recent theoretical frameworks emerging from the field of

disability studies before introducing an argument for a plural reading of policy formation. These ideas are put to work in a discussion of contemporary policies relating to SEN/D and art and design education.

Education reform by the UK Coalition government (2010 – 2015) was driven by a sense of ‘moral outrage’ at apparent inequities in education, with proposals for policy reforms that aimed to address inequality (DfE, 2010; DfE, 2011). For example, the ‘third lesson’ in the foreword to ‘The Importance of Teaching’ reflects a particular concern with the academic underachievement of children from low income families (DfE, 2010: 4). Similarly, the introductory remarks in ‘Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability’ acknowledges inequities in provision for disabled children and those labelled with so-called special educational needs (DfE, 2011:2). However, an exploration of the shared policy context for art and design education and Special Educational Needs (SEN/D) reveals ways in which the curriculum and ‘the disabled child’ are subject to exclusion via a focus on economic concerns with productivity.

Drawing on the work of Jean-Luc Nancy (2000:5), this paper aims to recognise what ‘passes between’ policy formation in art and design education and SEN/D in order to explore the ways art and design education and the ‘disabled child’, are produced. This exploration of a shared policy context contrasts with the decontextualized and abstract notion of education perpetuated through the special education discourse. A central argument here then is for recognition of the complexity of policy formation where one subject (the disabled child) might be read through another (art and design education). Nancy’s pluralistic ontology, explored in more detail later in this paper, emphasises that ‘the co-implication of existing is the sharing of the world’ (Nancy, 2000: 29). This position is undermined by the separation of ‘special’ policies relating to the education of disabled children and those identified as having a special educational need (SEN/D). This paper draws on the field of disability studies in order to address the problematic nature of this separation by discussing policy formation in art and design education and SEN/D.

An examination of this shared context offers a means of understanding the ‘epistemic invalidation’ at work in policy proposals where what is known and experienced by ‘the other’ appears de-valued and marginal (Wendell in Swain and French, 2008: 131). This

process is evident in policies relating to SEN/D but also in those relating to art and design education. Before developing this argument however, it is useful to offer a brief definition of this term. Wendell refers to 'epistemic invalidation' as the ways in which professional knowledge (what medical professionals know about a disabled body) can come to dominate the lives of disabled people. The process of epistemic invalidation refers then to the devaluing of what one might know through one's own experience when this is set against official or dominant knowledge forms. The term 'epistemic invalidation' is applied here to policies which appear to devalue different ways of knowing and being in the world which sit beyond notions of economic productivity. This narrowing of perspectives is also apparent in documents that have sought to establish educational research priorities (DfE, 2013; DfE, 2014). These documents emphasise particular ways of understanding 'what works' in teaching (DfE, 2013) and 'special' education (DfE, 2014) and establish research agendas that favour large-scale quantitative experiments or randomised trials (Haynes et al, 2012); they negate methodologies concerned with the particular and reinforce the professional domination of research long resisted by disability activists such as Barnes and Mercer (1997) and described by Allan and Slee (2008). Forms of epistemic invalidation, evident in recent policy formation for SEN/D and art and design education confirm subjects as excluded and excessive if they are not 'typically' productive are explored in this paper.

This analysis of policy formation relating to SEN/D and art and design education makes use of critical disability studies (CDS) in order to examine the exclusionary discourses, which result in the kinds of epistemic invalidation described. In addition the paper draws on crip/queer theory as an extension of this theoretical framework. Critical disability studies can offer a means of exploring exclusion by examining normative assumptions that underpin changes in educational policy. It is therefore useful to offer a brief outline of disability studies, critical disability studies and the value of crip/queer theory to this project.

### **Critical Disability Studies (CDS): Drawing a theoretical framework**

Critical disability studies (CDS), is described as a comparatively new, theoretical expansion of disability studies which builds on important foundations by Oliver (1983; 1990) and Barton (1986) for example. It is vital to recognise the political significance of work important for problematizing the evolution of a parallel special education system in the UK (Barton, 1988;

Tomlinson, 1981; Barton and Tomlinson, 1984) and the US (see for example Ware in Gabel, 2005: 103). The social model of disability is central to disability studies, acknowledging the ways in which socio-cultural factors produce disability and recognising the limitations that social organisations place on people who are disabled by material barriers and social attitudes. Disability studies examine societal and institutional barriers recognising important distinctions between individual impairment and the social and cultural production of disability (Oliver, 1990:14). However, it is worth noting that there have been some significant critiques of the social model. Oliver (2013) describes these as falling in to two main camps: the first being that the social model does not take sufficient account of the effects of impairment on the individual (Shakespeare, 2006: 31) and the second which indicates that the social model does not reflect the complexities of race, gender, sexuality and age (Oliver, 2013: 1025). However, it is indisputable that the social model offers a fundamental challenge to the dominance of a concern with individual pathology evident in the medical or individual model of disability. Disabled activists have challenged political and societal structures leading to significant change in the role disabled people have in decision-making. This shift in power is evident in the methodological approaches that have emerged from disability studies, which have re-imagined the relationship between disabled people and research. The 'politics of disablement' has been realised in the politics of empowerment and the importance of voice and participation in research (see Barnes and Mercer, 1997 and Allan and Slee, 2008). Such work established the context for analysing the relationship between disability, education and social policy for the last forty years and provides the foundation for the work presented here.

Although a linear mapping from disability studies through to critical disability studies may be an oversimplification it is important to recognise that CDS as a theoretical approach emerging from this earlier work. Shildrick (2012) describes the field of disability studies, as important in instigating changes to ways of thinking about disability that has had a real influence on the lives of disabled people. She describes theoretical developments in critical disability studies as important to scholarship as a whole by promoting a questioning and critical disposition towards 'embodiment, identity and agency as they affect all living beings' (p.30). CDS acknowledges the social construction of difference and our complicity in

creating and maintaining the able/disabled boundary in our cultural and social activities of which education policy and practice are a part (Goodley, 2007). Importantly, CDS makes us:

*rethink the relations between disabled and non-disabled designations – not just ethically as has long been the demand, but ontologically, right at the heart of the whole question of self and other... (Shildrick, 2012: 30).*

CDS can therefore play a role in examining social and cultural practices that inform our judgements about bodily and cognitive difference. CDS has been criticised for offering little in the way of practical solutions to real-life problems (Vehmas and Watson, 2014:642). Conversely it is recognised as offering an important theoretical framework for critically reflecting on notions of equality that appear to have driven policy reform in education.

### *Ableism/Disablism*

Ableism has emerged as a central concern in understanding disability and the values attributed to difference and terms described as important for discussing the politics of disability, impairment and inclusion (Bolt, 2012). Bolt suggests that 'ableism renders people who are not disabled as supreme' whilst disablism works actively against people who are disabled (p.288). Goodley (2014:26) suggests that in discussing ableism, we must acknowledge 'the hidden referent of disablism: ableism's tacit, hidden, masked, accepted, hegemonic privileging of a distinct idea(l) of humanity.' The use of the terms ableism and disablism signal an epistemological shift by recognising the active role that dominant discourses play in the social construction of dis/ability. This privileging of an ideal is expressed overtly in policies relating to SEN/D, by the diagnosis and separation of those defined as in need of special intervention. The application of CDS also enables us to examine the dominant discourses at work in privileging particular curriculum subjects and practices over others. Ableism and disablism offer a means of exploring exclusionary ideology by examining that which is privileged in policies which aim to redress educational inequalities.

Goodley (2014:26) extends this discussion of ableism recognising neoliberalism as an economic driver for its existence. He recognises the relationship between the able, ideal and productive body where, autonomy and independence are implicated in the 'privatisation of ableism' a process that he defines as *neoliberal-ableism*. The ideal citizen as an autonomous

productive individual becomes normalised via economic and social policy and value is judged by their contribution to the market economy and is best realised by the ideal mind/body. Shildrick's discussion of the valued attributes of personhood as 'autonomy, agency – which includes both a grasp of rationality and control over one's own body – and a clear distinction between self and other' can also be understood in terms of neoliberal-ableism with a preference for the controlled and separate individual (Shildrick, 2012: 32). Furthermore she describes any physical and mental compromise or 'indication of interdependency' as grounds for anxiety. In neoliberal terms, this is a personal anxiety around bodily difference and a shared anxiety coming from the perceived threat to economic productivity, security and social cohesion.

### *Towards a Cripistemology of Policy Formation*

Materialist concerns with productivity are central then to ableism and an important aspect of the theoretical framework being drawn on here. Further to this though is a concern with ontology and epistemology, the way we come to understand our world and the ways in which we understand knowledge and, by implication, learning. Cripistemology, emerging from crip/queer theory is a concept with the potential to further disrupt underlying concepts that emerge in policy discourses. Cripistemology attempts to acknowledge and work with a crises of 'conceptual instability' encouraging us to further destabilise our relationship with disability by questioning how we can know about, through and with disability (Johnson & McRuer, 2014:130-133). Sandahl (in McRuer and Johnson, 2014:167) offers a useful definition of the verb 'to crip' as a means of 'spinning' mainstream representations and practices, revealing and questioning ableist assumptions that underpin everyday practices.

'Curricular cripistemology' (Mitchell, Snyder and Ware, 2014) extends the capacity of critical disability studies by drawing on crip/queer theory to interrupt 'normative cultural practices' that have come to define inclusionism. Mitchell et al argue that the value of difference in education has been undermined by forms of inclusionism that have resulted in 'a flattening out of embodied differences' where those who can pass as non-disabled or succeed as 'norm-fulfilling' are more readily included. Here the value of difference is undermined by 'a disability rights-based model of policy intervention [which] relies upon assimilationist claims

in order to gain access to key neoliberal institutions such as education' (p.302). This reduced space for knowing and being in the world reproduces inequality by promoting a narrow concept of what it is 'to be', what it is to know and what it is to be educable. This can be recognised as a kind of epistemological invalidation described earlier.

Mitchell et al, (2014) encourage us to draw on crip theory in order to question the pedagogic heteronormativities, which produce the 'norm-fulfilling child' (p.299). They frame this as 'curricular cripistemology' and encourage us to explore the teachable moments that emerge from failure by treating these as generative failures or 'productive incapacities'. The emphasis then is not on normalising difference but on working with failure as a resource that emerges from difference. This is important to my argument here since the idea of 'productive incapacities' enables us to recognise and value subjects that cannot be made to 'work'. I have employed these ideas as a framework for critiquing the dominance of neoliberal ableism in reforms relating to SEN/D and art and design education.

The relevance of ableism, disablism and cripistemology to policies relating to SEN/D is perhaps obvious but their application to policy for art and design education allows an exploration of the subtle ways in which ideology works through policy by identifying subjects as excessive. Education policy can be explored for the 'active structuring' of ableism and disablism in the same way that Gillborn (2007) refers to the reinforcement of white supremacy through education policy. Policy formation is predicated on ableist assumptions or the 'illusory standards of the psychosocial imaginary' (Shildrick, 2012: 32) that seek to define those who sit beyond the 'illusory standards' of 'normal' educability. This results in disabled children being subject to 'support', for example, whilst their 'normal' peers are educated (DfE, 2011). Shildrick's assertion that 'the dominant discourse continues to mark some people as inherently excessive to normative boundaries' has relevance for the ways we 'manage' the education of disabled children. Policy relating to SEN/D explicitly marks disabled children and young people as excessive in terms of their educational needs. The policy context for art and design education also works to reinforce exclusionary principles although perhaps in more subtle ways. I will explore the ways in which the 'illusory standards of the psychosocial imaginary' are implicated in the formation of new policy for art and design education but must now establish my argument for exploring this shared context.

## Making the case for plural perspectives in an analysis of policy formation

Existence *is with*: otherwise nothing exists (*Nancy, 2000:4*)

The separation of discussions about education policy and SEN policy reinforces an acceptance of the very notions of exceptionality that critical disability studies attempts to resist. Policies concerning children labelled with a so-called Special Educational Need and/or Disability exist as a parallel track. It may be argued therefore that policy analysis are subject to their own 'illusory standards' (Shildrick, 2012) since this separation in policy is confirmed and reinforced by texts that discuss SEN/D and education as discrete concerns. Ball (2013:202) offers a brief commentary on recent changes to SEN/D policy acknowledging that he cannot do justice to the complexity of the discussion. The pragmatic rationalisation for a specialist and in-depth study of the field reinforces these parallel tracks, signalling this as relevant to those with an interest in the education of children who are beyond 'normal' educational provision. The dominant discourse that marks 'some people as excessive to normative boundaries' (Shildrick, 2012:31) is also at work in the analysis of education policy where SEN policy is excessive to the normative boundaries of 'the education debate' (Ball, 2013).

Examining the policy context between art and design education and SEN/D recognises a shared space where understanding the implications of hegemony for one may serve to illuminate the other. In *Being Singular Plural*, Jean-Luc Nancy's relational ontology, *being-with*, emphasises the inevitability of recognising this co-existence and is offered as a justification for bringing these seemingly unrelated areas of concern together (Nancy, 2000). Nancy's work suggests an optimistic perspective from which to interrogate neoliberal-ableism and disabling policies by questioning notions of the individual subject, proposing that 'being with is more originary than individuality' (Atkinson, 2011:146). Atkinson emphasises the usefulness of this in the formation of pedagogic relationships acknowledging that Nancy's recognition of *being with* 'is also a thinking-with' an approach that is vital in a consideration of education policy, where education and special education are reinforced as singular concerns. This philosophical approach resonates with CDS perspectives that question the focus on independence and the primacy of the individual. Nancy (*ibid*) recognises difference in that 'people are strange' but recognises that

everything 'passes *between us*' (p.5). In passing from one to the other, we recognise that there is distance and our proximity to the other serves to emphasize difference from but also our relationship *with* the other.

The policy context for art and design education may be described as 'strange' to SEN/D yet what passes *between* offers a ground for exploring ableist and exclusionary discourses in education policy. Nancy states:

This "between", as its name implies, has neither a consistency nor continuity of its own. It does not lead from one to the other; it constitutes no connective tissue, no cement, no bridge...it is neither connected nor unconnected; it falls short of both; even better, it is that which is at the heart of a connection, the *interlacing* [l'*entrecroisement*] of strands whose extremities remain separate even at the very centre of the knot (Nancy, 2000:5)

The application to policy analysis is significant since the singularity of the fields of art and design education and special education can be acknowledged whilst recognising the relational dimension of this plurality. There is then a contradiction in recognising the proximity and distance in the relationships between different aspects of education policy.

SEN/D policy appears abstract and disconnected from the ways in which learning is organised since educational experience in the UK, is largely understood and assessed through curriculum subjects and disciplines. Children and young people experience schooling via the curriculum as well as a range of assessment forms and approaches to teaching and learning. It is through these pedagogic systems and practices that children can be included and/or excluded (Slee, 2011). The disciplinary context is central to the ways that teachers and students make sense of their educational experiences. For example, secondary teachers of art and design usually come to teacher training via a specialised route in art and design and this subject specialism could therefore be described as offering a 'centre of confidence' for the development of a teaching practice which they come to understand through their subject specialism. It is logical to assume that trainee teachers meeting 'SEN/D' as a potentially abstracted and decontextualized means of identifying and separating learners, could develop a more effective understanding 'difference' in the classroom if this was considered through art and design education and their own arts

practices since this will form the context for their understanding of pedagogy. The importance of subject discipline has been acknowledged as a means of establishing professional confidence via the role of the artist as teacher (Daichendt, 2010) and the development of the artist-teacher scheme in the UK, a subject specific route for continued professional development, has been recognised as having a positive impact on student teachers' professional development (Page, Adams and Hyde, 2011). Working with diversity through art and design education therefore offers the potential for working with difference in a familiar and creative space. Diversity may be better understood through the curriculum subject which emphasises pedagogy rather than generic principles or descriptions of need in a code of practice (DfE, 2014). A plural reading of policy and practice could therefore promote epistemic validation through contextualised ways of knowing about and *being with* the other through a disciplinary subject.

In addition to the preceding argument for plurality, Braun et al (2010) recognise that a focus on individual policies does not take account of the ways 'multiple policy demands and expectations' are managed in school (p548). Policy for SEN/D *is with* educational policy relating to curriculum reform in art and design education. A consideration of the exclusionary processes at work in policy formation is therefore strengthened when we acknowledge the range of ways that this is being enacted. For example, it becomes possible to recognise that the rejection of the global agenda for inclusion in policies relating to SEN/D (DfE, 2011:5) sit alongside the denial of the international creative arts education agenda outlined in the UNESCO Road Map for Arts Education (UNESCO, 2006). Recognising this shared context therefore enables an examination of the exclusionary processes at work in policy proposals.

The next section of the paper employs this plural reading to exemplify the processes of epistemic invalidation at work in recent policy formation to examine the ways in which 'the disabled child' and art and design education are framed as excessive and excluded if they are not economically productive.

### **Support and Aspiration: Producing the excessive and excluded subject**

Recent reforms of provision for children with so-called special educational needs (DfE 2011, DfE 2015) sit within a broader framework of changes to educational policy which have continued to signal an increased emphasis on marketization in education and ‘the enterprise narrative’. This was a central concern in New Labour education policy between (1994-2010) and was continued in full by the UK Coalition government (Ball, 2013:207). It is worth noting that education policy reforms predicated on equality sit alongside austerity measures which have reinforced ‘the rationality of the market rule’ and have had a damaging effect on the quality of lives of disabled people and their families (Goodley, Lawthome & Runswick-Cole, 2014:981). It has been acknowledged elsewhere that austerity policies have had a disproportionate impact on disabled people (Cross, 2013: 721).

The initial proposals reflected a significant concern with individual achievement and employability intertwined with aims for reducing bureaucracy and increasing efficiency (DfE, 2011: 7). In the early draft proposal *Support and Aspiration*, Michael Gove, the then Secretary of State for Education, marked the ‘special’ child out from their ‘normal’ peers suggesting children *with* a SEN/D ‘desire to become like every other child – successful and independent’ (DfE, 2011:6). The extension of provision for children identified with SEN/D from the ages of ‘0-25’ years can be viewed as a means of managing a perceived ‘excessive need’ whilst attributing particular value to independence and productivity. A subject that cannot become economically productive or independent fails to exist in this policy landscape; since it cannot be comprehended it becomes marginalised and invisible through the processes of epistemic invalidation evident in this process of policy formation (DfE, 2011, DfE 2015).

The new code of practice for SEN/D (DfE, 2015) continues to define some children’s needs as excessive to an imagined ‘norm’ and this is emphasised in the deficit based descriptions in the four ‘broad areas of need’ relating to communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social emotional and mental health difficulties and sensory and/or physical needs (p.97). The relationship between education and employment is particularly evident in the extension of provision for children identified as having SEN/D from 0 – 25 years where a

successful transition to adulthood is conflated with becoming independent and economically productive (DfE, 2015: 49). The emphasis on education for economic competition and productivity (DfE, 2010) and the emphasis on independence and employment (DfE, 2011:7) reflect a dual concern with international competition and the efficient allocation of resources. Policy dictates that disabled young people will be supported in order to fulfil their hopes and aspirations in moving to further education or employment and human value appears to be defined by this particularly narrow set of expectations. Therapeutic support now sits alongside the 'job-coach' in the range of support roles that are seen as essential for enabling disabled children to realise their potential. Remediation in education is extended to employment where the individual needs to be worked upon in order to become productive. In a section of the new code of practice 'Strategic planning for the best outcomes in adult life' actions for the good of the individual is harnessed to their economic productivity with evidence from the National Audit Office indicating that:

Supporting one person with a learning disability into employment could, in addition to improving their independence and self-esteem, increase that person's income by between 55 and 95 per cent. (DfE, 2015:122)

The document also indicates the savings in 'lifetime support costs to the public purse' for a young person who can live in semi-independent rather than fully supported housing. The code moves beyond outlining education policy to reinforcing a particular political ideology that matches resource allocation with ableist aspirations. Slee (2011:86) might argue that this is 'policy inaction' where the focus is on the justification of a redistribution of resources whilst taking little account of pedagogic or attitudinal change.

Young people who cannot progress into further education, employment or independent living are unimagined in policy directed at the most 'able-disabled' or those who 'exceed their disability limitations through forms of administrative 'creaming' or hyper-prostheticization but leave the vast majority of disabled people behind' (Mitchell & Snyder, 2015: 12). Policy making designed under the broad remit of inclusion asserts ableist notions of what it is to be educable signifying a significant challenge to UNESCO's international aspirations for universal education since it enforces a particularly limited idea of what

education might entail, implying that education has less relevance for those who may not become gainfully employed. This emphasis on the productive subject operates as a form of epistemic invalidation by failing to recognise 'peripheral embodiments' and/or ways of knowing and being that sit beyond productive employment and independent living (Mitchell & Snyder, 2015: 14). In addition, the cost to the 'public purse' frames an appropriate social responsibility as an excessive requirement. The 'failure' to become independent and economically productive for those who cannot have this as an ultimate aim enables us to question the alignment between independence and economic productivity and the meaning we attribute to education for all children and young people.

### **The production of art and design education as an excessive and excluded subject**

I now turn to recent reforms in art and design education to make a parallel argument regarding the creation of art and design education as an excessive and excluded subject. The damaging impact of neoliberal consumerism on the curriculum is an established concern. For example, Power and Whitty (1996: 5) recognised the dangers of the liberal humanist curriculum unable to resist infiltration from neoliberal consumerist interests. In his commentary on the proposals for the primary curriculum, Alexander argued that new curriculum proposals was disproportionately and inaccurately informed by a concern with enhancing the status of the UK as a global competitor (Alexander, 2012: 370). He expressed concerns about the resulting emphasis on the core subjects, English mathematics and science and the reduced nature of a 'two-tier' curriculum, which has continued to mark the arts as excessive. As a consequence arts based subjects have continued to be marginalised resulting in a complete exclusion at higher levels of study where science, mathematics, languages and computing were prioritised at the expense of arts based subjects in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). The first draft of the revised curriculum for art and design was published in February 2013 within this context of an on-going threat to the curriculum for arts based subjects.

The decrease in curriculum guidance to a few pages (DfE, 2013a pages 146 - 148) emphasised the diminished status of the subject. There were also concerns about a misrepresentation of the subject and what constituted an appropriate art and design

education. The new curriculum, clearly aligned with a form of cultural conservatism or 'cultural restorationism' (Ball, 2013:15), was recognised as restrictive, emphasising an appreciation of beauty and aesthetics as well as drawing, painting and sculpture with no recognition for the significance of craft (DfE, 2013a: 146). In their response to initial consultations the National Society of Art and Design Education (NSEAD) recognised the limitations of the proposed changes:

*As it stands, the proposed national curriculum for art, craft and design is reductive. It strongly references a historical fine art led model focusing on appreciation, aesthetics and beauty in preference to a more balanced programme of study that includes contemporary, global and future gazing curriculum (NSEAD, 2014:21)*

Art and design education is implicated in what it is to be human expressed through access to art and cultural education as a human right (UNESCO, 2006) recognising our innate response to create in response to an aesthetic experience (Hickman 2010:136). However, initial policy proposals reflected narrow and outmoded definitions of the best of human creativity. The guidance emphasised an elitist and ableist notion that 'art and design teaching should instil in pupils an appreciation of beauty and an awareness of how creativity depends on technical mastery' (DfE, 2013). Creativity appears to be put beyond reach of those of us who may not 'master' particular skills in drawing, painting and sculpture. This prioritisation of 'illusory standards' emanating from ableist concerns with aesthetics, beauty and individual technical mastery appear to trump other aspects of creative practice such as collaborative experimentation and mistake-making valued by art educators (Adams, 2014:4).

The designation of art and design as a subject deemed to be of less economic worth has continued to result in concerns regarding the exclusion of the subject from the curriculum (Truss, in Steers, 2014). Art and design appears then to be subject to the 'illusory standards of the psychosocial imaginary' described by Shildrick via the definition and prioritisation of core curriculum subjects which define art and design education as excessive to the economic demands of education policy. This emphasis on economic drivers for education policy was reinforced when a central defence of the arts drew on the economic argument for art and design to retain a central place in the curriculum (Steers, 2014). Here art and design education was deemed to be most 'able', when aligned with normative arguments

for economic productivity through the growth of creative industries. Adams (2014) offers a strong counter argument for the social value of art and design education and recognises that by using the narrow economic defence, proponents may also be contributing to the demise of the subject. (It is worth noting that the National Society for Art and Design Education (NSEAD) of which Steers and Adams are members, has been actively involved in data gathering as well as a range of creative campaigns with the artist and NSEAD patron, Bob and Roberta Smith, in order to defend art and design education from the negative implications of the EBacc (TES, 2014)).

A revised version of the curriculum for art and design, published later in 2013, still highlights the 'mastery of skills' which viewed from an anti-ableist stance still suggests a problematic emphasis on ability and capability. However, it also refers to increasing proficiency in the execution of ideas, the importance of critical thinking, creativity and the development of ideas (DfE, 2013b). The revised version of the curriculum stresses that pupils should know 'how art and design both reflect and shape our history, and contribute to the culture, creativity and wealth of our nation' (DfE, 2013b: 1). Although it is important to recognise the potential economic contribution of the arts, those seeking to defend art and design education may be in danger of contributing to the process of epistemic invalidation by expressing value in terms of a narrow, materialist concern. This has the potential to relegate and even deny the distinctive contribution that art practices can have in education for all children, since the value of art and design education becomes harnessed to a reductive employability agenda that emphasises connections between the arts and material wealth.

The influence of neo-liberalism on education as a means for developing the useful, productive citizen is already well established (Ball, 2013, Goodley, 2014) and the process of policy formation in art and design education and SEN/D strongly reflects neoliberal-ableist agendas concerning productivity. This is evident in this shared policy context where art and design education and 'the disabled child' are only valued when perceived as economically productive. Policy promotes the productive and independent as ideal and therefore negates the experiences of those for whom employment and independence is impossible. Mitchell, Snyder & Ware (2014) suggest that 'there is no inclusionism that does not come replete with a strategy of making estranged bodies better fit normative expectations' (p298). The 'estranged bodies' of art and design education (as a body of knowledge) and the disabled

child (as learner) must fit the 'normative expectation' of productivity or fail to exist in education policy since a fulfilling adulthood is directly associated with 'employment, good health and independence' (DfE, 2015: 10).

The 'flattening out' of differences in the curriculum and the learner by claiming currency through economic productivity resonates with the negative implications of assimilationist moves promoted by the disability rights movement where access to education is granted to those who can best fit normative expectations (Mitchell et al, 2014). It seems that art and design can reassert its position in the curriculum by claiming a greater similarity to subjects more obviously aligned with economic growth and global competition such as mathematics, literacy and science. However, by drawing on 'curricular cripistemologies' we can explore the points at which art and design education might fail to be economically viable in order to recognise its 'productive incapacities' in educational terms (Mitchell et al, 2014:296). In considering the 'productive incapacities' of art and design education we may be able to reclaim an arts education policy that moves beyond the economic justifications.

### ***Employing Critical Disability Studies for a moral and ethical conclusion***

Vehmas and Watson (2014:640) argue that CDS is theoretically irrelevant and morally and ethically questionable for its use in enabling an understanding of the lived experiences of impairment since it seeks to reduce the significance of difference and therefore minimise impairment effect. However, this extension of the central principles of disability studies offers important tools for interrogating systemic practices such as policy formation and is important to the moral and ethical project of disability studies. Its application can enable us to recognise the limitations of dominant normative and ableist perspectives in the development of education policy.

The separation of education and special education policy through policy analysis should be resisted since this produces an inauthentic representation of the complexities of policy implementation. Analysis of policy formation should attempt to bridge related aspects of education policy in order to promote an understanding of the interrelated nature of such work. Although some may identify limitations with CDS, there are still benefits in disrupting singular, ableist assumptions that underpin policy formation across the education sector and across curriculum subjects. The special education discourse requires such forms of

disruption now, particularly at a time when it has come to define the intersection between disability and education from birth to adulthood. Mitchell et al (2014:301) encourage us to work with 'productive incapacities' leading to what are described as 'alternative ethical mappings' and 'non-normative living coordinates that privilege interdependency over liberal concepts of the autonomous subject'. Productive incapacities offer a significant challenge to the orthodoxy of neoliberal ableism that underpins the continuation of separatist approaches to education for disabled children. As illustrated here, such discourses are at work in the field of art and design education, where alternative ways of knowing and being are marginalised through the revised national curriculum. In both cases subjects experience a process of epistemic invalidation. Curricular cripistemology encourages us to work with the notion of excess as a productive means of destabilising normative concepts of education. I argue that the potential for this is enhanced when we recognise what happens *between* subjects. Adopting a plural perspective on education policy formation is beneficial when interrogation exclusionary discourses. Recognising what does not work *between* policies, enables us to question normative assumptions that underpin policy formation and the problematic singularity of its subsequent analysis.

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