



Building New Identities in Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Education in Ghana

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Abstract

“We want our classrooms to be just and caring, full of various conceptions of the good. We want them to be articulate, with the dialogue involving as many persons as possible, opening to one another, opening to the world” (Greene 1993 as cited in Nieto & Bode, 2008). These words sum up inclusive education as a multifaceted practice that deals with value and belief systems, invites and celebrates diversity and difference arising from family background, social class, gender,

language, socio-economic background, cultural origin or ability with human rights and social justice at its core. In this paper we reflect critically on current pedagogical practices in Ghana in relation to inclusive education. Using a critical post-colonial discursive framework the paper takes up the challenge to problematise the existing pedagogical practices, which are intensely oppressive. It examines the impact of colonial and cultural practices (beliefs, values, norms) on teaching and learning, using data obtained from three focus groups with 21 student teachers, a total of 42 hours of non-participant observation of their classroom teaching and existing research commentaries. We found that current pedagogical practices are prescriptive, mechanistic, and do not value student diversity and different learning styles. We conclude with new directions for teacher education programs in Ghana that value and celebrate diversity, and difference.

Keywords: Ghana, inclusion, teacher preparation

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In Ghana, government and teacher training institutional initiatives have aimed to contribute to the quality design and conduct of preservice teacher education, and inclusive teaching (Amedeker, 2005; Anamuah-Mensah, n.d.; Republic of Ghana, 2002). This paper aims to contribute to the knowledge base for the design and implementation of preservice teacher education to enhance teachers' professional knowledge and identity to support diverse learners' needs. The paper draws on data obtained from 21 preservice teachers in three focus groups, 42 hours of non-participant observation of these teachers' professional placement experience, public commentaries and previous research to highlight the issues associated with inclusive teaching and learning in Ghana. Using a critical post-colonial discursive framework, the paper highlights the need to construct new teacher knowledge and identity forms for inclusive education to be successful in Ghana.

A critical post-colonial discursive framework

There is no space in this paper to provide a comprehensive account on a critical post-colonial discursive framework; therefore, we present key components of this theoretical framework to guide our analysis. Historically and intellectually, post-colonial theory deals with the examination of the impact and continuing legacy of the European conquest, colonisation and domination of non-European lands, peoples and cultures (McLeod, 2000). Integral to this is a critical examination and analysis of the inherent ideas of European superiority over non-European peoples and cultures that such imperial colonisation implies (Childs & Williams, 1997). Post-colonial work also seeks to uncover the debilitating effects of such ideas on both the self-identity of the colonised and the instability of the conceptual underpinnings of the colonizers, for instance, the role of representation in establishing and perpetuating such notions

of European superiority (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1989, 1998; Childs & Williams, 1997). Dirlik (1994) and Slemon (1990) present three reference points of post-colonial theory: a literal description of conditions in formerly colonial societies; a description of a global condition after the period of colonialism; and a description of discourse informed by an epistemological orientation. In this paper, we draw on the third reference point to critically examine and analyse discursively, how information, knowledge, belief and value systems are structured to create dominating meaning for everyday school practices. Our main framing of critical post-colonial theory in this analysis is a gradual disengagement with the colonial experience of pedagogy not necessarily the foreign but also local forms that are dominating, exclusive and elitist with little accommodation for students' creative thinking in school and teacher training institutions. We used post-colonial theory as a pathway towards exploring the complexities of teacher identity, policy dimensions, inclusive education and the constructs that maintain or uphold the current pedagogical system in Ghana. We believe that a critical post-colonial analysis of pedagogical archetypes in Ghana offers possibilities for arguing for educational and pedagogical change, and for supporting social and educational inclusion. True change that supports inclusion must start from teacher training institutions (McLaren, 2007).

Teacher identity

Studies on teacher identity formation have identified teaching as a complex process of socialization (Carrington, Deppeler, & Moss, 2010; Murrell, 2001; Proweller & Mitchener, 2004; Wenger, 1998). With this complexity is the tension between philosophy of teaching underpin by the teacher's self (values, beliefs, behaviours) which influences what is taught, the policy and curriculum, and the structural constraints of school ethos (Goodson, 1992; Helms, 1998).

Teacher identity development and change is shaped by the interrelationship between personal

and experience, and professional knowledge linked to the teaching environment, students, curriculum and culture of the school (Proweller & Mitchener, 2004). According to Proweller and Mitchener (2004), “early functionalist frameworks dominating research on teacher socialization provided linear models of teacher identity development and change” (p. 1045). Fullan (1993) argues, “the way that teachers are trained, the way that schools are organized, the way that the educational hierarchy operates, and the way that education is treated by political decision makers results in a system that is more likely to retain the *status quo* than to change” (p. 3, italics in the original). Lortie as far back as 1975 posited that the school as a society shapes and alters the teacher, reconstructs teacher socialization more in terms of structural accommodation than individual agency. Agency here implies giving opportunity to learners to produce themselves in the world of their learning, to socially interact and reflect back through the independent behaviours of their interaction and knowledge they have produced. Without agency teacher development practices remain traditional, and “legitimate and institutionalize dominant beliefs and values; a process that both undermines critical thinking as a democratic educational and social practice” (Armstrong, 2006, p. 8). However, new theoretical insights into strong and effective teacher professional identity formation relevant for inclusive education have highlighted the importance of multidimensional framings within interrelationships and community (Britzman, 1991; Munby & Russell, 1994) and professional knowledge linked to the teaching environment, students, curriculum, policy and ethos of the school (Hargreaves, 1994).

What does inclusive education involve?

Inclusive education is “a process intended to respond to students’ diversity by increasing their participation and reducing exclusion within and from education” (UNESCO, 2009 p.1).

This definition considers inclusive education beyond disability issues and includes quality

teaching, the attendance, involvement and achievement of all students, especially those who, for different reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized (UNESCO, 2009). Our own understanding and concept of inclusive education intersects with established multifaceted scholarship that deals with value and belief system, invites and celebrates diversity and difference arising from family background, social class, gender, language, socio-economic background, cultural origin or ability with human rights and social justice at its core. Thus far, our definition is grounded in Gardner and Kelly's (2008) view that educators must "...foster learning environments that are integrally attentive to issues of meaning-making, critical reflection, social justice, diversity, care, collaboration, and community" (p. 1). Therefore, teachers who promote inclusive education are caring. They consider a school as a community, value good interpersonal and personal relationships and create optimum learning opportunities for all students (Lindsay, 2003; Sweetland, 2008).

Inclusive education requires something more than the binary divide between teachers as the givers of knowledge and the students as receivers (Freire, 1973). Freire (1998) posits,

... our relationship with the learners demands that we respect them and demands equally that we be aware of the concrete conditions of their world, the conditions that shape them. To try to know the reality that our students live is a task that educational practice imposes on us: Without this, we have no access 'to the way they think, so only with great difficulty can we perceive what and how they know (p. 58).

This affirms that positive attitudes from the whole school community and changes to the concept of pedagogy, structure and policy are perpetuities for successful inclusion (Elkins & Grimes, 2009; Hooker, 2008; Loreman, 2007; Peterson, 2004; Sweetland, 2008).

In relation to inclusive practice student achievement can be compromised unless teacher training programmes change course to embrace a new wave of pedagogical practice that value all learners (Carrington, Deppeler, & Moss, 2010). Learning to teach in an inclusive setting is a highly complex and dynamic activity, and much to do with context that uses a ‘whole school approach.’ A whole school approach to inclusive education involves using multiple strategies that have a unifying purpose and reflect a common set of values. It requires that policy makers, teacher educators, teachers parents, students, and the community working together to create education environment that promotes equal opportunity for learning and wellbeing on social and emotional levels (Avramidis, 2005; Elkins & Grimes, 2009; Fullan, 2007; Peterson, 2004). While we cannot claim a definitive form of inclusive pedagogy an attempt can be made to stir up a rich and diverse knowledge base that informs the preparation of teachers for inclusive education.

The education policy framework

The first post-independence policy initiative in Ghana to provide a comprehensive equal access to education for all children was the 1961 Education Act, which sought to provide a free, universal and compulsory basic education (of 6 years duration) for all children from 6 years of age. The Act mandated that:

every child who has attained the school going age as determined by the Minister shall attend a course of instruction as laid down by the Minister in a school recognised for the purpose by the Minister (GES, 2004, p. 2).

This Act was followed by a Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy which was the Ministry of Education’s response to the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana Article 39 (2) which states:

The Government shall, within two years of parliament first meets after coming into force of this Constitution draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of free, compulsory and universal basic education (GOV, 1992, p. 40).

In line with this the Special Education Division of GES developed a policy in 2004 that sought to adhere to the challenges of marginalization, segregation and inequality that students with additional needs experience in Ghanaian schools. Essential components of the policy outlining inclusive initiatives were presented at the International Conference on Education in Geneva in 2004. These included: the mandating of Special Education Division of GES to carry out policies that will ensure the social inclusion and quality education for children with disabilities; the provision of equal educational opportunities for children with special needs at pre-university levels to promote access and participation, quality and inclusion; and the mobilization of financial and human resources towards the provision of educational opportunities for children with special needs and its efforts towards inclusive education in Ghana (GES, 2006, pp. 14 & 16).

The Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan (2003 – 2015) envisions the achievement of quality inclusive education system by 2015 (GES, 2003; Hooker, 2008; Kuyini, 2010). This is reflected in the support provided by both government and NGOs such as Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), Sight Savers International (SSI), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in inclusive education in the last decade (Agbenyega, 2005; Kuyini, 2010). The government also initiated pilot inclusive education programs in 2003 in 30 schools in Central, Eastern and Greater Accra regions with the aim of rolling out the outcomes nation-wide (see Agbenyega, 2005 for details).

The Ghanaian Persons With Disability (PWD) Act 2006 reinforced the rights of (PWD) and gave the impetus for their inclusiveness in education and all aspects of social life in Ghana. Although the policies demonstrate the government of Ghana's commitment to equity for all children, researching from insider perspectives, we would argue that Ghana's education system is essentially arbitrary, dualist in nature with good education policies on one side and poor implementations on the other side (Avoke & Avoke, 2004; Kuyini & Desai, 2006, 2009; Ocloo & Subbey, 2008; Yarboi-Tetteh, 2008). Whereas the education policies advocate for inclusive teaching, we found through our observation that curriculum and assessment requirements are essentially prescriptive and rigid, leaving little room for teachers to modify it to meet individual student's needs. The main concern for teachers was to finish the curriculum as stipulated by policy. Post-colonial theory provides a framework which helps to address questions of why so many curriculum practices appear still so far away from reaching or even recognising the goals of individual differences. The inclusive elements of the education policy thus remain on paper without its real meaning being experience in schools. A post-colonial view of the policy-practice divide as it currently exists would see it as an outdated dysfunctional colonial institution in many ways, including the way in which it promotes inclusive policy on one hand and a curriculum steeped in the traditional assumption that the highly structured examination driven and teacher centred approach is the best. It is argued that the traditional school almost inevitably promotes and reinforces socio-economic inequity (Hickling-Hudson, 2002; Ladwig, 2000) because they are unsuitable for meeting the learning needs of diverse student populations but rather drill the bodies of students into a regimented and stultified approach to learning through regimented curriculum (Tait, 2000). Post-colonial educators argue that it is vitally necessary to teach

students to critique policies and practices that reproduce privilege and dominance for some children, and disadvantage others (Dei & Shahjahan, 2008).

Current teacher education in Ghana

Teacher training in Ghana has a checkered history yet space will not allow us to present a detailed historical account in this paper. Currently, teacher training is offered at two types of institutions in Ghana, Teacher Training Colleges and Universities. Prior to 2004, the training Colleges offered a 3 year Post-Secondary Teachers Certificate A. Due to low teacher salary levels compared to other sectors of the economy, students who do not qualify to enter public universities mostly enrolled in the training colleges, and some brilliant but needy students who could not afford university fees also find their way into the training colleges. The training colleges pay allowances to the preservice teachers as a form of motivation. As part of a national improvement strategy to raise teachers' entry level skills the 38 public and three private Post-Secondary Teacher Training colleges, which formerly offer a three-year 'Certificate A' to teachers were upgraded in 2004 to offer Diploma courses. Students spend two years on campus learning theory and in the third year, are assigned to classroom mentor teachers to undertake a one year professional placement while they continue to study through a distance mode.

Education studies, cultural studies, physical education, English, basic science, basic mathematics, Ghanaian language and basic agricultural science form core course components of study with little emphasis on inclusive education. Ghana Education Service (GES) exercises supervisory responsibilities over the work of the teacher training colleges, and qualified teachers from the programs are eligible to teach in primary and junior secondary schools. Primary school teachers generally teach all subjects in a class, and Junior Secondary teachers teach subjects according to their specializations but this is not always the case in areas with teacher shortage.

The University of Education, Winneba (UEW) and the University of Cape Coast are both public universities and provide university level training for teachers, awarding diplomas and degrees. Currently, UEW has replaced the four-week per year teaching practice with a new programme that seeks to enhance the efficiency of teacher-trainees. This involves teacher-trainees spending the final year of their training period out of campus to undertake teaching practice in selected schools with the aim of infusing greater professionalism into the students before they graduate. Professional placement is supervised by the university lecturers (Amedeker, 2005). The University of Cape Coast is currently reviewing its current structure of practicum experience. There are departments of special education in both universities that teach courses in inclusive education and an introduction to special education as a core unit for all students undertaking education related courses for a semester.

The pedagogical landscape

This section theorizes pedagogical practices in Ghana. By using a critical post-colonial discursive lens we examined the power dynamics inherent in Ghanaian pedagogical practices and histories represented in the education system. This approach enabled us to explore the complexities of oppressive pedagogy (Freire, 1973) so as to become emancipated of the embedded colonial pedagogical archetypes. Emancipation is foundational for developing a new pedagogical landscape that values and supports all learners.

Perhaps the major challenges facing teacher education in both the training colleges and the universities are the approach to pedagogy and entry level scores for admission into the teacher training colleges. In an international teacher education conference in 2008 in Ghana, Prof. Joseph Kingsley Aboagye, Director of the Institute of Education of the University of Cape Coast, (UCC), advocated strongly for a review of the entry requirement for admission into

Ghana's Teacher Training Colleges to be raised from aggregate 24 to 22 or better to make it comparable to what pertains in the Universities. He indicated that some of the students admitted into the teacher training colleges were sometimes of sub-quality standard (Yarboi-Tetteh, 2008). Similarly, Prof. Emmanuel Adow Obeng, the former Vice Chancellor of UCC, posited that there is absence of coherent policies in teachers' professional training and development, and content of many teacher training programmes lacked reflective practice, active learning, innovation, creativity and partnership building. Pervasive of these are severe disjuncture between the training provided and the realities of the classroom, schools, their communities and the world of work affect teaching quality and learning for all (Yarboi-Tetteh, 2008). As some of the teachers stated in focus groups:

The issue is the lack of support systems for pre-service teachers in training colleges or universities. If you struggle with academic work the only option available for you is expulsion from the academic program. The moment you enter you are on your own unless you have a critical friend who can support you...because rigid examinations are more favoured than any other forms of assessment, it makes teaching and learning mechanistic, prescriptive, we don't think this support inclusion (transcript, 2/10/2009).

This situation depicts the student teachers as colonised bodies with limited opportunities to thrive in learning environment. We observed similar practices in the student-teachers' professional placement, they were subjective, rigid in their pedagogy without provision for individual differences. Foucault's (1977) point illustrates this more vividly:

The body now serves as an instrument or intermediary: if one intervenes upon it to imprison it, or make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is

regarded both as a right and as a property...now the body is caught up in a system of constraints...obligations and prohibitions (p. 11).

While the gloomy picture of the lack of support and regimented assessment practices are giving way to generic assessment practices such as portfolios in many advanced education systems these students are still caught up in the transcendental pedagogy of colonialism. Similarly, a Ghana Education Service report card on inclusion found that critical challenges facing educational inclusion highlighted curriculum inflexibility and inadequate pre-/post-training in additional education needs for regular teachers (GES, 2004, p. 15). Further evidence suggests that a large number of children are in school as a result of FCUBE policy but a significant number do not stay to finish and those who stay on produce poor results because of the hostile school communities, poor teaching, regular corporal punishment and the lack of care expected in inclusive classrooms (Agbenyega, 2006; Dei & Shahjahan, 2008; Kuyini, & Desai, 2007).

It appears the form of oppressive pedagogy in Ghana has its roots in her colonial history and traditional cultures. Colonialism under the former imperial power (Great Britain) was based on a social and economic construction of "Otherness", a conscious oppression, exclusion and marginalisation of native Ghanaians from the White minority. By this construction Ghanaians were considered unequal to their former colonial masters, and consequently, were subjected to master-servant relationships accompanied with severe sanctions and punishment. Formal schooling, which started as a colonial endeavour in the castles, the symbols of White supremacy, adopted oppressive pedagogical practices.

The traditional Ghanaian system, which operates on the culture of submissive absolutism, reinforces the oppression experience through colonialism (Deppeler, Moss, & Agbenyega, 2008).

For instance, the traditional kinship system in Ghana resonates around subject-master ideology. It precludes mutually constituted relationships and legitimises authoritative relationships. A king must exercise his authority over his subjects to demonstrate how powerful he is. Invariably, it can be explained that the dualist experience (culture and colonialism) were precursors to the formation of excessive control identities and the ways in which teaching and learning are currently legitimated and practiced in Ghana. Without the experiences of mutually constituted learning it would be difficult for an educator to do same for his/her learners.

Research points to the direction that the Ghanaian learning spaces (from preschool to the university level) depict a hegemonic colonial rationalist way of organizing educational practice (Agbenyega, 2006; Deppeler, Moss, & Agbenyega, 2008). Researchers of inclusive education practices in Ghana consistently found that despite the majority of teachers' support for inclusive education, they had limited knowledge of inclusive practices and their approaches to pedagogy remain punitive (Agbenyega, 2006; Deppeler, Moss, & Agbenyega, 2008; Kuyini & Desai, 2007, 2009). For example our observation of pedagogy during field works in some primary schools show:

some of the children with tears in their eyes so we asked the teacher, what is wrong with the children? The teacher replied, I caned all of them...I taught them well then I gave them work to do but they all failed... It is shocking...they don't know anything so I caned them. I am going to cane them again for this disgrace. We saw most of the kids very timid, some unable to express themselves for fear of making mistakes that could attract punishment from the teacher (Field observation, 5/11/2009).

This is a demonstration that the colonial-culturally blended pedagogical practice is still ripe in the Ghanaian classrooms. By culture we imply, the self in relation with others to which

the individual belongs. This self is made up of beliefs, values and behaviours. By colonial we mean anything that is imposed. Thus colonial-culturally blended pedagogical practice is pedagogical practice that imposes beliefs, values, behaviours and knowledge on learners. In non-inclusive learning spaces learners' voices and agency are submerged in the authoritative pedagogy of teachers (Deppeler, Moss, & Agbenyega, 2008; Kanpol, 1994; Mprah, 2008).

The colonial pedagogical practice considers the learning relationship as simply a 'novice' receiving knowledge from a higher authority. Other comments made by the classroom teachers during focus groups are quite illuminating of the power dynamics they experienced during their professional preparation:

The entire university system operates on the false belief that we the students are ignorant and that the professor is the one who has knowledge and is the one to whom everybody should listen...If you question a lecturer that might be your license to losing your student status or your certificate because... you just need to keep your cool and salute them if you want to guarantee your successful exit (Teachers' focus groups).

Mprah (2008), a Ghanaian quoting Paulo Freire's banking concept of education to illustrate the pedagogical situation in Ghana states:

the teacher teaches and the students are taught, the teacher thinks and the students are thought about, the teacher knows everything and the student knows nothing, the teacher talks and the students listen and meekly, of course. The teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the students are mere objects. The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which is set in opposition to the freedom of the students (p. 1).

It appears from this extract that teachers often privilege their position over their learners through a replication of their previous experiences. Because their own training silenced them similarly, they are also likely to silence their students. It can be argued that preservice teachers who form their identities through the experience of tyranny and exclusion are likely to accept that tyranny is good to be meted out to other learners. Thus, the 'colonial' should not be perceived simply as only 'foreign and alien', but as broadly to imply any pedagogic behaviour that is 'imposed' and 'dominating' (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001; Dei, & Opini, 2007; Foucault, 1980). A colonised pedagogy considers teaching as a mere collection of strategies of what works and what does not work for the teacher; the authoritative knower must pass on what works to his or her students whether that knowledge is contextually relevant or not. Further focus group comments from preservice teachers reflect this:

During a lecture we all sat quiet as the lecturer dictated her notes on language acquisition...the only time she paused was when she thought there was a difficult term she needed to explain to us... She went on like that and everybody was silent. I took the courage to ask a question, Madam, I read in another book which contested Noam Chomsky's version of innate language abilities, what is your...I did not finished the statement when she attacked me verbally...Are you here to teach me or who is in control here? It went on for some five minutes but I was the looser as my fate was decided by the final grade that was awarded me for what was considered challenging the lecturer's authority (transcript, 2/10/2009).

This account further confirms the practice of pedagogy as simply the transmission of information through fear. It is an approach that rejects knowledge construction through mutual meaning making (Vygotsky, 1987; Daniels, 2001). Such approaches to pedagogy

neither make connections with learners nor engage them so that they want to be at school. It mirrors the banking concept of education where knowledge is perceived as a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing (Freire, 1973). It demonstrates a departure from a school as a community of individuals learning and sharing knowledge together (Rogoff, 1994).

In inclusive learning, all students, teachers and policy makers belong to the school community and therefore, value the differences embodied in various elements of the school (Keddie & Churchill, 2005). Colonial form of schooling on the other hand, considers schooling as simply receiving knowledge from a superior authority for replication (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). If the pedagogical landscape of the Ghanaian schooling systems privilege teachers' authority and knowledge over learners then individuals with learning difficulties will be further subjugated. Dewey (1938) cautions that:

Education is essentially a social process. This quality is realised in the degree in which individuals form a community group...As the most mature member of the group, [the teacher] has a peculiar responsibility for the conduct of the interactions and intercommunications which are the very life of the group as a community...When education is based upon experience and educative experience is seen to be a social process,...the teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities (pp. 65-66).

Dewey's comments are consistent with Rogoff's (1994) idea of a learning community and a whole school approach where all elements of the school must be brought together to make inclusion effective (Rinaldi & Stuart, 2009). Similarly, teacher education and pedagogy in Ghana need to shift a focus from sheer transmission of knowledge to a more inclusive approach that

actively involves learners in producing knowledge. This approach values active engagement where the voice of teacher trainees are valued and respected. Current inclusive practices challenged traditional frameworks of pedagogy that view learners as receptacles. It embraces a new discourse of education where appropriate support is the key (Loreman, 2007).

Given this new direction post-colonial theory signals a new interest in education, a renewed interest in the colonial legacy and its aftermath in Ghana. By applying a post-colonial theory to current pedagogical practices in Ghana we place centre stage the continuing implication of colonial legacy of pedagogy on inclusive education which has little changed since independence in 1957. Our main framing of post-colonial theory in the analysis of teacher education in Ghana is a gradual disengagement with the colonial and the aversive forms of cultural reproduction of pedagogy. Teachers need a new way of thinking about educational practice as a collective social and cultural endeavour (Daniels, 2001; Fleer, 2006). Teachers will not support inclusive education if they do not understand it. We therefore consider teacher education as the primary task in addressing the challenges facing inclusive education in Ghana.

Reframing teacher preparation for successful inclusion in Ghana

We conclude this paper by proposing a new framework for teacher education in light of the Presidential Committee on the Review of Education Reform in Ghana which stated the objective of teacher education in Ghana as the training and development of the right type of teacher who is competent, committed and dedicated who should be able to:

- Develop attitudes, values and dispositions that create a conducive environment; for quality teaching and learning in schools;
- Apply, extend and synthesise various forms of knowledge;
- Facilitate learning and motivate individual learners to fully realise their potential;

- Promote inclusive education at all levels;
- Adequately prepare the learner to participate fully in the national development effort (Anamuah-mensah, n.d; Republic of Ghana, 2002).

Deconstructing the pedagogical experiences reported in this paper provided insights into how teacher training must be reconstructed and the factors instrumental in reshaping teacher identities or core beliefs consistent with the above statements. It appears that if current teacher preparation continues to reproduce teachers in the traditional practice of knowledge transmitters, inclusive education will be hard to achieve. Teacher education in Ghana needs to be infused with content that includes instructional and curricular techniques appropriate for the development of cognitive, social, cultural and physical needs of diverse learners in the inclusive environments. The implementation must be swift, decisive and dramatic in the wake of Ghana's education reforms that characterised the education enterprise.

The pedagogical archetypes in practice in current teacher training institutions and schools in Ghana lacked the complexity of teaching required in inclusive classrooms. Effective teachers know their role and do effective teaching, and this begins with effective training (Fullan, 2007; Norwich, 2000). Teacher training institutions in Ghana need to design inspiring preservice and inservice programs that engage learners in problem-based learning communities, transforming their understanding and experience of learning, teaching and inclusive practice. Current approaches should inspire transformational learning in student teachers by structuring learning opportunities and experiences that respond to the student's home culture. There should be both a solid foundation in the course content, and its application to problem solving in classrooms and society. Course development should be based on these core beliefs:

- Vibrant learning communities;

- Respect and a positive attitude influence learning;
- A high level of content knowledge and expertise on subject matter to influence teaching;
- Strong and continuous support of students' learning; and
- Empowerment to encourage students to become critical thinkers who can take risks to question normalisation and marginalisation processes which will lead to broader understandings of the broader historical, cultural, political and educational context in which they are part of (Curran, 2007).

Vibrant learning communities. Inclusive education is full of complexities in regard to policy and implementation. The course units in teacher training should lead students to identify and understand these complexities, and find practical ways of implementing inclusion practice in their schools. An important way to do this is to make learning spaces vibrant communities that allow preservice teachers to reflect on their own experiences of inclusive education (McLaren, 2007) and consider why inclusion matters and for whom it is important. They would then reflect on how their own experience of inclusion in education and learning compares with what they now believe inclusion should be about and look like. Course units should incorporate requirements for students to conduct research as part of their ongoing learning and assessment which they must discuss in groups. Teaching methods and teacher behaviours that are needed to facilitate context specific quality inclusive education should form core components of course delivery. Through this approach, students are not only learning content but are also building their identities as effective teachers with extensive knowledge in using research to inform practice.

Respect and positive attitude influence learning. The extracts provided in this paper demonstrated that colonial pedagogy does not respect students and as such is counterproductive to inclusive education. For a transformation to occur pedagogical practices in Ghana must be based on respect and positive attitude as these play important role in students' survival in their academic learning (Keddie & Churchill, 2005; Rinaldi & Stuart, 2009). Teachers cannot motivate diverse learners without earning their respect. This can be achieved by designing the professional development course structures that take learner's feelings, needs and thoughts into consideration (Rogoff, Pradise, Arauz, Correa-Chavez, & Angelillo, 2003). For example, teaching and learning must encourage open discussion both in lectures and tutorials on what qualities and capabilities the students want to attain at the end of their qualifications. This implies that Ghanaian teacher educators must listen non-judgmentally and non-defensively, and allow students to come out with innovative suggestions other than those provided by their lecturers.

A high level of knowledge and expertise on subject matter influences teaching. Research shows that the pedagogy of talking, where the lecturer dominates the teaching and learning situation, dampens students' enthusiasm and leads to exclusion (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). For this reason, the nature of the material to be delivered to preservice and inservice teachers must be based upon constructivist learning incorporating a community of learners approach (Rogoff, 1994; Rogoff et al., 2003) whereby real world, classroom, family and societal problems are incorporated into developing course units. The constructivist approach to learning derives its name and power from the belief that knowledge is best constructed when the learner actively interacts with the environment and, hence, constructs meaning from that experience (Vygotsky, 1987; Daniels, 2001; Hausfather, 2001) implying that learning should be meaningful

and related to real life situations. Educators following the constructivist perspective base their instruction on what the students already know as a foundation (Duhany & Duhany, 2000) and active learning is an important facet. When students are actively involved in the lesson, they learn and retain information (Harris & Graham, 1996). According to Bruner (1997), the teaching of theoretical concepts must be inextricably linked to its application. This kind of teacher training is required if teachers are to assist all children in inclusive settings to apply their learning to a useful purpose. Similarly, prospective teachers must understand the relationship between the ideas they are taught and the applications they will encounter. One way to develop this skill is to arrange for this connection to be made in the context of real life situations (Hughes, 2006). Such learning in context will provide the preservice teachers the opportunity of questioning what they do or think (Brookfield, 1995). It is during this process of inquiry, thinking about their practice that teacher transformation and new identity forms occur (Hughes, 2006).

The community of learners approach (Rogoff, 1994) ensures that the lecturer and the students have no fixed position but where everybody is a learner and an educator. There should be a focus on setting interesting but challenging assessment tasks. Students can be motivated for learning through assigning tasks that are neither too easy nor too difficult, and which incorporates research activity for individual or group investigation. To counter students' apathy to engagement and learning, rigorous steps and time must be spent to develop a well-organized unit that is integrated, and incorporates real life situations and events into assignment tasks. Teacher professional preparation should aim at liberating the individual and must move away from unidirectional to a community of learners' relationship (Rogoff, 1994). This calls for collaborative teaching and dialogicity - the essence of education as freedom in practice (Freire, 1973). This interactive approach is important for working with varying learning styles.

Preservice teachers need to know from the onset what they are learning, why they need to learn it and what is expected of them as well as how this applies in real classroom or world context.

To facilitate the preparation in a more unified fashion, the field experience would have to be constructed and take place in classrooms and settings that are inclusive and representative of the range of students one would expect to teach after completing training (Fleer, 2008; Hedegaard, 2008). Further, field experience would have to be structured to provide regular and consistent opportunities for reflection since experience alone would not be enough to clarify the knowledge and meanings derived from practice (Pugach, 1996). This type of reflection forms the basis by which students can question what they think or do (Brookfield, 1995).

Constructive timely feedback. Quality inclusive teachers are those that provide prompt and timely response on students' work. Research suggests that timely constructive feedback can be a powerful tool for learning and contributor to building student's identity (Black & William, 1998). Feedback is critical to preservice and novice teachers' professional development. Newmann and Wehlage's (1983) writes, "the professional cultures into which new teachers are inducted are critically important because the early years not only confirm new teachers' choice of occupation in life, but also lay a base for future professional development" (p.255). We should not assume that full blown teachers emerge from preservice programs capable of implementing all that they learnt from their professional preparation programs (Russell & McPherson 2001), which suggested that, failure to acknowledge the effects of experience and further professional development on professional growth could result in teachers losing their core identities as good teachers. Thus, frequent, timely, positive feedback that supports preservice teachers' beliefs that they are either doing well or what they need to do to be successful in their programs should form a core component of the teacher training programs.

Reflections for professional development. Of particular importance is personal measurement of preservice teacher's own work. Many Ghanaian teachers know a lot about children with additional needs however, they do not incorporate reflection in their teaching. The lack of reflection about children with additional needs can push teachers into ineffective programming, rejection and abuse (Allen, 2000, Horn, 2000). Thus reflective practice needs to form a core component of preservice teacher education in Ghana.

Our analysis demonstrate a pattern of schooling that reflects ongoing teacher education models based on what Freire (1973) described as oppressive educational practice and creates further barriers to inclusive education that continue to reinforce a technical approach to the professional practices of teaching (Giroux, 1981). Carrington, Deppeler and Moss (2010) argue strongly that "if we want to progress education reform and change, then the importance of value positions that are grounded by social and cultural beliefs about education, learning and difference need to be acknowledged" (p. 1). A critical post-colonial framework requires that teachers use self- reflection to form their identities through communities of practice that promote active and critical dialogue, and questioning of historical and traditional notions about education and pedagogy. Kumashiro and Ngo (2007) writes succinctly, "anti-oppressive education requires us to be continuously reflexive about how any of our perspectives on teaching and learning are partial, necessarily so" (p. xix). To confront oppression involves teacher educators and teachers discerning and critically positioning themselves in ways that allow them to actively question ideologies about how professional beliefs and knowledge are understood and enacted in professional preparation and practice. As teachers reflect, construct and adopt identity positions for themselves (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) that are grounded in equity and social justice transformational teaching and learning can occur (Gur-Ze'ev, Masschelein, & Blake, 2001).

Conclusion

What we have discussed so far provides a framework for teacher education that prepares teachers to be responsive to individual differences. It moves beyond the mechanistic prescriptions of pedagogy and conformity expected in dominant traditional classrooms. A post-colonial teacher preparation and pedagogy applies a multilogical reasoning and meaning making that draw on individual strengths, and not on their shortcomings (Kincheloe, 2008). Teacher education within this theoretical space will re-position pedagogy in Ghana that rejects the notion of transmission (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; Nsamenang, 2008). Inclusive teaching does not set boundaries and or lock children into rigid categories of ‘deficits and normals’ (Ashby & Causton-Theoharis, 2009; Rossetti, Ashby, Arndt, Chadwick, & Kasahara, 2008). Inclusive teaching is an ethical practice that brings to the educational table multiple ways of learning and knowing (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999). It is only when teachers achieve such transformations that they would no longer view different cognitive abilities in children as markers of deficiency, and need to fix them (Ashby & Causton-Theoharis, 2009; Daniels, 2001; Rossetti et al., 2008). Society and school systems would come to view all children as knowledgeable individuals who are developing in different cultural contexts and thus need culturally appropriate support and not criticism and punitive pedagogy that is based colonial rationality.

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