South Australia's special school co-location reforms: *inclusion or illusion?*

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Abstract

On 20th September, 2006, the Rann Government announced *Education Works*, its bold plan to "reshape the face of public education in South Australia" (Government of South Australia, 2006a, p.1). A critical feature of this plan was addressing infrastructure issues arising from ageing school buildings, limited curriculum choice and declining student enrolments, by partnering with private industry to create six new schools. These 'super schools' were to cater for different types of schooling. After consultation, 17 schools were identified as being suitable for closure, combining with other schools, or, alternatively, being reconfigured. As a result of this plan, six new schools were built.

One of the key features of *Education Works* was "greater school interaction though clusters" (Government of South Australia, 2006b, p.1). Historically, special schools have been segregated environments. Interaction between schools can reduce such segregation and reflect a movement towards both inclusive policy and practice. The current research described and explored in this dissertation seeks to discover whether and how increased interactions have been planned for, or occurred, in relation to the students with disabilities and their teachers within selected special settings. Opportunities and barriers to the development of inclusive practice are identified, in newly created schools that involved the co-location of special and mainstream schools under the *Education Works* plan, with recommendations made to guide future policy.

The dissertation is an interpretive case study, utilising four newly co-located special schools. Three separate methods of data collection and analysis are utilised: a document analysis, a spatial analysis, and, finally, interviews of leaders from the special schools. For both the interviews and document research, coding occurs through a blended design. In the spatial research, however, Soja's Thirdspace (1996) framework is used to explore spatial design intentions, the way space is utilised in practice, and to propose alternative spatial responses to support the goal of inclusion.

The main findings indicate the problematic nature of using special school leaders to develop inclusive practices when they conceptually frame inclusion in a manner that does not align with a rights approach to inclusion or support the goal of full inclusion (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). Instead, systemic segregation appears to be reproduced by framing inclusion as a faulty, utopian vision, and a threat to the sustainability of special schools. Existing and planned connections between special schools and mainstream schools fit the definition of integration rather than inclusion. The increase of withdrawal spaces appears problematic, considering their capacity to be used as spaces for seclusion.

The findings indicate the need to provide more detailed direction regarding inclusion (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016) at a policy level, and to ensure that those leading inclusive education reforms do not hold positions which are antithetical to the goal of full inclusion. Future co-locations would benefit from a broader, research-informed, understanding of how to meaningfully include the voices of students with disabilities in co-location planning and decision-making. An increase in preventative behavioural approaches, such as Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS), is also recommended in order to lessen teachers' advocacy for withdrawal spaces.

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any material previously submitted for another award or published by another person, except where due reference has been made.

Peter Walker
Date: 20/12/18

Acknowledgements

This work continues a discussion already commenced, in many forms, by the research of previous pioneers on and into inclusive education.

Rather than acknowledge authors individually, I would like to recognise that my own work is indebted to that body of literature already established. (Such amazing giants, such helpful shoulders.) I hope this thesis serves to tease out threads from previous discussions, authored elsewhere, and to build on them in new and meaningful ways.

Thank you to Associate Professor Kerry Bissaker and Associate Professor David Curtis who both supervised my thesis. David was influential in his early support and guidance. Kerry took on the heavy lifting at the end – which I will be forever grateful for. Both the carrot and the stick had their place.

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Dedication

Thanks to those close to me, family, friends, and colleagues, who have given me the space and time to complete this research – and to enable me to prioritise it at key times. Thanks also to those who provided enthusiastic and critical sounding boards, and encouragement along the journey.

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This thesis is dedicated to my two children, Will and Daisy, who remind me every day of the importance of inclusive schooling. We're not there yet, but we'll get there.

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Glossary of Terms

Ableism

a form of discrimination involving a bias (sometimes systemic) towards people without disabilities. Ableism can be illustrated through beliefs which devalue the position or societal contributions of people with disabilities.

Charter Schools

a public school typically found in the United States of America. A Charter School is funded by its government but operates with freedoms not possessed by other state system schools. Each school's focus is defined by their specific charter and attendance is sometimes dependant on a lottery system.

Cluster Schools

a group of schools within a defined geographic area, which work together for common purpose and to better share resources.

Constant Comparison

a process which involves the repeat comparison of new data interpretations with previous interpretations in order to saturate categories and therefore reach an analytical conclusion.

Discriminant Sampling

the asking of questions to explore the relationships between data categories, then returning to the data in order to establish evidence of such relationships.

Discrimination

prejudice expressed against a person because of a defining characteristic, such as disability.

Exclusion

pressures which affect a student's full participation (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). This may include a formal exclusion process, removing the student from the school for a defined period.

Free Schools

Similar to Charter Schools but operating in England. Examples of Free Schools include small studio schools, focusing on project-based learning, and technical colleges which prepare students for specific industries.

Full Inclusion

a goal as expressed by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), for the meaningful and complete inclusion of students with disabilities in regular, non-segregated schooling.

Inclusion

broadly speaking, being included as part of a group or organisation.

Inclusive Education

as outlined extensively by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016), a right, a principle, and a means of achieving an inclusive society through the process of full inclusion.

Inclusive School

a school permeated by inclusive education philosophy and practices.

Integration

conditional, part-time attendance of segregated students in mainstream schooling.

Least Restrictive Environment

considered to be the schooling option which successfully and safely provides a student with the greatest range of freedoms and choices.

Maindumping

a colloquialism for the hurried placement of a student with disabilities into mainstream schooling without adequate or planned supports.

Mainstream

a regular school. Mainstream schools may include more restrictive options, such as segregated special units or classes.

Medical Model of Disability

a model which focuses on the biomedical characteristics of people with disabilities.

Normative Centre

the least marginalised position within a group or structure.

Othering

the labelling of a person or group as being different and/or subordinate.

Place

a defined area which has been provided with a considered and often agree upon meaning.

Reform

making changes (e.g. to an institution) for the purpose of improvement.

Regular Schooling

a mainstream school, possibly including special units or classes – features lacking in inclusive schools.

Reverse Integration

conditional, part-time attendance of mainstream/regular school students in special school programs or classrooms.

Schools-within-schools

a large school that includes sub-schools which run with autonomy.

Seclusion

the confinement of a student for a period, during which they are not able to exit by choice.

Segregation

the enforced separation of people from each other, facilities, programs, and resources.

Social Model of Disability

a model which identifies that the greatest barriers to the full participation of people with disabilities are societal.

Space

often an abstract area, lacking a considered and attributed meaning, or defined label.

Special Education

the education of people considered to have exceptional needs, usually due to disability factors.

Surveil

the conducting of surveillance.

Thick Description

the inclusion of a subjective example to illustrate developed theory.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Inclusive education has remained a hotly contested concept despite its agenda being set over 20 years ago with the release of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1991). It has been resisted on many fronts due to conflicting pressures and "multiple levels of political tension" (Slee, 2011, p.62). The language of inclusive education has nevertheless become increasingly ubiquitous in schooling. In Australia the principles of inclusion are represented within the national goals for schooling (MCEETYA, 2008), Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2014b), and the Professional Standard for Principals, where inclusion is considered to be an essential democratic value (AITSL, 2014a). Although an open and broad interpretation of 'inclusive education' embraces all types of diversity, including culture, gender and sexuality, for the purpose of this study it specifically focuses on the educational inclusion of students with different abilities commonly referred to as disabilities.

Special schools have historically had an uneasy relationship with inclusion given that the goal of inclusive education is to have all schools prepared, able and willing to meet the needs of all students (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2005). The accomplishment of this goal is considered to be that of 'full inclusion'. The very existence of special schools shows that full inclusion exists in theory, but not yet in practice. If full inclusion were to be achieved then special schools would be deprived of their *raison d'être*. It is within this climate that the Australian Special Education Principals' Association (ASEPA) have sought to position themselves as inclusive practitioners and to challenge the notion of place as being primarily important (Forbes, 2007). (This positioning will be further explored in this research and, in particular in Chapter 7.)

South Australia's *Education Works* reform recognised both place and space as being important (Government of South Australia, 2006c). Some government schools were considered to be "simply in the wrong places" (Government of South Australia, 2006c, p.4) at a time when communities were advocating for the convenience of co-located "one stop shops" (p.6). The beginning of these reforms was described by then Premier Rann as "the most significant reform agenda for our school infrastructure in more than 30 years", and signalled a significant policy shift (Government of South Australia, 2006a, p.1).

1.1 Aim of the thesis
The aim of this thesis is to identify the degree to which the *Education Works* reforms, involving the co-location of special schools, led to, or would likely lead to, increased inclusive practice within South Australian public schools. The stated goal of full inclusion – *for all schools to be prepared, able, and willing to meet the needs of all students* – is considered 'aspirational' within this thesis.

The space between established school practices and this aspiration was conceived as an 'inclusion gap'. This thesis sought to identify whether the *Education Works* reforms would likely be influential in closing this gap, and to identify the opportunities seized and barriers encountered throughout the reform process.

1.2 Framework to guide the research

As a foundation for this current research it was critical that a defined understanding of inclusion was established. Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey (2005) noted that many educators held misinformed positions around inclusion, which resulted in muddied perceptions and interpretations. Certainly definitions of inclusion have differed from educator to educator, creating a "conceptual muddle" (Florian, 2014, p.293).

'Place' is a key sticking point between contrasting definitions. Lefebvre (1991) identified place as "marked, noted, named" (p.118). Places are locations which are given names as signifiers, such as 'the principal's office' or the 'school canteen'. Space, alternatively, exists between places. These "holes in the net", exist as both "blank and marginal" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.118). Forbes (2007) does not consider a shared educational 'place' as integral for inclusion, which is at odds with this researcher's framing, aligned with that put forward by Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey (2005), and clarified by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016).

Inclusion is fundamentally about students being together. It is about students having a shared place and space. It is reductive to identify inclusive education as simply 'residing', however, within mainstream schools. Students with disabilities who are educated in units or special classes are not experiencing inclusive education. Nor are those in mainstream classes who are learning in a manner significantly differently to their peers, such as students relying on paraprofessionals to provide their instruction or facilitate their participation (Bakken, 2010). A meaningful connection between students is not simply about shared space; it is also about shared purpose and experience. Special schools are therefore not considered to be inclusive education environments within this current research. They are considered specialised settings with expertise for the meeting of diverse students' needs. Their students, nevertheless, are separated and segregated from their age-appropriate peers without disabilities.

Inclusive education is not seen within this current research as something 'done to' the student with a disability. Allan (2005, p.293) identified inclusion as being not what we do "to a discrete population of children, but rather as something we must do to ourselves". This inner-looking experience of inclusion appealed to this researcher as it challenged individuals to change the one person they truly can change, themselves. In seeking inclusive education, we are all beneficiaries.

There are many established benefits of inclusive education for all students (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2005), but that does not mean attempting inclusion always results in success. Student preference for special schools, parental concerns over reduced support, and teachers' feeling of being inadequately prepared for inclusion, each exist as impediments to full inclusion being realised (Foreman, 2014). Some researchers have continued to challenge a policy of full inclusion and have advocated strongly for a continuum of placement options (Bakken, 2010). Fletcher (2010) considered the overall evidence base behind inclusive education as weak, proposing that inclusive policy might work best if implemented for students with particular disabilities only. Wong (2006) argued that any positive difference in attitudes towards students with disabilities was reliant on adult consideration and intervention. Hardiman, Guerin and Fitzsimons (2009) identified that student gains in social competence were no greater in inclusive settings than those in segregated environments. Such counter voices have highlighted that barriers towards inclusion still exist.

Within the broader literature on inclusive education, negative attitudes towards inclusion (Gal, Schreur & Engel-Yeger, 2010; Boyle, Topping, Jindal-Snape & Norwich, 2012), inadequate teacher preparation (Anderson & Boyle, 2015), and lack of appropriate resourcing (Slee, 2011; Anderson & Boyle, 2015) have frequently presented themselves as barriers. Slee (2010) proposed that a commitment towards tackling such roadblocks would be a fruitful way to work towards inclusive education. Inclusion is not a recipe or a checklist, and should not be "reduced to a list of policies, strategies and resources" (Slee, 2011, p.39). It can be conceptualised at both micro and macro levels (Graham & Spandagou, 2011) and exists both ideologically and through practical application (Jahnukainen, 2015). In short, inclusive education has proven to be difficult to define, and equally difficult to enact. Lindsay (2003) evaluated that the evidence for inclusive education appeared weak and more rigorous research was required. A decade later Forlin et al. (2013) identified a lack of evidence-based data to indicate the impact of inclusion. Cologon, however, determined a body of research "overwhelmingly" supported inclusion (2013, p.23). Dempsey claimed "[t]he argument over whether inclusion works is ended. Inclusion does work when key components of the classroom and the school environment are in place" (cited in Cologon, 2013, p.45). Despite such claims, further research is required to strengthen the case against segregation, which, despite its historical dominance, has yet to have a rigorous defence advanced "either philosophically or empirically" to support its retention (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2011, p.13).

In order to better frame this current research it was useful to identify the sort of practices that might be considered inclusive and those that would not. Booth & Ainscow (2002) created an Index for Inclusion to help schools identify and review the degree to which they may have embodied an inclusive mindset. This was later adapted for the Australian context by Deppeler & Harvey (2004).

A focus of the index was the dismantling of barriers that might limit inclusive opportunities. Exclusion, identified as "the pressures which get in the way of full participation", was at all times resisted (Booth & Ainscow, 2002, p.3). The relationship between inclusion and exclusion has been identified as "two sides of the same coin" (Díez, 2010, p.163), and "connected processes" (Vislie, 2003, p.21).

The three dimensions identified within the Index for Inclusion were Producing Inclusive Policies, Creating Inclusive Cultures, and Evolving Inclusive Practices. This current research does not go into the micro-detail of the index as its fine-grained approach has been considered so comprehensive as to be overwhelming (Vaughan, 2010), but as a theoretical touchstone, its broad brushstrokes are useful. An alternative deconstruction of inclusion was put forward by Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey (2011), who brought together the work of Hargreaves (1997) and McGregor and Vogelsberg (1998) to outline nine key reasons inclusion may or may not work.

Table 1. Reasons successful school inclusion should or may not work (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2011, p.4-6)

Reason	Explanation
Rationale	The conception of an inclusive philosophy within a school. All staff members are involved in its creation from inception.
Scope	The incremental steps that build towards inclusion. A manageable scope enables reflection and early, timely evaluation. A scope that is too ambitious can lead to teachers being suddenly overwhelmed and the creation of unnecessary difficulties.
Pace	The speed of the implementation – how quickly changes are made within a school.
Resources	Resources need to be both adequately supplied and strategically utilised to facilitate inclusive practices.
Commitment	The generation of 'ownership' in inclusion as teachers collaborate meaningfully and regularly. Inclusion is not something with an end date, or the latest program to be delivered, then later to be discarded.
Key staff	Those people within a school who motivate others. They may be special educators, leaders within the school, or teachers with a particular interest in this area. As such, they help keep others on track and working together.
Parents	The inclusion of parents within the school's inclusive planning and practices. They are seen as meaningful contributors who hold valuable knowledge about the school and students.
Leadership	The ability of leaders to ensure teams and individuals are heading in the agreed upon direction. They do not attempt to control the process, but ensure there is accountability and follow-through on stated objectives.
Relationship to other incentives	The manner in which inclusion connects meaningfully with other school initiatives and directions. Inclusive education is not a silo; it connects and resonates with all that a school does.

Both Ainscow (2004) and Westwood (2007) identified multiple factors which influenced inclusion. Ainscow proposed 12 factors, including: definition, leadership, attitudes, policies, planning and

processes, structures, roles and responsibilities, funding, support and challenge to schools, responding to diversity, specialist provision, partnerships, use of evidence, and staff development and training. Of those, 'definition' and 'use of evidence to measure student performance', were considered the most powerful. Westwood (2007) identified strong leadership, positive attitudes and collaboration as being critical. Subsequent research supported the attitudes of teachers (Gal, Schreur & Engel-Yeger, 2010) and principals (Graham & Spandagou, 2011) as being vital for inclusion to be realised. Principals who believed in the benefits of inclusion communicated this to their staff members and expected them to support it through their own behaviours and practices (Sage & Burello, 1994).

Florian and Spratt (2013) presented an analytical framework which enabled university coursework to be evaluated, drawing links between teachers' initial inclusive principles, and their later pedagogy and practice. Florian (2014) developed this further within her 'Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action Framework' (IPAA), used to enable students at Masters level to better understand how inclusion works in their schools, and to articulate connections between pedagogies and curriculum knowledge (Florian, 2014). It extended beyond actions which were easily observable, examining the way practices were often the outcomes of teacher assumptions of diverse learners, teachers' roles and schooling.

In the vein of Soja's Thirdspace (1996), inclusive education is considered in this current research as an 'othering' to the traditionally framed binary of mainstream and special education (Figure 1). The relationship between mainstream and special settings has been considered as both a co-dependency (Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011) and a collusion (Graham & Slee, 2006). The utilisation of special education to remove problematic students from the mainstream helps to "keep the peace" (Connor & Ferri, 2007, p.68). Full inclusion serves to eliminate this dichotomous relationship (Graham & Slee, 2008), replacing it with a shared place where all students are meaningfully engaged and taught together.

Full inclusion may serve to eliminate special settings, but this researcher considers that it does not necessitate the elimination of special education provisions, but rather the re-shaping and transformation of them. Instead of being used to mark difference, special education would work to ensure that difference was not detrimental. A continuum of educational options, as supported by Bakken (2010) and Forbes (2007), would become unnecessary on a macro-level, as all student needs would be met within one place – the inclusive school.

Slee's research (2011) was highly influential in guiding the critical questioning within this current research. The mechanisms of special education, sometimes under the banner of 'inclusive

education', have been used to separate students, and to group them by deficit. This process was partially responsible for the very creation of an inclusion gap, as it positioned idealised students at the centre and 'surplus' (Slee, 2013) others at the margins.

This current research considered whether the inclusion gap was closing or widening based on whether beliefs, attitudes or practices positioned students together in a more shared and valued act of learning as desired by the *Education Work*'s agenda, or placed them apart. Schools have traditionally involved many key stakeholders who are highly influential in commencing, enacting or resisting inclusive practices. This current research sought to capture the views and voices of such stakeholders.
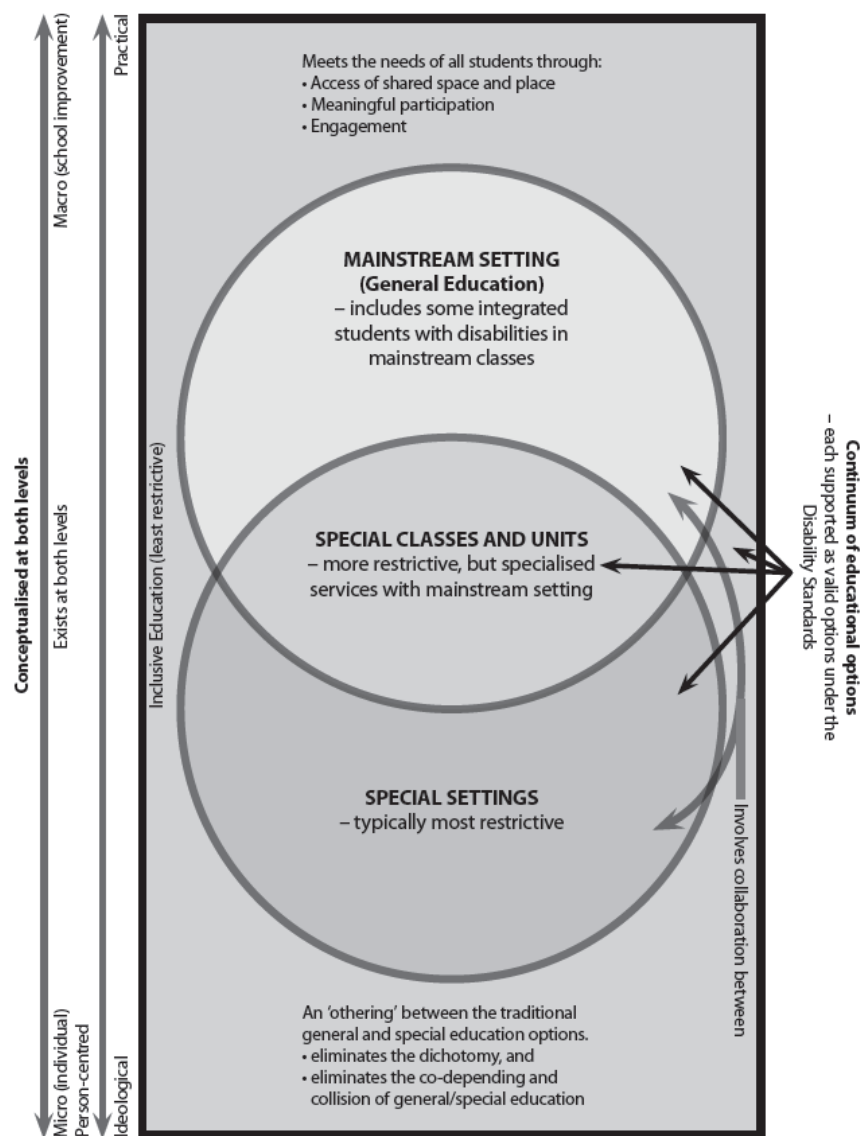
Figure 1. Inclusion as an 'othering' to mainstream and special settings

1.3 Research questions

The research questions for this thesis concerned the nature of the phenomena observed – the co-location and building of new special schools alongside mainstream sites, and any related inclusive teaching and learning experiences. A stated intent of the reforms was for co-located schools to develop meaningful relationships with their new neighbours. This current research examined the nature of these fledgling relationships, and illuminated the degree and manner in which schools were becoming more or less inclusive.

Research questions

How have the Education Works *reforms changed the manner in which schools respond to the inclusive education agenda?*

How have attitudes towards inclusive education changed because of the reforms?

What opportunities for inclusive education have been sought because of the reforms?

What barriers continue to inhibit the realisation of Inclusive Education?

Is the reform, overall, a successful approach to increasing inclusive education?

Informants for these questions were predominantly educational leaders within the special schools, though the voices of students, parents, teachers, and other educational leaders were also somewhat captured. The reasons for and limitations of this approach are explained later in this thesis.

1.4 Potential contribution of the thesis

> "Relocating these special schools to mainstream schools will allow children to be part of the broader school community, while still ensuring they have the special supports they need." South Australia Education Minister, Jay Weatherill (Hood, 2010, para. 6).

This thesis contributes to existing bodies of literature on inclusion and innovative learning environments (Thomson, 2007; Theoharis & Causton, 2014; Imms & Mahat, 2017). Although previous research focused on different schooling models, including the schools-within-schools model, little attention had been given to what these models meant in terms of inclusion. The limited scope of this current research enabled the researcher to collect documents from schools and online (Chapter 4), then to tour co-located special school sites to take photos of emerging and established learning spaces (Chapter 5). This occurred within a matter of months. After an initial analysis of data, the researcher met with school leaders for hour-long interviews (Chapter 6). Time

constraints did not permit follow up interviews or the re-visiting of sites. The research analysis was therefore confined to the three types of data which the researcher was able to harvest during the times available.

This thesis seeks to produce new knowledge regarding the movement towards inclusive schooling. *Education Works* was not only a significant shift in policy, it influenced the allocation of funding and resources throughout South Australian public schools. This current research critically evaluates this policy shift, which may affect future policy decisions. Outcomes from this thesis align with national (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training & Youth Affairs, 2008) and state educational goals (Government of South Australia, 2012) and therefore contribute new knowledge towards these priorities. Recommendations will hopefully inform the approaches of schools considering participating in similar co-locations, and educational systems and sectors contemplating similar reforms.

1.5 How the thesis is organised

The thesis was organised in seven chapters. This chapter, Chapter 1, provided essential background information, research scoping, and detail regarding how inclusion will be both defined and framed within this thesis. Chapter 2 constitutes a literature review of both inclusive education and the South Australian reforms, providing some additional contextual information. Chapter 3 describes the research design, methodology and methods used in the research. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 represent three separate qualitative studies, an analysis of documents of relevance to the research, a spatial analysis, and an analysis of interviews with key stakeholders. Each study will identify key messages, which will be triangulated in the concluding chapter, Chapter 7, producing an overarching hypothesis regarding the overall inclusive nature of the reforms.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

"The language of inclusion is often deployed to shield the practice of exclusion" (Slee, 2013, p.14)

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review was to investigate previous research on educational reforms relating to place and space, as briefly outlined in the thesis's introduction, and the degree to which such reforms sought to make schooling more inclusive. The chapter addresses the historical placement of students with disabilities in schooling, and how special schools might be positioned within an advocacy for full inclusion. *Education Works*, the policy shift at the centre of this thesis, has been clearly framed and positioned within the existing body of literature. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the emergence of school 'space' as an area of analytical interest for researchers.

2.1 A history of placement

The aim of this thesis was to identify whether and how South Australia's *Education Works* closed the gap between existing practices and the aspiration of full inclusion. Historically, inclusive education has been a recent development. During the 20th century significant changes occurred relating to where students with disabilities were placed and how they were taught. Segregation of students with disabilities was previously universal, with many students residing in asylums, hospitals or institutions where the focus was their care and protection more so than their education. Regular schooling was rarely considered suitable and legislation did not protect the rights of Australian students or families to access mainstream schools until the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in 1992.

Social justice perspectives changed the dominant mindset of exclusion from the 1960s. The segregation of students was challenged and the concept of normalisation "led many parents to seek enrolment for their child in regular classes" (Foreman, 2014, p.28). The Salamanca Statement's release in 1994 firmly set the international agenda for inclusive education, identifying that the regular school with an inclusive orientation was the "most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all" (UNESCO, 1994, p.ix). The regular classroom was now considered the optimal educational environment for all students (Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2010).

Although it was not within the framing of this current research to engage deeply in the ongoing and ubiquitous debate regarding the evidence base of inclusive education as a reform (Lindsay, 2007; Farrell, 2010; Cologon, 2013; ARACY, 2013), this researcher recognises that decisions to seek full

inclusion or to remain committed to segregation are frequently challenged and contested. Some researchers have identified special schools as barriers to inclusion (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995) whilst others have advocated for them as preferred options for students with disabilities (Bakken, 2010). Arguments for and against inclusion persist with individual students' needs often at the centre of these debates rather than a focus on the bigger picture of creating more inclusive communities, a societal level change. Whether or not to separate students according to their ability/disability remains an ongoing debate but one central to this current research.

2.2 'Inclusion' or inclusion

The language of inclusion has been used to promote successful inclusion in schools, regardless of whether it was evident or not (Graham & Slee, 2006). Inclusive nomenclature is used to describe schools as being accepting of diverse students. The Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities (MACSWD, 2010, p.11) declared South Australian education as "an inclusive culture"; whilst in the same paragraph, with no trace of irony, stating the majority of students with autism (60 per cent) were educated outside of regular schools. Riddell identified that, "Discourses are malleable and words such as inclusion can be used by different interest groups to refer to dramatically opposed concepts" (2007, p.34). Inclusive education has increasingly become a code for special education, despite the two being fundamentally different (Slee, 2013). Special education is the teaching of students with special needs, including those considered gifted and talented. The focus is not societal change. Special education approaches are often supported by research (Odom et al., 2005), though little evidence indicates benefits occur specifically in segregated settings (Lindsay, 2007). Educators who interpret inclusive education as special education may consider an inclusion gap as non-existent, as their interpretation of inclusion is already enacted daily through special education practices, such as the creation of individual education plans and modifications to the curriculum.

The word 'inclusion' has become immensely charged in response to not only competing interpretations, but the implication of being included into a fabricated and normalised 'centre' – the regular classroom (Graham & Slee, 2006). The same discourses that have sought to construct what is 'normal' have also constructed margins (Oliver, 1990) consisting of irregular options, such as special schools. 'Inclusion' constructs both the interior and the exterior. In response, and as a caution to the implied centeredness of mainstream classrooms, researchers have suggested striking out the word ~~inclusion~~ (Graham & Slee, 2006) or encasing it in cautionary quotation marks: 'inclusion'. Those suggestions, which utilised Derrida's notion of writing under erasure (1967), maintained original wording whilst indicating, as a precaution, that this existed as both reductive and contested language.

This thesis employs, for the purpose of clarity, the unaltered wording of inclusion, but philosophically aligns itself with the importance of questioning language that contributes towards, and perhaps co-creates 'otherness', privileging a fictionalised and ideal norm at the expense of other 'less-natural' ways of being (Graham & Slee, 2007).

This researcher takes the position that full inclusion is an aspiration worth keeping, regardless of whether its evidence base is equivocal (Lindsay, 2007, p.7) or not (Cologon, 2013). It is built on the premise that changing attitudes and experiences during schooling contributes to a reduction in discrimination beyond this period, laying a foundation for positive social change.

Although Forbes (2007) has considered full inclusion to be utopian, never to be realised, this framing can itself be strategic, painting others as impractical or "out of touch with reality" (Croll & Moses, 2010, p.10). In casting inclusion advocates as fanatics, special schooling escapes the "mechanism for change as well as critique" resulting from inclusion (Croll & Moses, 2010, p.11).

Slee (2011) considered the notion of 'full inclusion' to be a "spurious proposition" (2011, p.117), implying that inclusion may be accomplished either partially or in full. On a practical level he proposed the tackling of barriers as a way to seek inclusion, and critically challenged the status quo by asking (2011, p.42):

- *What is exclusion?*

- *Who is in and who is out?*

- *How does this happen?*

- *How do we learn to recognise, expose and dismantle it?*

Connell (1994) identified that schools have both included and excluded to reproduce privilege and disadvantage. In doing so, they re-created what is considered normal and abnormal, centred and marginal. Inclusion has been identified as occurring both at macro (community) and micro (individual) levels (Graham & Spandagou, 2011). On a broader canvas inclusion has referred to enrolment in a shared place, but it has also existed in what Slee termed 'second order issues', nuanced ways in which policies are written or interpreted, and resources are appropriately committed (Slee, 2011).

The claim that *Education Works* and its subsequent co-locations provided greater access to general education (Schriever, 2014) and increased interaction (Government of South Australia, 2006b) was examined by this current research. Does co-location, practically and philosophically, represent a genuine step towards inclusion, or is it just an illusion?

2.3 The tenuous position of special schools in the age of inclusion

Inclusive education has often been advocated for in Australia, yet segregation has dominated through a continuum of placement options for students who do not fit within the normative centre (Graham & Slee, 2006) of schooling. This continuum has included regular schools, special classes, special units, special schools, hospital schools and juvenile justice facilities, each typically more restrictive than the next. This range of schooling options has been considered by some to be the best way to accommodate different student needs (MACSWD, 2010). The degree of restriction has continued to be commonly captured by the terminology 'Least Restrictive Environment' (LRE). A student's LRE is the setting best suited for them at a particular point in time, with the fewest restrictions (Foreman, 2014). From most to least restrictive, LREs include:

1. Residential Schools
2. Special Schools (separated from other schools)
3. Special Schools (co-located with a mainstream school)
4. Special Units (more than one class, within a mainstream school)
5. Special Classes (within a mainstream school)
6. Special Classes/Mainstream Classes (integrated placement)
7. Regular classrooms

Based on Foreman (2014, p.13)

LRE has been identified as a loophole which not only resists inclusion, but effectively facilitates segregation (Connor & Ferri, 2007). Graham and Slee (2006, p.278) contend that repositioning students "on the educational chessboard" does not equate to inclusion. Others, such as Kauffman and Badar (2016) contend that LRE is secondary to an appropriate education, which for some students exists best in specialised settings.

Fourteen per cent of children with disabilities are taught in special schools, compared to 86 per cent who are taught within the normative centre of schooling – the mainstream classroom (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The more restrictive the educational option, the more students are removed from this centre; edged out towards the margins. Inclusive education has, however, resulted in a gradual transformation at these margins. The most restrictive environments, for example, are now no longer considered to be valid options in Australia, with residential

schools, such as Estcourt House in South Australia (Manning, n.d.) and Kingsdene in New South Wales, now closed (Hall, 2009).

Court cases, such as Finney vs Hills Grammar (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.), have illustrated that mainstream settings have struggled in changing their environments to become more inclusive to the students who were historically educated elsewhere. (Scarlett Finney, a young girl with spina bifida, was found to have been unlawfully discriminated against by Hills Grammar School, which had refused to enrol her due to a belief that they could not cater for her disability.)

Full inclusion means the removal of a spectrum of educational placements, following in the footsteps of countries such as Canada, Norway, Italy and Portugal. Inclusion has therefore been positioned as a threat to the survival of special schools and to the professional identities of special educators and leaders. Forbes, the President of the Australian Special Education Principals' Association (ASEPA), warned that the expertise residing within special schools was now under threat due to the "diminution of specialised knowledge" produced by the race towards full inclusion (2007, p.67). Connor and Ferri (2007, p.74) have been more critical of special educators, such as Forbes, self-protecting their identities, questioning: "are the majority of non-disabled 'special' educators more invested in maintaining their own sphere of influence than making substantial changes for people with disabilities?" One conclusion drawn is that special educators are unlikely to view inclusion in a benign manner. If special education has grown in response to barriers existing within general education (Connor & Ferri, 2007), then the removal of these barriers, via inclusive education, would remove the need for special education environments.

2.4 School reform and *Education Works*

Brady (2003) has stated that no identified educational reform measures have a success rate of over 50 per cent, meaning they are most likely to fail. The South Australian reforms specified in *Education Works* (Government of South Australia, 2006c) and the subsequent co-location of additional special schools alongside mainstream school sites (Hood, 2010) signalled a notable policy shift. *Education Works* was described by then Premier Rann as "the most significant reform agenda for our school infrastructure in more than 30 years" (Government of South Australia, 2006a). In order to initiate the *Education Works* reforms, consultation with communities occurred, with an agreement to close some existing schools to create new and larger educational sites. Key features of the newly built schools included developing private public partnerships (PPP) with commercial bodies responsible for building and maintaining the new school (schools) and the communities from the pre-existing schools coming together in a 'cluster' model.

Although the *Education Works* literature described a group of co-located schools as a 'cluster' it has similarities with both a traditional schools-within-schools model (Raywid, 1996) and a cluster school model, as proposed by ASEPA (Forbes, 2007). Such a model (Figure 2) shows how schools can co-locate in order to better share expertise, resources, and increase movement between schools.
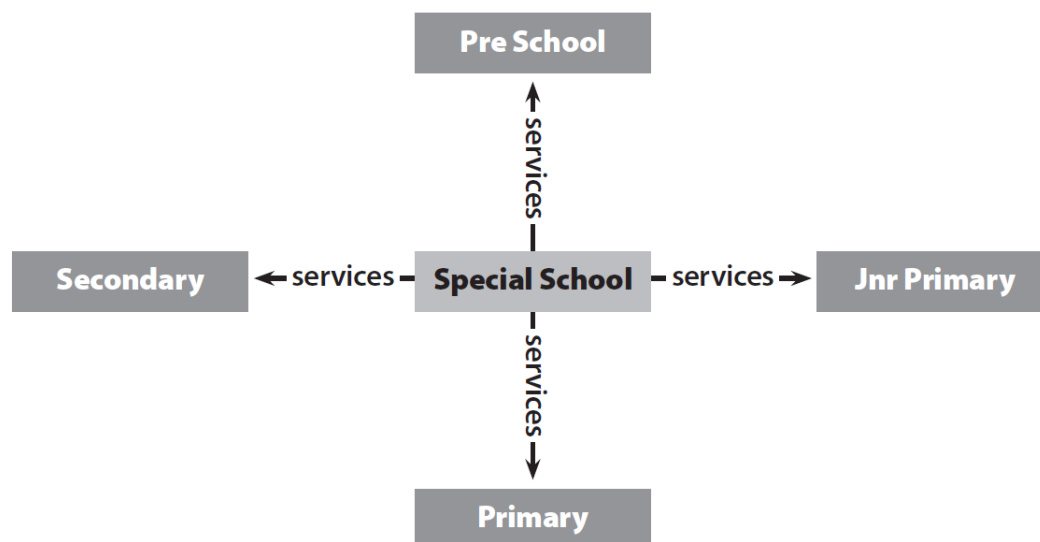
Figure 2. Cluster model

The placement of the specialist school within Forbes' proposed model centres the field of special education more than it does inclusive education. In this scenario, the special school becomes pivotal not only to its own operation, but the smooth operation of all other sites. It maintains a separate sense of self, but attempts to reposition itself from the margins. Critically, it appears unquestioning of its need to remain a segregated place.

Schools-within-schools models have been attempted in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, which now favour alternative reforms such as 'charter schools' in the U.S. and 'free schools' in the U.K. Western Australia's Education Support Centre model appears to be a schools-within-schools variation (Forbes, 2007). A schools-within-schools model can contribute to undesired outcomes such as a competition for finite resources, resulting in discord amongst schools. Schools may also feel they have lost some of their previous independence and feel disempowered as a result (Raywid, 1996).

Increased inclusion is not an explicitly stated feature of *Education Works*, though there is clearly an intention for isolated special schools to be brought closer to the mainstream 'norm'. In outlining the benefits of new co-locations, former South Australia Education Minister, Jennifer Rankine announced, "Special Schools located within mainstream schools give students greater access to

general education experiences" (Schriever, 2014, p.14). Furthermore, "Importantly, co-location of special schools allows students with disabilities to develop and build strong links with their peers".

This need for increased links between each school was elaborated frequently within the media releases from the state government:

"Our plan will deliver integrated schools" (Government of South Australia, 2006a, p.2).

"Connect preschool, junior primary and primary schools to enable children to more easily progress through their education" (Government of South Australia, 2006c, p.3).

"Greater school interaction through clusters" (Government of South Australia, 2006b, p.1).

This discourse outlines the need for schools to 'connect', although special schools are seldom mentioned, possibly because only one of the initial *Education Works* schools was a specialised setting. Following this reform, other special schools across the state were additionally physically co-located alongside neighbouring mainstream settings. These subsequent co-locations went under the banner of the *Special School Renewal Program*. Both *Education Works* and the *Special School Renewal Program* involved co-locating special settings with mainstream sites for the purpose of better connecting schools. As a result they will henceforth be conflated within this current thesis, utilising *Education Works* as an umbrella term.

The co-location of special schools with mainstream sites was not a new reform. In the U. K., for example, special schools have been co-located since the 1980s (Gordon, 2006). The terminology of co-location, however, has referred to three separate, specific models in the U.K. These included a mixed model, with special classes next to mainstream classes, a 'two schools under one roof' model, with different schools residing in different spaces within the one building, and a third model, a combination of the previous two (Gordon, 2006). None of those definitions of co-location would equate to the physical relocations within *Education Works*, where schools are placed alongside each other, without shared spaces for teaching and learning. Variants to co-location in the U.K. have included hospital schools connected to special schools and even an unusual cluster of schools in Belfast, consisting of a mainstream site surrounded by four different special schools (Tutt, 2007, p.57). Tutt (2007) suggested that co-location in the U.K. existed in many forms; that there was "no single blueprint" (p.44). Gordon (2006) highlighted benefits of co-location, such as increased understanding of disability, shared teaching expertise, and a measurement of inclusion that best meets the individual needs of students. Such descriptions of inclusion more closely align with what is commonly viewed as 'integration'. Gordon considered it "time to recognise that co-

location is the way forward" (2006, p.22) for students with severe learning difficulties, positioning co-location as better than segregation, and more achievable than full inclusion. Both Gordon and one of his interviewees concurred that co-location created "the best of both worlds" (2006, p.14), straddling the spatial divide between inclusion and specialised settings.

In New York the co-location of mainstream sites, in response to funding cuts, resulted in violations towards the provision of special education services (The Campaign for Educational Quality, 2014). Inappropriate practices included developing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) around spatial restrictions instead of required student need. Special educators were also seconded to administrative roles or as replacement teachers, instead of supplying mandated instruction to students with disabilities. Advocacy bodies have identified concerns with co-locations, including the expansion of one site at the expense of the other, and the transferring of students with multiple disabilities to locations which do not meet their access needs (Coalition for Educational Justice, 2010).

Australia's neighbour, New Zealand, has also previously explored the possibilities of co-locating special schools, though the catalyst was earthquakes rather than financial constraints (Government of New Zealand, 2014). Three special schools were asked to consider the co-location in order to "enhance inclusive practice" (p.1). One school supported being co-located, whilst the remaining two chose to retain their locations. Concerns expressed regarding co-location included safety and security issues and the possibility of existing peer groups being negatively affected. It was also felt that there was an irregularity of primary or secondary settings being aligned with special schools that catered for both age ranges. The school that accepted co-location, Allenvale, did so under the condition that they remained self-governing. The New Zealand Ministry of Education accepted this, yet suggested they would later encourage special schools to revisit the "benefits of some form of shared governance" (Government of New Zealand, 2014, p.7).

2.5 The emergence of space

Efforts to suggest that inclusion is not about location (Forbes, 2007) are considered in this thesis as attempts to re-frame inclusive education discourse. Ashman and Elkins claimed a characteristic of effective inclusion might be "the re-design of regular schools, both physically and in the curriculum, to provide for the complete education of all students who seek to attend" (2012, p.44). Studies that analyse the spatial design of special schools are in short supply, despite a spatial analytical approach considered important to "disrupt understandings in, and posit new possibilities for, 'mainstream' policy studies" (Gulson & Symes, 2007a, p.2). Gulson and Symes identified spatial theory as an important method for understanding policy changes and how they served to

change or reproduce social inequality. A critically conscious reading of space would therefore contribute to discussions on educational policies and reforms.

Desirable purpose-built facilities have been provided through *Education Works*, replacing old and neglected school buildings. The design of new facilities makes an important contribution to enabling or blocking inclusive practices in schools. Technologies, such as ceiling tracking systems, can, for example, facilitate quick, safe and appropriate movement in and out of wheelchairs, which would have benefits for students and staff. Fisher (2010) determined the lifecycle of individual technologies to be only three years, spatial planning to be seven years, and services up to 20 years. The physical structure of a school, however, can exist for over 100 years. This illuminates the importance of initial scoping and planning. It is not enough that schools plan for their current needs. They should consider how they would deliver future schooling to future students.

The conceptual architecture of learning spaces has been considered critical in negotiating meaning (Wenger, 1998), with spatial orientation serving to indicate the values of those within (Symes & Preston, 1992) such as whether they are positive about inclusive education. The provision of "21st century school buildings" (Government of South Australia, 2006c, p.6) within *Education Works* might therefore serve to either assist or resist inclusion, depending on the placement and design of facilities.

Whilst the movement towards inclusion has seen mainstream environments become more accessible over the last two decades, following Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles (CAST, n.d.), the use of seclusion in 'withdrawal rooms' has been raised as a concerning and restrictive practice (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2012). A lack of regulation regarding seclusion has meant not knowing the frequency or duration that students are withdrawn from their peers. The Australian Law Reform Commission (Australian Government, n.d.) has pointed towards a growing need for a national approach to restrictive practices, rather than relying on state and territory jurisdictions to devise and implement their own, different guidelines. This need has become more pressing as cases have emerged of special schools resorting to purpose-built 'cages' in an attempt to manage the behaviours of students with disabilities (Macdonald, 2016).

Within special schools independent access for students is often restricted. This has been problematic considering their desire to facilitate and develop the independence of their students. Pedagogical spaces have been demarcated in order to create multiple, distinct areas, such as withdrawal spaces, sensory rooms, or space for teacher preparation. Such spaces create opportunities for the seclusion of students, which is inconsistent with inclusive education. The

separation of a child from their class has been a common strategy in dealing with challenging behaviours, particularly for students with autism or behaviour disorders (Westling, Trader, Smith & Marshall, 2010). Although seclusion is meant to be a last option in response to highly challenging behaviour, some incidents (Richards & Bloom, 2012) and research (Ryan, Peterson, Tetreault & Vander Hagen, 2007) have indicated that withdrawal spaces are often utilised early, in response to non-violent misbehaviour. Teachers have used seclusion without developing behaviour intervention plans to highlight less aversive strategies (Westling, Trader, Smith & Marshall, 2010).

Some special education settings have made adjunct rooms multi-sensory environments in an effort to provide the appropriate level of stimulation to calm students, reduce anxiety and defuse challenging behaviour. After a review of the concerning use of seclusion rooms in Columbus City Schools, a recommendation was made to eliminate their use and instead replace them with sensory rooms (Ohio Legal Rights Service, 2012). Despite such a recommendation, the use of multi-sensory environments remains an unproven teaching practice, regardless of teachers' contrary impressions (Stephenson & Carter, 2011). The title of the room, or the equipment within, also does not limit the way in which a room is utilised by teachers. Just as a general classroom can be utilised for sensory stimulation, sensory rooms can still be used to seclude students.

Traditional classrooms, without adjunct rooms, can be divided with partitions used to restrict line of sight. This can be done in an attempt to focus students and remove distractions. Corridors or walkways may also be blocked by gates requiring key or keypad access. This is contrary to the goals of special schools in producing independent, responsible citizens, but serves to illustrate a real tension, the contrasting need for safety, surveillance and security.

2.6 Summary

The review of literature provided in this chapter has captured the South Australian reforms and where they fit within broader, international definitions of inclusion. Inclusion is not the principal aim of *Education Works*, but the consistency of co-location as a feature has demonstrated that 'place' was considered highly important. No South Australian special schools were re-located to a place where they were not physically situated alongside mainstream settings. *Education Works*, through its action and corresponding discourse, has therefore been identified in this current research as a broad reform that has sought to address the isolation of special schools.

The underlying principle of this current research is that inclusion is socially just and that together we benefit more than when we are apart (Cologon, 2013). Chapter 3 expands on this author's viewpoint, and then outlines the methodological approach and methods used. This is followed by three separate studies, examining schools' policies, programs, communications, newly designed

spaces and their leaders' perspectives within the *Education Works* reforms. Key messages from these studies are triangulated and discussed in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

Chapter 3 – Methodology and Methods

Introduction

This thesis reports on the recent South Australian phenomenon of special school co-location within *Education Works* and how this spatial shift affects perceptions and practices of inclusion. The thesis seeks to identify and understand new opportunities or barriers to inclusion within emerging school environments and to inform future practice and policy development through a sharing of both the researcher's analyses and participatory experiences. This chapter details the principles that shaped the research and the methodology and methods employed.

3.1 Methodology and methods

3.1.1 Underlying principles guiding this research

All researchers have an ideological position. Slee has stated that researchers benefit by clarifying their position from the outset, particularly when embarking on research "to produce useful and meaningful social change" (2011, p.158). My ontological values have been shaped by my experiences as a father, teacher, leader in special schools, and, more recently, a university lecturer in special education. I consider inclusive education as a valuable, progressive social reform, which advocates for both the educational and social benefits of diverse students learning together. I have not, however, always thought this way. For years, I advocated for an interpretation of inclusion commonly adopted by special school leaders, framing it conceptually as less to do with societal change and more to do with producing educational outcomes for all students regardless of where that education took place. My change in beliefs came about through a deeper engagement with inclusive education research, and my experiences as a father, witnessing first-hand the multitude of barriers that resist inclusion and challenge parents as advocates.

I agree with Slee (2013b) that inclusive education is becoming increasingly synonymous with special education, resulting in confusion and resistance towards inclusion. I believe the current duopoly of mainstream schooling/special schooling is maintained by the constructed belief that some students 'do not belong' with others. As dominant schooling options, general and special schooling rely upon each other through mutual practices of exclusion. Or, in the words of Slee, "Special education compromised democracy by excluding students from the right to be enrolled in their neighbourhood school, and educational administration provided the organisational rationale and infrastructure to do so" (Slee, 2011, p.75). This duopoly is a conservative social justice positioning which protects the status quo from the 'threat' of full inclusion.

My belief in spatial justice (Soja, 2010) has been shaped by my experiences as a special school principal. In this role I experienced the tension between maintaining safety whilst increasing student independence. Students with histories of aggressive behaviours are placed into special schools through the dehumanising filter of risk assessment processes. Although these are successful in enabling students to commence schooling, the resultant spatial restrictions (gates/walls/locks/fences) privilege the preparation for worst-case scenarios over a valuing of inclusion.

Finally, I believe that although full inclusion may appear to be "utopian" (Forbes, 2007, p.2) or an "idealised landscape" (Armstrong, 2007, p.100), it is worth striving towards in practice as it contains benefits for both schooling and society (Cologon, 2013).

I am mindful that my ontological position will influence my interpretations so have purposefully selected qualitative methodology to frame the research. Qualitative methods will provide opportunity for the use of multiple data sources and in-depth analysis, which will illuminate my interpretative stance to be either challenged or supported by others. As noted previously, my lived experience has shifted my previous ontological perspectives and brought a critical lens to others' interpretations of inclusion, in particular the leaders of schools who agreed to participate in this current research.

Conceptual divisions of inclusion among school leaders has led to a "proliferation of meanings" (Graham and Spandagou, 2011, p.233) which has impacted how inclusive education is both considered and enacted. Interpretations of inclusion are affected by the characteristics of leaders' schools (Graham & Spandagou, 2011). As each of the interview participants in this current research was a special school leader, their understandings of inclusion were informed predominantly from a special education perspective, similar to that espoused by the Australian Special Education Principals' Association (ASEPA), which proposes that inclusion is about increasing the skills and understanding of all students, regardless of where such learning occurs (Forbes, 2007). This contrasts with social justice interpretations, which have focused on critiquing the underlying principles and motivations behind decisions to spatially separate students. Inclusive education was created as a civil rights issue in response to the limitations of segregated settings (Florian, 2014). Given that my own interpretation of inclusion is deeply rooted in shared place and space, conflicting perceptions and conceptual understandings between researcher and participants became evident early within the research process. However, it was important to recognise participants' perceptions and beliefs were outcomes of their lived experiences and that their 'realities' shaped their responses. Bauman considered that multiple realities were, after all, integral to forming an understanding and a critique of culture (Marotta, 2002). As a research principle in

this current research it was considered important to value participants' realities by including their voices as a key data source in the research. This did not preclude me, however, from contesting their socially constructed perceptions, challenging how meaning is linked to power and habitual roles (Galbin, 2014).

An important guiding principle of the research design was found in Boghossian's (2001, p.6) defining of social construction. He stated:

> The core idea seems clear enough. To say of something that it is socially constructed is to emphasize its dependence on contingent aspects of our social selves. It is to say: This thing could not have existed had we not built it; and we need not have built it at all, at least not in its present form. Had we been a different kind of society, had we had different needs, values, or interests, we might well have built a different kind of thing, or built this one differently. The inevitable contrast is with a naturally existing object, something that exists independently of us and which we did not have a hand in shaping.

Boghossian's proposition reflects well my ontological stance and provides an epistemological framing for the research design. The design elaborated on in the following sections is framed by social construction principles and a qualitative interpretive case study employing three key data collection processes including document analysis, spatial analysis and interviews.

3.1.2 The research design

The choice of methodology and methods in this current research was guided by both the researcher's ontological and epistemological positions as introduced in the previous section. Social constructivist principles are drawn upon, as the researcher viewed himself to be in partnership with the research participants. Such an approach posits that multiple social realities may be considered as correct and that an objective 'truth' does not exist, as all participants bring a level of subjectivity to the research process (Ratner, 2002). Findings are co-created through an exchange of voices, beliefs and understandings within different social environments. However, the researcher's analyses of findings shape the propositions reported as the thesis.

The research design is framed as an interpretative case study in which four schools involved in the *Education Works* reforms agreed to participate as individual cases. Five schools were invited to participate in the research but only four accepted the invitation. The use of a case study with multiple sites provided an opportunity for cross-site analyses (Yin, 2009) as noted in Figure 3. The four schools were given pseudonyms for confidentiality purposes (see Figure 3 below).

Three, separate but interrelated data collection methods were employed with each school including, document analysis, spatial study and interviews with the principals. The methods complemented each other and provided for diverse data forms and participatory voices. Documents, for example, informed the early stages and processes at the commencement of the co-locations. Interviews, however, better captured the recent voices and perspectives of school leaders. The use of complementary research methods was beneficial as it resulted in a more robust research design and reduced any inadequacies found in individual data collection methods. As identified in Figure 3 data was collected separately from each site and then compared and contrasted to generate the research findings and propositions. The following sections provide a more detailed rationale for the selection of methodology and methods.

OVERVIEW

Sturt	**Eyre**	**Cook**	**Flinders**
Documents	Documents	Documents	Documents
Spatial	Spatial	Spatial	Spatial
Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview
Triangulated Messages	Triangulated Messages	Triangulated Messages	Triangulated Messages

Key Messages
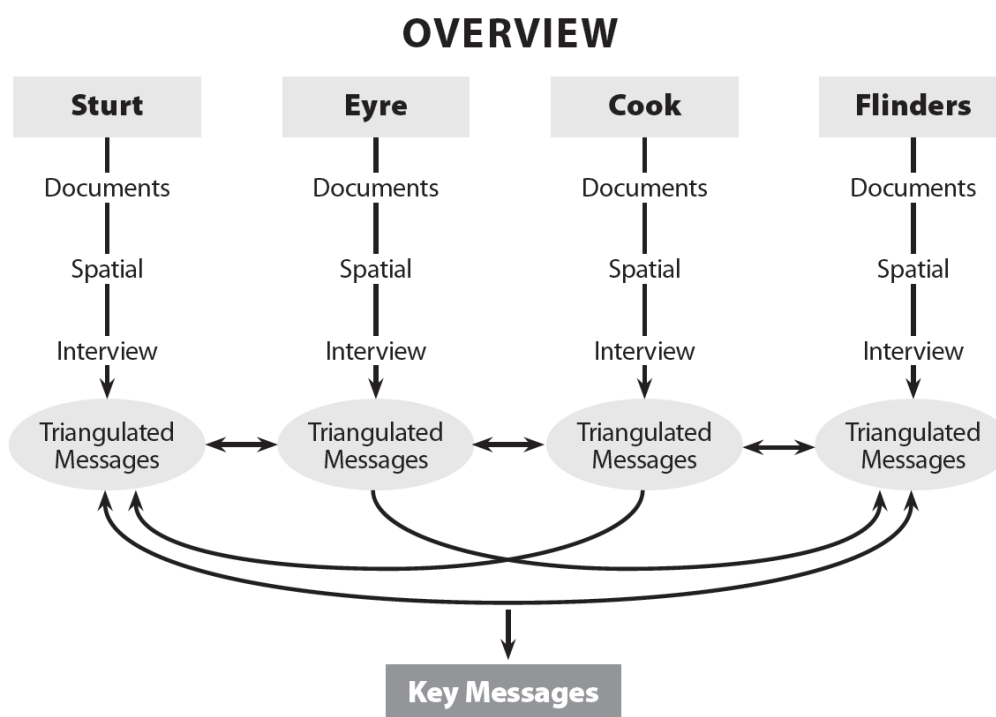
Figure 3. Thesis Overview

3.1.3 Positioning of principals

The voices of school principals have been included in this current research as "leadership practice is a crucial element in gearing education systems towards inclusive values and bringing about sustainable change" (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010, p.401). As an advocate for inclusive research, however, this researcher identifies the limitations in excluding the critical voices of students, parents and teachers. Some of these voices are captured within the fringes of the document analysis. However, due to limitation on the size and scope of this current research a decision was made to restrict the interviews to principals. The foregrounding of special school principals' voices within this current research should not be interpreted as an indicator of prioritising their voices

over other voices, but rather an attempt to maintain control over research scope and time demands. It is hoped, as an outcome of this current research, that additional research will provide other stakeholders with a more adequate opportunity to contribute to deeper understanding of their experiences, perspectives and beliefs.

The methods employed

3.2 Document analysis

Document analysis is used to develop new theory about contested concepts, such as inclusion (Göransson, Nilholm, & Karlsson, 2011; Isaksson & Lindqvist, 2015). This method was selected for this current research as texts and documents are rich sources of data. Texts are "generated contemporaneously with the events they refer to. Hence, they are less likely to be subject to memory decay or memory distortion compared with data obtained from an interview" (Ololube & Kpolovie, 2012, p.51). They capture events, such as co-location reforms, at different stages and from different perspectives. *Education Works* has itself been described in chameleon-like fashion as being a 'plan', 'program', 'project', 'initiative', 'reform' and an 'investment' within multiple sources. It has not, however, been labelled a 'policy', from which broader belief systems might be identified (Slee, 2011).

Primary source documents in this study were received via traditional mail and email. They included: general information, surveys, minutes from meetings, newsletters, partnership outlines, strategic plans, project briefs, curriculum folders, site maps, speeches, annual school reports, presentation slides, information pamphlets, site improvement plans, and school context statements. Students, parents and teachers co-created many of the documents with school principals, helping to somewhat balance the privileging of leaders' voices in the interview section of this thesis. Voices within texts can be instrumental in revealing attitudes towards co-locations and whether fledgling relationships are viewed in an inclusive manner.

Although school leaders were provided with suggestions of document types, they ultimately chose which documents to share. The guiding instruction was to provide those documents which indicated any changing or future practices resulting from the co-location. Such documents could point to what Ainscow described as 'levers of change' (Ainscow, 2005). Documents can indicate both high and low leverage efforts. Fullan (1991) identified that some initiatives contribute to change, but ultimately may not make important shifts in either thinking or practice.

3.2.1 Limitations

One limitation of document analysis is that the information documented may not accurately capture what took place. Minutes, for example, can be incorrectly recorded or summarised, altering meaning. Atkinson and Coffey warn that records should not be treated, "however 'official', as firm evidence of what they report" (cited in Bowen, 2009, p.30). Another limitation within this current study is a possible lack of representation – what Yin describes as "biased selectivity" (cited in Bowen, 2009, p.32). School leaders may have omitted some texts due to not perceiving them as relevant, identifying possible privacy issues, or considering the contents to be too controversial to be included in the study.

3.2.2 Coding procedures
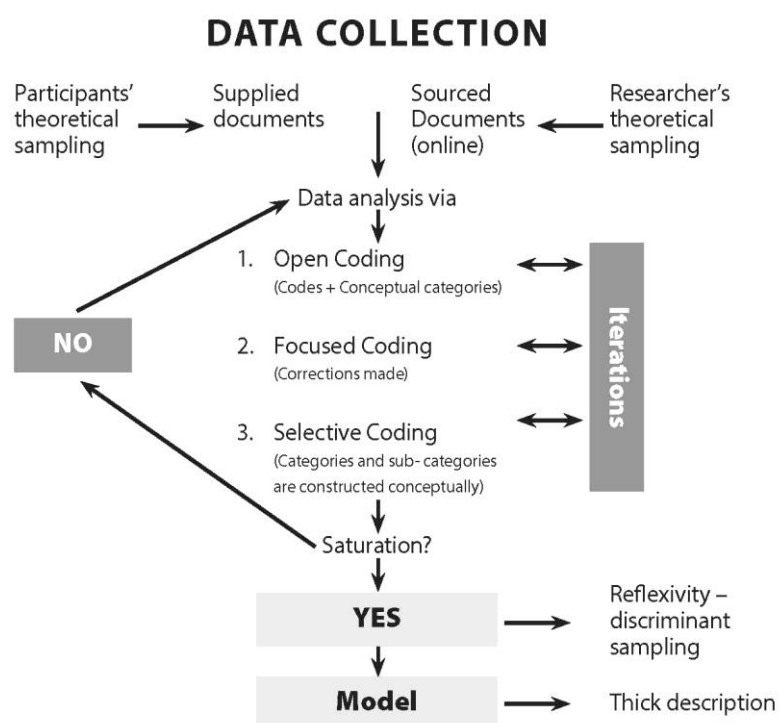
Figure 4. Document collection and coding

A blended design was utilised for document coding, featuring elements of both systematic and constructivist approaches (Figure 4). Open coding, as an initial cycle coding method, was used to separate data into segments to find both similarities and differences (Saldaña, 2013). Charmaz identified its goal as remaining, "open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data" (cited in Saldaña, 2013, p.100). Strauss and Corbin considered open coding to be "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data" (cited in Halaweh, 2012). As the documents in this study were varied, open coding was a highly suitable approach (Saldaña, 2013). It provided a strong starting point as it enabled directions to emerge and codes to be established, yet was flexible and open to change throughout the process.

Each document was read and theoretical sampling employed in order to identify common themes. Sections relating to inclusion or *Education Works* were highlighted by hand for later coding (see Figure 5).

There needs to be a limit of how many students can be on the trampoline at once for safety reasons. BQ Only one ☐ student and one of our students are to be on the trampoline at any given time.

- Sometimes the ☐ students are playing on the bikes and they need to be redirected to include our students in their play. BR
- With the recent warmer weather flies have become a problem outside. ☐ will be making more umbrellas with nets for our students to use.
- Remember to get parental consent to use sunscreen and insect repellent on the students.

Show Day
The ☐ Education Centre will now be starting their program at 10.00 a.m. with the second session at 11.15 a.m. The animals will be set up in the hall.
10 students from ☐ OSHC will coming over to participate. $BS.$
Show stations to be set up on Friday afternoon if possible depending on the weather.

Figure 5. Open coding example

Coded sections within the documents varied in length, from short phrases to entire paragraphs. Each section was given an alphabetised code to assist with identification and tracking. Sections were then re-read, interpreted as to their meaning, and allocated an initial category. In the example provided (Figure 5) the two sentences identified by the code BQ were coded as 'spatial/staffing', and BR and BS were both coded 'connections with mainstream'. The data informed the required thematic codes during the process. Each case study began afresh, not informed by the previous. No pre-conceived codes were employed at any stage.

Cycles of coding resulted in some codes becoming more strongly defined and, at times, separated into more specific coding descriptions. In the example provided above, BR became 'connections with mainstream – *barriers*' whilst BS became 'connections to mainstream – *pragmatics*'. Changes due to iterations during open coding were made by hand on the documents, showing revised interpretations, the addition of more refined codes and, occasionally, decisions made on the most appropriate code when sections straddled multiple meanings. At the end of initial coding procedures each code was quantified in terms of how frequently it appeared within the texts. This helped to identified main themes.

The second cycle coding method was 'focused coding' (Charmaz, 2006) which enabled salient categories to be identified (Saldaña, 2013). This method is particularly well suited to grounded theory approaches, assisting to identify and build meaningful discussion around major themes. Categories and sub-categories were identified and connected through graphical means, such as tree diagrams. This assisted with the building of both narratives and propositions regarding the

phenomenon observed. Analytic memos were written to assist in outlining thinking processes during analyses.

Returning again to the sample codes, 'pragmatics' (BS) eventually became the most populated sub-category, as part of a 'connections' category. This positivist approach of numerically determining how often categories were represented was tempered by a complementary consideration of the more constructivist approach advocated by Charmaz (Creswell, 2012). Although falling short of privileging 'meanings' above 'topics', the researcher nevertheless positioned himself to the fore, making interpretive decisions which were informed both by the literature on inclusion and the researcher's ontological stance.

Major themes were identified in the third and final, 'selective stage' of coding. Similarities were identified as well as any differences or contradictions. Constructed categories were examined for elements of hierarchy and integration. At this stage analyses became more conceptual than descriptive. The example data (BS), for example, became conceptualised as part of a broader narrative around the history and aspirations behind the relocation.

Moving beyond constant comparison, discriminant sampling occurred. Questions were asked of the data, omissions considered, and a robust checking took place to explore the possibility of alternative interpretations. At the point of data saturation examples were sought to best inform the resultant story (Siggelkow, 2007). These sections were provided as thick description, supporting the trustworthiness of the research through a return to the initial voices of the participants, speaking in tandem with the voice of the researcher.

3.3 Spatial analysis

"The causes of exclusion run deep in the architecture of schooling. A priority for researchers in the field of inclusive education is the identification, interrogation and interruption of these patterns of schooling." (Slee, 2010, p.102)

The spatial study within this current research was designed to identify and interrogate spatial patterns within four special schools. It would be disingenuous to claim Slee's 'architecture of schooling' was directed towards the spatial turn alone, though paying attention to space is long overdue within educational research (Gulson & Symes, 2007a).

Foucault (1986), Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996) each advanced the profile of spatial theorising within transdisciplinary studies. This spatial turn in the late 20th century positioned space as no longer a benign background (Gulson & Symes, 2007b). Along with 'place' (a shared name, such as

'special school') and 'spatiality' (socially produced space), 'space' was identified as a fertile source to be critically analysed. A school's place refers to its geographical location and position within its community. Its spaces, however, are numerous, and often ill defined. 'The naughty corner' within a classroom is one example, redolent with its overt threat of punishment and humiliation. 'Outside the principal's office' is another: a location of fear, waiting and deference to the hierarchical nature of schooling. What we create is ingrained with who we are; our social identities (Boghossian, 2009). This applies to the design, creation and impact of spaces. Space is therefore socially created and socially experienced. Spatial theories are connected to and interwoven with social theories (Gulson & Symes, 2007a). Due to these multiple connections, spatial theory is highly suitable for examining socially constructed phenomena, such as inclusion.

Foucault identified space as locations where surveillance and regulation occurred; a non-neutral arena both socially created and serving to socially create. He conceived space as 'curious sites', both utopias (unreal, perfect places) and heterotopias (real counter-sites which are both represented and contested). A fully inclusive school might be considered an example of the former, and a special school the latter. Foucault considered heterotopias as sites "in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" (Foucault, 1986, p.5). This coupling of deviance and space was later identified by Armstrong (2007, p.101) who saw the special school as a "confirmation of abnormality, an aspiration for mutual protection for those on the inside and those on the outside".

Foucault was interested in what was hidden within 'sanctified oppositions', such as public/private spaces. Both Lefebvre and Soja built on this, arguing that the use of two terms was reductive and therefore insufficient. There always had to be a third; an 'other'. This led to their development of conceptual trialectics, used to disrupt understandings resulting from traditional binaries. Lefebvre's spatial trialectic considered space as 'lived' (by various inhabitants), 'perceived' (through the senses) and 'conceived' (through discourse). Soja's trialectic identified the physical, the imagined and, following a 'both, and also' logic, a Thirdspace which posited alternative ways to consider space, including elements of both the real and the imagined (Figure 6). Soja interpreted this third position, as 'othering' (Soja, 1996), the creation of an alternative to the privileging of the historical and social binary.
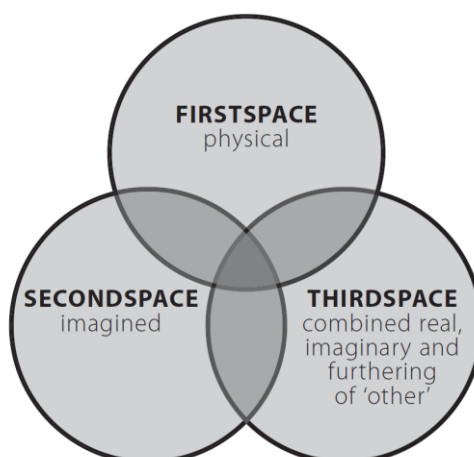
Figure 6. Soja's Trialectic

Firstspace focuses on knowledge that is mappable, a concrete geography perceived through the senses. Secondspace is discursively created. In inclusive terminology, the architectural concept of 'universal design' would be a Secondspace voice – designing space to meet the needs of all, reducing the likelihood of ableism occurring in the process. Secondspace considers what has been both planned for and ultimately experienced. Soja's Thirdspace critically deconstructs the duality of 'Firstspace' and 'Secondspace' and examines the problematic interplay between the two. It invites "a challenge to the privileging of either framing of space as entirely material, or as purely subjectively constituted" (Armstrong, 2007, p.103), or in Soja's own words, Thirdspace constitutes:

> A knowable and unknowable, real and imagined lifeworld of experiences, emotional events, and political choices that is existentially shaped by the generative and problematic interplay between centers and peripheries, the abstract and concrete, the impassioned spaces of the conceptual and the lived, marked out materially and metaphorically in spatial praxis, the transformation of (spatial) knowledge into (spatial) action in the field of unevenly developed (spatial) power (1996, p.31).

Soja deliberately and perhaps provocatively revisits and reconceptualises 'Thirdspace' in order to achieve a theoretical approach which is both fluid and open to re-interpretation. In an emancipatory manner, Thirdspace seeks to turn new knowledge into action by 'refolding' back to "disturb and disrupt established conventions" (Halsey, 2013, p.81).

3.3.1 Actions taken

Thirdspace is used as the conceptual framework for a spatial analysis of each co-located special school as it seeks to find solutions to real world problems, such as human inequality. Researchers, such as Armstrong (2007), have effectively used Soja's trialectics to analyse new spaces.

Armstrong's examination of the closure of a special school and its relocation within a large comprehensive school (2007) showed how Thirdspace methodology creates new understandings and areas of contestation within the field of special education. Many binaries exist within special education discourse: special/regular, include/exclude, independence/dependence, centre/de-centre, and normal/abnormal, to suggest a few. Thirdspace looks at and beyond such binary thinking through its consideration of 'other'.

Data for the spatial study was sourced through tours of each site. Although all four schools are now fully built and operational, only one (Eyre Centre) was a functioning school when the tours took place. The other three were essentially construction sites at different stages of completion. For each tour the researcher was accompanied by a school leader. Their comments were at times noted during the tours, providing the researcher with additional input into the researcher's analysis and interpretation. Although the occasional map was provided, the vast majority of data consisted of photographs taken during the tour and field notes made during and immediately following the tour. The leaders' voices, maps, photographs and field notes together informed each spatial analysis.

Firstspace analysis was made through the documentation of the physical design of the school, as visually interpreted during the tour and reviewed afterwards through examination of the photographic evidence.

Secondspace analysis included the additional layering of the leaders' voices, the researcher's own voice, and literature on inclusion and space. The intention(s) behind spatial decisions was the main focus of this element of analysis.

The Thirdspace analysis considered the binaries produced by the Secondspace analysis and offered an 'other' interpretation. This was then refolded upon the original binary to challenge assumed knowledge.

3.3.2 Limitations

Because three of the four sites were not physically completed at the time of the data collection, the majority of the analyses were based on partially constructed environments. Although these were still rich in terms of spatial intent and physical location, some aspects of spaces, such as school signage and furnishings, were unable to be considered within the analysis. The trustworthiness of the researcher's analysis was increased through member checking at the end of the interview study, asking the leaders questions based on key findings within the spatial study.

3.4 Interview

The final method utilised was in-depth semi-structured interviews with leaders from each of the four case study schools. A semi-structured interview approach enables researchers to gain detailed information regarding school practices and interviewees' attitudes and beliefs. What leaders say can be instrumental in demonstrating their beliefs about inclusion (Goodlad & Lovitt, 1993), impacting on the inclusive nature of their school and teachers (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Written permission was provided by participants for interviews to occur. The purpose of the interviews was the provision of additional information for analyses, post co-locations. Following introductory questions, additional member checking questions were asked relating to findings from both the document and spatial analyses.

The interviews occurred at each school, except for Eyre Centre, which was transferred to a private home at the interviewee's request. Within each school a quiet meeting room was provided so interviews would not be interrupted. Interview durations varied, but were generally very close to the 40 minutes allocated. Participants were not given the questions beforehand in order to capture immediate responses rather than something pre-considered and possibly self-censored. As this was the final stage of the research project, a healthy rapport had been developed between the researcher and participants. This rapport was helpful in facilitating rich responses.

Each interview was audio-recorded and later transcribed. Despite interviews often resulting in run-on sentences, the researcher decided to transcribe verbatim in order to provide the leaders' voices as accurately as possible, spared from editorial manipulation. Very rarely, a word was indecipherable. In those cases, it was marked as such on the transcript. Full transcripts were emailed to each interviewee in order to provide them with a chance to check their authenticity and to change those responses they believed, on reflection, did not accurately capture their position. Only one leader made alterations, which were of a grammatical and somewhat cosmetic nature.

Each interviewee was a member of that school's leadership team, with direct experience of the co-location and the school-wide practices. If interviewees found it difficult to respond to the set questions, an additional probing question was asked. These were predetermined and only used to tease out responses. Additional, improvised questions were asked sparingly in order to confirm a response, or to seek clarification of information already provided.
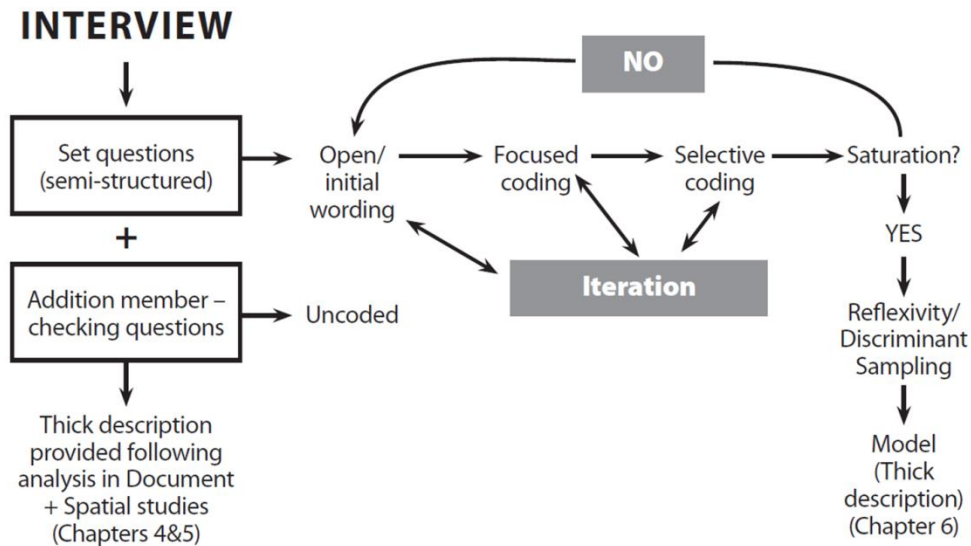
Figure 7. Interview collection and coding

Interviews contained both set questions and additional ones, used to member check and test major themes produced from previous stages of research (Figure 7). The intention of the initial, set questions [see Appendix 1] was to identify the nature of the relationship between co-located schools, and any opportunities and barriers encountered. Interviewees were able to describe their school and the design process. Questions sought to identify interpretations of inclusion and types of inclusive practice occurring. Major themes were developed from an analysis of the interview responses.

3.4.1 Coding approach

The coding approach used for analysis was similar to that within the document study – initial coding, followed by focused and then selective coding. Provisional codes were produced in an iterative fashion. This involved highlighting sections of text, line by line within the transcript, and attributing a code to each. An example of this process can be seen in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8. Focused Coding example

Each transcript was independently coded and re-coded, with a final coding cycle informed by previous iterations. Decisions were made regarding discrepancies between the coding across versions. This led at times to some codes being subsumed by emerging, dominant codes and others being made redundant. Coded sections of text were split when necessary, enabling a finer grained segmentation. Handwritten notes captured the links between codes and operational model diagrams were likewise constructed to show relationships between codes and developing themes.

A focused coding approach was then used to identify the most significant codes within each interview (Saldaña, 2013). Similar codes were grouped together and examined to create categories, such as 'identified benefits of inclusion'. Categories were then considered in regard to their relationships with each other. Tree diagrams were produced to symbolically connect these relationships and memos outlined connections and possible omissions.

Trustworthiness was increased through the re-coding process. Once a hypothesis was established for each school, a rival hypothesis was considered and transcripts re-examined to consider whether the rival hypothesis could be supported. Thick description (Brantlinger et al., 2005) was provided in order to transparently illustrate how direct statements from the interview transcript supported the final analysis.

Additional member checking questions were not coded due to being informed and guided by earlier findings from the document and spatial studies. Their purpose was not the provision of additional data for analysis, but the checking of a priori hypotheses.

3.4.2 Limitations

One limitation was the inclusion of only four interviews, capturing the views of five interviewees (two interviewees from Flinders Special School). Although there is a variety of perspectives as to what qualifies as an appropriate minimum number of interviews (Baker & Edwards, 2012), the researcher believes that more interviews from across more sites would have been beneficial. This research stage does not, however, build theory in isolation. It is a component of an overall study. An additional limitation, as previously stated, was the omission of students', parents' or other educators' voices. Findings are therefore largely representative of leaders' opinions, and cannot be generalised as representing the views of others.

3.4.3 Trustworthiness

The term 'trustworthiness' is considered more useful to qualitative research than constructs such as 'validity' (Munro, 1995). This is principally due to the nature of qualitative research, seeking to

understand phenomena deeply. Trustworthiness can be determined through clear description of the researcher's conduct leading to the determination of findings (Smith, 2000).

The researcher utilised the following within this thesis to establish and build research trustworthiness (Smith, 2000; Brantlingner et al., 2005):

•   Thick description of the voices of participants

•   Triangulation (both methods and data)

•   Provision of an audit trail

•   Disconfirmation of evidence

•   Member checking.

The use of multiple sites within this current research provided increased trustworthiness through the capacity to compare sites (Yin, 2013). Member checking aided in the confirmation of findings and provided potential rival explanations to be established and later explored. Such confirmation of details by participants contributes towards greater credibility within educational case studies (Stake, 1988).

3.5 Triangulation

The social constructivist grounding of this current research acknowledges multiple realities. In order to establish verisimilitude and trustworthiness of findings, it is incumbent upon the researcher to support any constructed 'truth'. This is achieved through those trustworthiness measures outlined, and the following detailed method of triangulation.

Step 1

For each of the four sites, the major themes produced from each method are compared in pairs (Figure 9). These pairings (e.g. the document and spatial) are examined for areas of agreement (convergence) and difference (divergence), producing an overall hypothesis, for each site, as to whether *Education Works* is increasing inclusion within schools and, if so, how this is occurring.
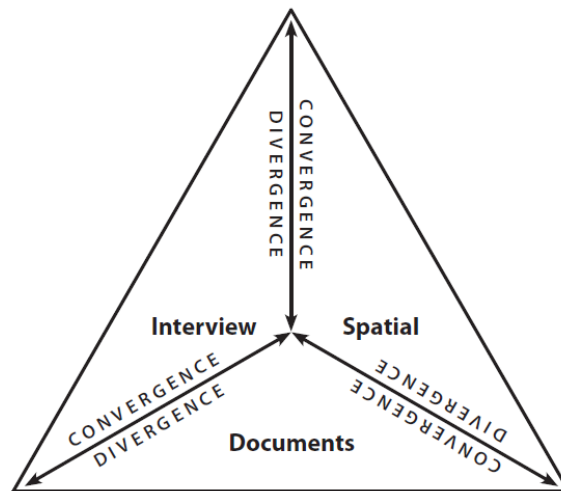
Figure 9. Convergence and divergence pairings (pyramid viewed from above)

Step 2

The identified areas of convergence and divergence for each study pairing are then checked for areas of convergence/divergence across the three pairings. Clear areas of convergence indicate that "greater confidence may be placed in the evaluation's overall findings" (Yin, 2013, p.324). Areas of convergence/divergence are then clarified in a resultant description for each site.

Step 3

A final paired comparison between each site description results in key messages for the overall research (Figure 10). Such cross-site comparisons can be beneficial for teasing out additional themes and relationships (Eisenhardt, 1989).
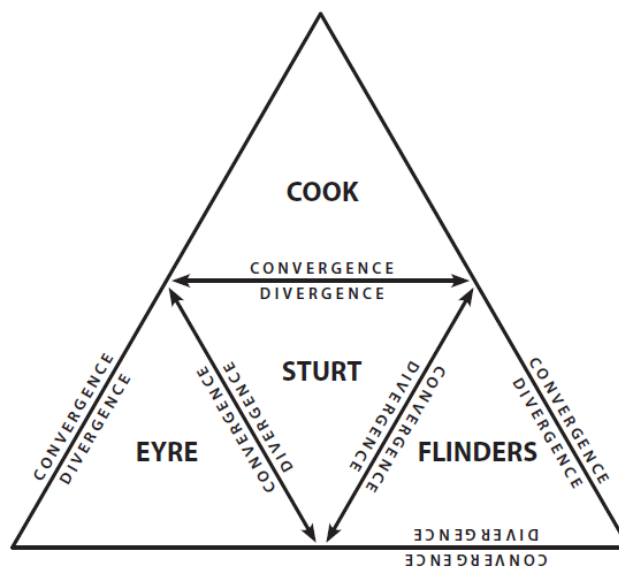
Figure 10. Cross-site comparisons (view as unfolded pyramid)

Yin highlighted the benefits of triangulation in case studies (2013). Methods triangulation, such as the one adopted in this current research, was considered most likely to strengthen the trustworthiness of the researcher's propositions. Data triangulation was additionally utilised in the research, as each method is informed by different data.

Many case studies utilising triangulation do not specify how it occurs (Yin, 2013). The steps outlined in this section reflect this researcher's addressing of such criticism, and a desire to show transparency in how triangulation occurred, resulting in what Denzin identified as a "confluence of evidence that breeds credibility" (as cited in Bowen, 2009).

3.6 Ethical considerations

One ethical consideration encountered was the difficulty of protecting participant anonymity when a limited number of special schools were co-located in South Australia. Due to the possibility of identification, no guarantee of anonymity was provided. This was conveyed to participants from the outset. Strategies, such as the use of pseudonyms, were utilised to provide protection from identification. Additional safeguards included participants not being identified by their specific role. Due to their possible identification, each participant was provided with the opportunity to remove unintended comments from interview transcripts.

3.7 Summary

This chapter details the epistemological and ontological stances that influenced the research design. This is followed by a rationale for the selection of three methods and the processes involved in coding data generated from these methods. Limitations are considered and trustworthiness of the analyses addressed. The researcher's time in the field; meeting with leaders to outline the project, undertaking site tours, and conducting final interviews, enabled the researcher to build a strong rapport with the school leaders and witness transformation, in most cases, from planning to practice. This added richness to the data generated and, the researcher hopes, to the quality and trustworthiness of the research outcomes.

The following chapter, Chapter 4, outlines the initial document study in more detail. It is fitting that it is the first method discussed as it captures the earliest moments in the *Education Works* reforms, when initial decisions were made to co-locate special schools with mainstream settings.

Chapter 4 – Documents

Introduction

Document analysis, in combination with other qualitative research methods, is a useful way to triangulate different understandings about the same phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). Data from documents have been studied and interpreted in order to establish meaning and discover insights regarding the *Education Works* reforms. Both public and private documents between schools serve to highlight signs of established or developing inclusive practices, as well as the attitudes of schools and individuals towards inclusion.

4.1 Document request and retrieval

Each of the four special schools were asked to supply copies of documents for analysis which might illustrate recent practices, or comment on the fledgling relationship with their new neighbouring school. The researcher supplemented the received documents with those later downloaded from the schools' public webpages, adding depth to the sources that could be drawn on. Downloaded documents were scanned to determine whether any content described inclusive philosophies or emerging practices between schools. If this was the case, documents were retained and used within the analysis.

The scope of this thesis did not extend to the direct involvement of the neighbouring mainstream sites. Conscious of this, and the limitation of providing only the voices of the special schools, the researcher decided to also harvest data from the public websites of the mainstream schools in order to, at least in some capacity, represent their voices. As these documents were restricted to those that were publicly available, the selection was narrow and many documents were omitted from analysis as they were not related to the relationship with the special school or inclusive philosophy in general. Nevertheless, some documents of value were retrieved from each site.

Table 2. Numbers of documents retrieved from each site

Documents Harvested			
Eyre Centre	20	Cook Centre	9
- Neighbouring mainstream	12	- Neighbouring mainstream	4
Flinders Special School	22	Sturt Centre	22
- Neighbouring mainstream	10	- Neighbouring mainstream	2

A summary of each school's documents will now be presented, followed by a discussion on key themes arising from each analysis. The results of member checking are outlined for each school. The chapter concludes with a broad summary of the overall findings.

4.2 Eyre Centre

Texts and documents received from Eyre Centre and their neighbouring mainstream were varied. The earliest documents received were from 2011 and therefore did not represent the period leading up to the planning. Instead, they captured the move into the new school and the development of the relationship between the two schools. In late 2014 additional newsletters were downloaded from the school's website. A copy of a digital presentation made earlier in the year by a member of Eyre Centre's leadership team was also received. The presentation focussed on the inclusive programs developed between the schools. In both 2013 and 2014 texts and documents were downloaded from the website of the neighbouring, mainstream school. Fortunately, these captured not only the voices of the school's educators, but also its parents and students.

Major themes

4.2.1 Unequal roles reflect unequal expectations

> Whilst this school is absolutely spectacular in so many ways, the best part about being here is being right next door to another school community with students who are the same age as ours and the contact and friendship that this will bring (Speech for Official Opening, 2011, p.2).

A significant amount of text (n=60) focussed on the way the two schools identified and positioned both themselves and their neighbours. The mainstream school described its population as diverse and inclusive. Some students with disabilities were taught in separate classes by special educators, indicating that segregation was at times considered beneficial. Students with autism were described by a school counsellor as "special little people" (Mainstream newsletter, 2014, p.5), language perhaps intending on being affectionate, yet nuanced, this researcher asserts, with condescension. Readers of the newsletter were encouraged to develop empathy towards students on the autism spectrum.

Eyre Centre considered itself to be nationally and internationally recognised as experts in special education, particularly in teaching students with complex communication needs and physical disabilities. Although inclusion was described as being valued by the school, the texts consistently referred to practices more aligned with integration or reverse-integration. Eyre Centre elaborated on programs they taught with several mainstream schools. These programs provided training on disability awareness, and supported schools to increase their integration opportunities. Eyre Centre considered the promotion of inclusion to be one of their roles.

The attitudes towards the schools' connections with each other were consistently described in a positive manner, with stakeholders excited about both present and future possibilities: "I can remember the time when we found out Eyre Centre was moving next door and never realised the amazing opportunities it would create for all our students! A match made in heaven!" (Eyre Centre Presentation, 2014, slide 8).

The relationship between schools was considered strong, valued and celebrated. "Our sites have a beautiful relationship based on the premise 'We can do anything together'" (Eyre Centre Presentation, 2014, slide 2). This described 'togetherness' was written, however, in response to practices of integration, more so than inclusion. A noted omission within all texts was a critical questioning of why students needed to be more often apart than together during their daily learning. Advantages of segregation over inclusion were not described within any documentation.

As Eyre Centre had been the most established of the four sites, there had been increased opportunities to engage with their neighbours. Links between student bodies and schools were well established with many examples (n=51) describing the pragmatics of the relationship – what happens between the schools, when and how. Students from the mainstream school typically visited Eyre Centre to co-participate in learning programs, to enjoy lunch together, or to conduct a performance. Future opportunities suggested within the texts included the establishment of buddy classes, the provision of literacy program support, and the sharing of library sessions within Eyre Centre. Teachers across sites hosted conferences together, shared professional development opportunities and swapped resources. Mutual fundraising was also being considered.

The roles of mainstream students were regularly specified, whilst the roles of Eyre Centre students were not described. Students from the mainstream school visited Eyre Centre as a component of their work experience program (Site Improvement Plan, 2013, p.4). One lunchtime initiative, described as a 'friendship group' (Annual Report, 2013, p.9), was contingent on the mainstream students volunteering to participate. Students from Eyre Centre were never described as volunteers, however, suggesting they had no choice in becoming the program's 'beneficiaries'. Mainstream volunteers were described as helpers who cared for the Eyre Centre students: "The feedback I received about our students was amazing and made me feel so proud of our caring, compassionate students, who love helping others." (Mainstream Newsletter, 2014, p.4). Such descriptors align with outdated models of disability, which historically sought to protect people with disabilities from society rather than to challenge the role of society in creating and exacerbating the disablement of individuals (Oliver, 2013). The language also conceptualises the mainstream students as 'the helpers' and Eyre students as 'the helped'. This is contrary to the ideals of

inclusive education. It has established the mainstream students as 'dominant', a common element within ableism (Goodley, 2013).

The friendship group activities included reading books, playing music, and massaging the hands of Eyre Centre students (doing for them), as well as playing and building (doing with them). Mainstream students were valued as models of speech and play skills. This modelling needed to be occasionally coaxed, however, as they did not always include the Eyre Centre students in their play (Staff meeting minutes, 2013, p.2). Nevertheless, Eyre Centre staff identified improvements in "communication, play and social skills" (Annual Report, 2013, p.9) as a result of the peer modelling. Mainstream students saw the development of friendships and their caring for Eyre Centre students as equally beneficial aspects of friendship groupings (Eyre Centre Presentation, 2014, slide 12). Benefits were also recognised by the mainstream teachers, with one declaring that the connecting of students across schools represented "one of the best experiences" in their teaching career (Mainstream newsletter, 2013, p.7).

4.2.2 Vulnerability as a barrier and a marker of difference

The differences between the schools' student cohorts were captured clearly across several texts. The mainstream school described Eyre Centre as having a "unique student base" (P&C speech, 2012). The difference between cohorts was seen as significant in regard to greater health care needs and resultant vulnerability. In one year alone, four students from Eyre Centre had died due to complex health issues (Annual Report, 2013). This vulnerability was considered a possible barrier. In a survey of mainstream students, one third of the respondents identified 'death' as a difficulty in their developing relationships with Eyre Centre students. Staff at Eyre Centre likewise listed their students' "fragile health" as a challenge (Eyre Centre Presentation, 2014, slide 13). One parent reflected, "She gets sad when she hears something awful happens to them, when some of the poor kids die" (Eyre Centre Presentation, 2014, slide 15).

Eyre Centre staff were instructed on how to transfer and position students safely, as well as how to manage mealtimes and medication routines. This increased medical focus was supported by the involvement of both health support officers (HSOs) and registered nurses. Students from the neighbouring mainstream school were also prepared for working with Eyre Centre students. They received special training, which constituted disability awareness lessons. These lessons addressed the multiple health-related needs of students and the roles medical professionals had in their lives (Annual Report, 2012). Considering that one of the roles of inclusive education is the eradication of social barriers (Slee, 2011), an emphasis on student vulnerability and medical issues may have been counterproductive to the schools' efforts to form and develop meaningful friendships. Certainly, students and educators alike recognised the complex health needs were both a difference

and a difficulty. Strategies such as the involvement of social worker assistance, participation in memorials and the creation of memory books, had been identified to assist mainstream students with their grieving as a result of student death (Eyre Centre Presentation, 2014, slide 15).

4.2.3 Invisible disabilities, visible signs of changing practices

"I no longer hear the distorted speech of a person with CP. I now recognise the extraordinary effort and courage it took for that person to speak well. In my eyes that child is whole and perfect and loved." (Eyre Centre newsletter – eulogy, 2013)

Educators, parents, and the students from the mainstream school, each identified educational and social advantages that came from learning alongside Eyre Centre students. Benefits included better understanding the difficulties that students with disabilities faced (Annual Report, 2013) and the efforts they made throughout their schooling. Mainstream students believed their improved understanding opened up opportunities for relationships to be developed.

Interviewer: Do you think it makes a difference to the way your friends and others think about students with disability coming over here?

Girl A: Yes I think it does because a lot of people think that kids with disability can't really do anything and they can't play but they really can.

Girl B: I really think so 'cos the first time we came over we brought a lot of students with us but they were actually scared of the kids here but now they've got a really special bond together. We just all love them now.

(Eyre Centre Presentation, 2014, slide 17)

Teachers recognised that the mainstream students had learnt new skills through operating augmentative and assistive communication (AAC) devices to 'chat' with Eyre Centre students (Eyre Centre newsletter, 2013), and had developed an awareness of students' complex communication needs.

I love Eyre Centre and when kids do things for the first time it melts my heart. It's amazing. I want to keep going right through High School. To me, the students at Eyre Centre are perfect – I remember them for their smile and their personality – not for their disability. They light up my life! (Mainstream newsletter, 2013, p.3)

Claims of loving students may point to a closer bond, but this bond may not be an equal one, particularly if students do not engage from equal positions of power. Disability factors can be integral within self-identity. People with a disability will likely not want their disability to become a burden or barrier, but that does not mean they wish it to be ignored or rejected as part of their identity (Winters, 2016). Indeed, its removal could be considered as an attempt to avoid understanding.

Texts and documents point to some visible changes between schools. A myriad of integration practices certainly existed, which were not evident when Eyre Centre was more geographically isolated. These new practices had led to changing attitudes (Eyre Centre Presentation, 2014, slide 8), an improved understanding of diversity (Eyre Centre Presentation, 2014, slide 17), and increased student learning (Eyre Centre newsletter, 2013). Although the vast majority of integration saw students from the mainstream school visiting Eyre Centre, this was not always the case. At least one Eyre Centre student had been educated part-time within the mainstream school, with paraprofessional support (Annual School Report, 2012).

4.2.4 Member checking

An Eyre Centre leader, following an interview for this current research (see Chapter 6), also responded to some of the findings from the document analysis. The inequitable roles of students led the researcher to ask how students were positioned: as friends, carers or volunteers. The response was that they were volunteers. The notion of their being 'carers' was rejected. Friendship was identified as both an aspiration and a possibility: *"they do form friendships and they do have their favourite kids that they come and see and spend time with and play with"* (Eyre Centre Interview)

The school leader supported the major theme of student vulnerability being viewed as a barrier:

> *Last year we had a really rough year with a number of students dying and that really affected the [mainstream school] kids badly. And they were very, very sad about that.* (Eyre Centre Interview)

As Eyre Centre's students continue to have complex health needs, the issue of student vulnerability as a barrier looks to continue into the future:

> *So, there's, [student name] is one of our kids, and she's just a beautiful kid and they adore her, but her health is fragile too. So that'll, if anything ever happens to her then that's going to be really bad. So, yeah ...* (Eyre Centre Interview)

Documents from Eyre Centre showed they were successfully engaging with mainstream students and staff in a variety of ways, and that these interactions were viewed positively. Unequal roles and expectations between students appeared, however, to be a barrier towards the establishment of more inclusive relationships. The vulnerability of Eyre Centre students, due to their complex health needs, appeared to be both a marker of difference and a cause of grief. Students from the mainstream school were able to recognise strengths of Eyre Centre students. In terms of the retention of disability identity, it is important that recognising such strengths does not correspond, however, with a reduction in both recognition and awareness of disability.

4.3 Flinders Special School

Flinders Special School supplied a variety of documents, mostly covering the period 2012-2013 when the new co-located school was being designed and built. One text supplied outlined the school's considerations and planning as the co-location process was undertaken. Texts were also sourced from the neighbouring mainstream school, including those publicly available in their front office and those downloadable from the school website. The document types are listed in Appendix 2.

Major themes

4.3.1 Inclusion interpreted as 'special education'

Neither Flinders Special School nor its neighbouring mainstream site identified inclusion as it is defined within this current research. Instead, it was conceptually viewed as meeting the needs of students with disabilities, devoid of the context in which they were taught. This was illustrated through the mainstream school's 'Learning and Inclusion' team, which fundamentally focused on collaboration amongst stakeholders, and the meeting of diverse educational needs – not learning together nor fostering a sense of belonging amongst diverse students. Teachers within the mainstream school had the opportunity to participate in an inclusive education course, which framed inclusion as "an approach where education services transform themselves in response to the broad spectrum of learning needs within a diversity of learners" (Department of Education and Children's Services, 2009, p.25). Despite this course focusing on teaching within mainstream classrooms, at no stage did it frame inclusion as being exclusively about a shared place. By its definition, a segregated school could therefore claim itself to be 'inclusive'.

The social construction of inclusion as meaning education within multiple, separate environments was evident through the promotion of practices by both schools. Each considered themselves as already being inclusive by successfully meeting the needs of students with disabilities through the development of individualised learning plans, provision of professional development (autism), purchasing of specialised resources, and construction of spaces to assist with self-regulation.

4.3.2 Students with disabilities – segregated within each environment

Both schools highlighted differences amongst students with disabilities in their communities. The mainstream school taught over 200 students with disabilities, yet chose to teach one cohort within a separate, labelled space. Students within the space were referred to by a collective name. This appeared as affectionate nomenclature throughout the documentation yet lacked any critique in terms of whether it labelled students in a deficit manner.

Flinders noted that many of their students had increased health care needs and were therefore dependent on health support officers to look after their personal care. This resulted in teachers having a heightened awareness around their professional duty of care. In the same vein as their mainstream neighbours, Flinders chose to label needier students as a distinct group, heavily based on disability factors. One student learning space was identified as the SMD (Severe + Multiple Disabled) unit.

4.3.3 Connecting, with concerns

Each school outlined a national partnership that they had established prior to co-location, with a focus on both differentiation and autism. This partnership involved an initial time commitment of one day a week from both schools. Such early collaboration was perhaps to be expected given that Flinders Special School was designed to connect with the mainstream school, and to visually replicate it, emphasising a collective identity:

> The architectural design creates a clear and identifiable school entrance with connectivity to [us] to the south. The school master planning has been designed with sub schools surrounding a central park, similar to that of [our school] (Special School relocation flyer, 2012, p.1).

A concept design report highlighted the possibility that the two schools could share facilities. The actual experience of sharing seems problematic, however, given that concerns were already being raised by the principal of the mainstream school in relation to spatial restrictions:

> On behalf of our community I have strongly expressed my concern that this will further exacerbate the issues we have with traffic management in the streets and car parking both at [school name] and around the school (Special School relocation flyer, 2012, p.1).

Flinders had already encountered problems between the two schools, revealing that an earlier effort at linking sites had resulted in difficulties due to interpersonal factors – 'petty stuff' between coordinators. Flinders saw their relationships with annexe schools as potentially tenuous as they

were vulnerable to the whims of any new leadership. Such vulnerability could be avoided, however, through a documented 'treaty' between sites.

4.3.4 The natural advantages of separation

All documents framed the provision of multiple, separate learning environments as being a natural occurrence, and the segregation of students was therefore ubiquitously unchallenged. Segregated spaces (annexes, SMD unit) were considered a 'European' inclusive practice (co-location of schools document, 2013, p.1). Playgrounds divided up for different age groups were identified as being safer for students (School context statement, 2013). The only counter-voice to this narrative was found within the school context statement for Flinders Special School which outlined benefits, aligned with the concept of least restrictive environment (LRE), of moving students "from a 'solitary space' into a 'social space'" (School context statement, 2013, p.5) to better connect with peers.

4.3.5 Member checking

The leaders at Flinders Special School were asked to reflect on some of the themes within this document analysis, specifically the impact of the build on their relationship with the neighbouring school, the labelling of their SMD unit, and the thoughts behind replicating physical characteristics from the mainstream school, such as the central park.

Both leaders felt the build had not affected their relationship with the neighbouring school. The issue of traffic as a possible source of tension was, however, raised, supporting a source of tension found within this current analysis.

> *The biggest issue with [mainstream school], and we met pre-build anyway, was traffic. Traffic has been a significant issue here. There has been ministerial, you know, write ups about traffic issues and parents not being able to park from [mainstream school], and that was certainly raised with us, about how would we ensure that we would not impact on [mainstream school]'s parking issues that they had. So part of our design brief was to ensure that every teacher, every parent, every visitor could park on site. And we met that brief.* (Flinders Special School Interview)

Given that a ministerial intervention had occurred, concerns between schools appeared significant. Flinders Special School had nevertheless been responsive to the issue raised by the neighbouring school leader.

The echoing of physical similarities between schools, described earlier within this analysis as a conscious connection, might, however, have stemmed more from an architectural desire than Flinders' own intent, as captured here:

> *There was a subtle intention. I think the architects had certainly flagged that we could have this little area and in the initial stage, in the initial build our central park was a lot bigger, a bit more like [mainstream school] obviously, but on a smaller, smaller scale, but it was just too big. So we actually wanted something a bit more intimate. We certainly liked the idea of that village green feel and that place where people come together, so where our kids are spilling out of their classes into this little area, it's just got this sense of community. I don't know that [mainstream school]'s been able to pull that off because theirs is too big.* (Flinders Special School Interview)

The purpose behind labelling the SMD unit/building was queried by the researcher. The leadership team indicated that this title had since been changed, based on a program the students in the space all participated in – Mobility Opportunities Via Education.

> *That was the name of the unit, so 'Severe and Multiple Disability Unit'. So, our thinking was, you know, we know what our kids are so we really want to just have a flip of what the unit actually stood for. We know what we are. Let's actually call it what we do. So, the focus is now MOVE, so we call it the MOVE Unit. And that's what the core work in there is, on top of their curriculum, is getting these kids as mobile as possible and around their learning rather than a passive in your chair, you know, type learning. So, yeah, they are what they are. … So, rather than labelling.* (Flinders Special School Interview)

The decision to re-name the unit shows reflective thought and an internal challenging of the original labelling. Flinders are conscious of the impact of labelling on school communities. This became further evident when asked why they chose a school name which did not state their geographic location, positioned in one of South Australia's lower socio-economic areas: *"The name's had a huge difference. Without a doubt. I think we were being … I think we were a labelled school"*. The school leaders did not clarify who 'labelled' their school, but the inference was that they were tarnished in some manner due to their belonging to a struggling socio-economic community.

Forms of segregation were critically unchallenged by Flinders Special School. Despite this, they were conscious of the impact of deficit labelling, re-naming their own spaces in response to this, and reflecting on how their old school name had labelled them as 'deficit' by others. Although an

intent to build positive relationships with their mainstream neighbours was clear, early tensions and problems existed. These included the collapsing of programs due to interpersonal factors, and a developing spatial contestation, exemplified by a ministerial report into car parking complaints.

4.4 Cook Centre

Documents from Cook Centre covered 2009, when the school announced its co-location, through to 2014, immediately before site occupation by teachers and students. They were mainly representative of leader and teacher voices, but student voices were evident within some newsletters. A limitation of the data received was a document that summarised paragraphs from school newsletters. Instead of supplying individual newsletters, the school leader determined which content was relevant within each newsletter. In doing so, key or illuminative information may have been omitted. What may have been identified as important by the school leader, may also not have aligned with this researcher's own perceptions.

A small number of texts was downloaded from the website of the neighbouring mainstream school. These consisted of a context statement, a school improvement plan, a newsletter and website text pertaining to students with special needs.

Major themes

4.3.1 We're experts in special education, but we're no longer 'special'

Cook Centre identified itself as a 'Centre of Expertise' in special education (Newsletter excerpt, 2011). Their staff provided professional development to high school teachers, with a focus on both disability factors and curriculum (Newsletter excerpt, 2012). In naming itself Cook Centre, however, it distanced itself from its previous title and its nomenclature as a 'special school'. The new school name resulted from a survey which sought the opinions of students, parents and teaching staff. 'Cook Centre' and 'Cook Education Centre' were the clear preferences (35.8 per cent for each). Two less popular options included one with 'special' in the title (10.5 per cent) and another which borrowed heavily from the neighbouring mainstream school's title (17.9 per cent). The survey results suggested a desire for more normative language, and to be linked to the neighbouring school through a somewhat shared identity. In that way, the schools could be both co-located and co-identified. Remaining 'special' was the least favourable option within the survey. This reluctance may have stemmed from an understanding of labelling theory (Furze et al., 2015; Farrell, 2010) and a desire to eschew language perceived as having associated social stigma. Both the avoidance of the label 'special' and the possibility of becoming co-identified with the mainstream school suggest that some respondents desired to move away from a special education culture, towards a broader, more inclusive public identity.

4.3.2 Inclusive, but often apart

The Australian Professional Standard for Principals (AITSL, 2014a) requires school leaders to embrace inclusion and to develop an inclusive culture. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that both Cook Centre and their neighbouring school described themselves as already being inclusively oriented. Cook Centre considered themselves as inclusive as a result of their established practices: individualisation (School Improvement Plan, 2013, p.1); negotiated education planning (School Improvement Plan, 2013, p.1); modification (School Improvement Plan, 2013, p.1); catering for various learning needs (Newsletter excerpt, 2012) inclusion of stakeholder voices (Newsletter excerpt, 2011), and their engagement with both their local community (School Improvement Plan, 2013, p.2) and other schools' programs (Newsletter excerpt, 2012).

Their mainstream neighbour identified their own inclusive strengths as: cultural diversity (School Context Statement, 2013), having links with disability organisations (School Website, 2016), differentiating (School Context Statement, 2013, p.6), acknowledging different skills and abilities (Site Improvement Plan 2013-2017, p.3), supporting students with sensory disabilities (School Website, 2016), inclusive participation across varied elements of schooling, such as Sports Days and camps (School Website, 2016), and the provision of resources and technologies to support students' needs (School Website, 2016).

Although several of the practices described might be considered important within inclusive school cultures, others are more aligned with special education, such as possible peer mentoring or buddy programs between schools.

Mooted initiatives involving parents and teachers between schools were suggested in order to reduce any anxieties relating to the co-location (Newsletter excerpt, 2012). In one newsletter (2012) Cook Centre advocated politically for co-location and its benefits. These benefits resembled those of inclusive education (Westwood, 2013), highlighting that students developed particular skills and understandings through shared learning opportunities. Neither school regarded segregation as being antithetical to inclusion, each opting for some strategic student segregation within their own walls.

4.3.3 Reproduction and segregation

> Tours of the site are exciting as the layout is looking really innovative and designed to provide a wide range of learning environments to cater for our student needs (Newsletter, 2013, p.3).

Although Cook Centre expressed excitement over the innovative opportunities provided by a new, purpose-built school, documents revealed a tension resulting from wanting to duplicate previous practices:

> We are very much looking forward to re-enacting the positive learning spaces and great educational outcomes throughout [previous school name] within Cook Centre whilst promoting new and innovative ideas to flourish within the new learning spaces (Newsletter, 2014, p.1).

A desire for duplication could also be identified in the school's site improvement plan (2013, p.2) which called for community elements to be identified, then transitioned from the old school to the new. Students noted differences between learning spaces, considering them problematic because they did not allow for the reproduction of their previous learning experiences:

> We saw the new school site and we looked around and saw the new kitchen is smaller than I thought. We probably won't be able to all fit in there (Newsletter, 2014, p.7).

A conflict exists between the desire to be both innovative (Newsletter, 2014, p.1) and reproductive, consolidating Cook Centre's self-identified position as expert special educators. Spaces which are reproduced and practices which are re-enacted, resist change and the development of new, inclusive opportunities.

Both schools have used and planned for the use of practices of segregation. The mainstream school makes use of a 'Sit Out Room' (School Context Statement, 2013, p.5) when student behaviour has impacted significantly on a teacher's ability to teach. Cook Centre has itself created a multitude of new withdrawal spaces, labelled "w/drawal" (Site Plan, 2012). In this case, change appears to have been prioritised over reproduction. Whereas the previous site had very few spaces that students could be withdrawn to, Cook Centre now has three purpose built withdrawal rooms and four outdoor spaces connected to classrooms, each surrounded by security fencing. How these spaces are eventually used will be critical in terms of degree of inclusion/exclusion. If students use them to reduce their anxieties, then they may indeed be productive spaces, used to prevent behavioural escalation. Students can self-calm and then re-engage in learning when ready. If students are physically removed from their common learning space, however, then at best this is a restrictive practice, easily open to improper usage (ALRC, 2014, p.245). The Australian Government's Education and Employment Reference Committee (2016) recently recommended working with both states and territories in order to bring such restrictive practices to an end. It is within this controversial, contemporary context that Cook Centre have sought to create new spaces where

segregation and restrictive practices can easily occur, and historically have occurred (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2012).

4.3.4 Member checking

Following the final interview stage within this thesis, a leader at Cook Centre was asked to respond to major themes. In relation to their positioning of themselves as experts, supporting other schools, they concurred, identifying settings which had already sought help from them:

> *A lot of the schools around here and independents [schools], don't know how to modify SACE or the Australian Curriculum. They really, really struggle, so we do that excellently, really, really well, and we let them know that and they're knocking on our doors.* (Cook Centre Interview)

This portrayal of the short-comings of mainstream settings suggests a worldview in which full inclusion is unrealistic because general education lacks the expertise required to teach complex students. It is an interpretation of inclusion as Utopia (Forbes, 2007).

In relation to the duplication of existing practices, the leader provided detail about a research process they had undertaken with a South Australian university. This process involved asking students with complex communication needs what they liked about their school in order to identify, then replicate them. Students were given cameras and asked to photograph features they liked, to gain an understanding of their perspective (Epstein, Stevens, McKeever & Baruchel, 2006). This supported the researcher's analysis regarding a desire to duplicate existing practices. The Cook Centre leader did not identify ways in which such replication might serve to stifle innovation. Interestingly, within this inclusion of student voice, teachers were positioned as gatekeepers and inhibitors to genuine communication and advocacy.

> *We had to watch out for the gatekeepers because our teachers are very, very prone to telling them what to do, so it was interesting.* (Cook Centre Interview)

Teachers were also seen as barriers themselves, as opposed to facilitators of student inclusion.

> *We needed lots and lots of power points for kids, here, outside, because they like to plug their music in, and one of the teachers, a 'gatekeeper', she said 'What are you taking a photo of that power point on the wall for?' And 'Don't, don't take it'. And, anyway, he said 'I want that'. And then when we talked to him about that, it was about 'I live for my*

music', and if we hadn't, if we had've listened to the teacher they would never have got
what they got. (Cook Centre Interview)

In relation to the name change, the leader was asked why the community voted for 'Centre' above
'Special School':

Because we're mild intellectual, a lot of our kids, if we called ourselves – back in the old
days – '[previous name] Special', which it was, they wouldn't come. Especially the
Aspergers. They don't want to be seen as having a disability. (Cook Centre Interview)

This statement, and that following, supported the researcher's proposition that co-location
provided an opportunity to eschew disability labelling: "*Why should we be known as 'special'*
when they've got special kids in high schools?"

Cook Centre's school community sought to avoid being considered and labelled 'special'. Their
leadership advocated for the inclusive benefits of co-location, even though their own practices
appeared more special education focussed than inclusion oriented. Cook Centre teachers were
identified by their own leadership as 'gatekeepers', restricting student voices. Although the school
sought to reproduce popular elements from their previous setting, there was a clear intent to create
multiple new withdrawal spaces. Although these spaces have potential benefits for student self-
regulation, their availability could further encourage restrictive approaches.

4.5 Sturt Centre

Sturt Centre supplied documents dating back to 2011. Their relationship with the mainstream
school they co-located with dated back to 2009, however, when a peer mentorship program was
previously established. One document describing this program was particularly rich in data,
specifying how interaction between students was to occur and for what reasons. Some texts were
sent as 'excerpts' from different sources. Two newsletters were downloaded from the website of
the neighbouring school. One contained a lengthy article from the principal of Sturt Centre, and
narratives from two students who'd engaged in the peer mentorship program. This enabled a
counter-voice to the privileged adult voices within this current study.

Major themes

4.5.1 Peer mentors as teacher assistants

The Peer Mentor Program between schools was strongly represented throughout the data (n=76).
Benefits of peer buddy programs can include improved "social responses and communication
abilities" (Laghi, Lonigro, Pallini, & Baiocco, 2018, p.519). Program benefits at Sturt Centre were

recognised for both mentors and mentees. For mentors these included developing an understanding of diversity, increasing friendships skills, becoming more well-rounded individuals, and possibly finding a career pathway; and, for mentees, more age-appropriate interactions, greater engagement, the development of play skills and the possibility of making friends outside of their own school.

The peer mentors were consistently identified as being the students from the mainstream school. Their roles were clearly defined throughout documents. The roles of mentees, however, remained ambiguous. Sturt Centre students were considered the 'helped', with mainstream mentors helping the "needy others" (Peer Mentor Program, n.d., p.3). Criteria were stated for determining the best mix of mentors (Peer Mentor Program, n.d., p.14), but no information was provided regarding whether (or how) mentees were selected. Mentors were required to undertake 'essential' training whereas mentees did not. The mainstream mentors were assessed (Peer Mentor Program, n.d., p.11), yet the mentees were not. Such factors point to unequal relationships and learning expectations between students and sites. This is concerning as buddy programs which lack equality or equity may replicate the social construction of disability (Jaeger & Bowman, 2005) and "inadvertently reinforce ableistic viewpoints" (Storey, 2007).

Mentors continued to perform their roles when variations occurred for them (e.g. pupil free days), yet variations at Sturt Centre appeared prioritised above the mentor program. Some text positioned the mainstream students in roles clearly aligned with that of paraprofessionals. Students were encouraged to "take ownership of the program" (Peer Mentoring Program, n.d., p.8) and "provide guidance and support for curriculum lessons" (Peer Mentoring Program, n.d., p.5). They were instructed to facilitate access and participation (School Context Statement, 2013, p.6) and tasked with responsibilities similar to those required of graduate teachers, including the differentiation (AITSL Standard 1.5) of and delivery of games (Peer Mentoring Program, n.d., p.22). The management of challenging mentee behaviour (AITSL Standard 4.3) was prepared for (Peer Mentoring Program, n.d., p.21), with students capturing expectations of 'surveilling' students and supporting staff: "My job was to help the teachers to look after the students and help them with their school work" (Mainstream newsletter, 2013, p.5). Furthermore, "I would also keep a close eye on them while they were playing" (Mainstream newsletter, 2013, p.5).

Following this, it is perhaps unsurprising to note that the conception of the Peer Mentoring Program stemmed from a need to support teachers:

> Sturt Centre had experienced great difficulties attempting to teach, with just two adults (one teacher and a school support officer), high quality inclusive physical education and health lessons to severely autistic students (Peer Mentor Program, n.d., p.3).

Copeland et al. (2002) considered the use of peers as beneficial in supporting teachers who felt "overwhelmed at times" (Copeland et al., 2002, p.18). This is despite also recognising that peers are not paraprofessionals and therefore should not be assigned paraprofessional roles (Copeland et al., 2002, p.20). The Peer Mentoring Program at Sturt Centre appeared to demonstrate unequal relationships and expectations, with mentors taking on roles that positioned them as having power over mentees. Although it is easy to empathise with schools doing their best to teach increasingly complex students, the positioning of peers as pseudo-paraprofessionals is more aligned with ableism (Goodley, 2013; Storey, 2007) than inclusive philosophy.

Some counter-voices existed within documents, belonging to the participating mainstream students. Although not identifying or contesting unequal relationships, these voices did describe positives arising from the program, including the attainment of new knowledge, the development of communication skills, enjoyment, and friendship building. Friendships appeared temporary, however, as when the program ended then so too did the peer contact: "We all said goodbyes to the new friends we made during our time at Sturt Centre. I was feeling quite sad that I would not see them for quite some time" (Mainstream newsletter, 2013, p.5).

4.5.2 No positive outcomes for the mainstream school

The principal of Sturt Centre sought the establishment of a positive relationship with the parents of the mainstream students by writing an introduction in their newsletter: "Thank you for your support of your children as they continue to work closely with our students. We know that our future will be closely entwined with yours" (Mainstream newsletter, 2013, p.4).

Connections between schools occurred through shared events and meetings. The consolidation of a conceptually linked community was embedded within Sturt Centre's Site Improvement Plan (2012). Attitudes towards the *Education Works* reforms were consistently excited and positive, "Sturt Centre is poised on the brink of a fantastic journey towards the future" (Principal's Report, 2011, p.1). Some caution was identified, however, in how best to proceed, as the benefits at school-level appeared unequal:

> Some concerns have been raised by [mainstream school] as there appears to be no positive outcomes for them. The hall will become Sturt Centre's and there may be the opportunity to share some space with them where possible (School Council Meeting minutes, 2011, p.1).

The mainstream school was offered first selection from Sturt's surplus resources (Council Meeting Minutes, 2013), and funds were later provided to them (Mainstream newsletter, 2014) as a result of

Sturt's relocation, enabling them to freshen their external painting. New physical space for Sturt Centre, however, clearly came at a cost to the mainstream school, creating a possible tension between the two schools, which Sturt recognised and were eager to avoid.

4.5.3 Member checking

Following the final interview stage, questions were asked of a leader at Sturt Centre, in order to check or dispute findings. Firstly, clarification was sought on the role of the peers within the Peer Mentor Program.

Question: How would you describe the role of the [mainstream] peers within the Peer Mentorship Program?

> *It might be to read stories, it might be to help with the art lesson, or whatever it is, it also might be simply to hang out and to be a mate and a friend and a peer in a highly structured way.* (Sturt Centre Interview)

The response constructs the peers differently to the manner within the documents, establishing them more as friends – although still 'the helpers'. The benefits of the program, however, appeared distinctly different, supporting the hypotheses that peers were in unequal relationships:

> *It does contribute to their SACE PLP, so it's part of their PLP program and they write it up accordingly, so there's something in it for them and we also have a joint award that we present in our assembly over here, in our end of year assembly here for outstanding students. They all get a certificate for their portfolio, but they ...*
>
> [So, who gets the award?] (question from the researcher)
>
> *The [mainstream] kid.*
>
> (Sturt Centre Interview)

Not only were the benefits different, so too were the rewards, the 'something in it for them'. Providing mentors with a certificate, but not mentees, suggests their roles were more important, and worthy of public recognition. The hypothesis around peers being constructed as teacher assistants was supported by the leader's sharing that a previous award winner, who had recently completed a disability studies qualification, would soon be employed by Sturt Centre as a School Support Officer.

The leader was asked to identify tensions when planning for the school:

Budget, yep – the budget. I would have liked a different shaped piece of land. The budget was hard. I think also hard for [neighbouring school]. Because it was a capital works program there was no enticement. There was no positive outcome for them, that was tangible, you know they're in an old, I suppose it was circa 1960s probably, maybe early 70s, no probably 1960s when it was built. So they haven't really gained any positive benefit from this big whiz-bang school being built next door, not really at all, except to lose some land and their hall, so I think that's been hard for them and hats off to them and their leadership team and their staff for being as positive about us as they have been. (Sturt Centre Interview)

This positive relationship, despite a lack of clear benefits for the neighbouring school, may represent the efforts of Sturt Centre in treading lightly and demonstrating sensitivity. This could prove critical should future spatial incursions be required:

We have had to plan for, we've talked about where our footprint may extend, but it hasn't been part of a joint conversation with [neighbouring school] yet, so that's for our future isn't it? (Sturt Centre Interview)

Sturt Centre considered themselves to be the only beneficiaries of the co-location. Their mainstream neighbours had lost space and resources. Expected future pressures suggested an additional loss of space was likely. Their Peer Mentor Program provided regular integration which had been successfully sustained over many years. The unequal relationships, expectations, benefits and rewards suggested an imbalance of power, however, and that mainstream students were placed in quite separate roles and positions compared to Sturt Centre students.

4.6 Conclusion

All schools were analysed according to the same methods, outlined in Chapter 3. There was a considerable difference, however, in terms of the number and types of documents used within each analysis (Appendix 2). This variance was due to the availability of documents at the time. Some schools appeared more thorough in their retrieval of related documents, whilst others simply had more to provide. A comparison of themes across paired schools will feature as part of Chapter 7.

The major themes addressed within this chapter suggested a landscape in which the relationships between schools were already challenged by tensions arising from spatial restrictions and a loss of resources. Although some students were interacting regularly and positively with students from their neighbouring mainstream school, those relationships were marked by stark differences due to complex health conditions (Eyre) and roles and expectations of students (Eyre and Sturt). An

understanding of the problems of deficit labelling were reflected in some documents. Each of the four special schools viewed special school segregation as part of an inclusive system, rather than a systemic mechanism for exclusion.

Chapter 5 – Space

Introduction

Educational space manifests itself in myriad ways; one of the most obvious is school architecture, comprising spaces specifically designed with the process of teaching and learning in mind. Nonetheless, there has been a tendency to treat school architecture as a background phenomenon that was not integrated into the power of pedagogy, or, if it was, then it was seen as an innocuous force, generally for the educational good (Gulson & Symes, 2007a, p.8).

Where students with disabilities should be taught remains hotly contested (Bakken, 2010), although mainstream and special schools remain the dominant options for parents today. Forbes (2007) has argued against the dominant perception that 'place' is essential in inclusion:

The current Australian view is restricted to the concept of an inclusive school as a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, and where special education needs students are supported and cared for by their peers and other members of the school community. This is a Utopian view, where there are no references to the processes and learning environments needed to achieve authentic educational outcomes for *all* students (Forbes, 2007, p.67, emphasis in original).

Slee has challenged, however, any positioning of special school principals as "inclusive education advocates and experts" (2013a, p.13). Connor and Ferri suggested that special educators might be more focused on "maintaining their own sphere of influence" than seeking genuine change for students with disabilities (2007, p.74).

Legislatively, both the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992) and Disability Standards for Education (Australian Government, 2005) safeguard against the denial of access to school due to disability factors (Section 22 of DDA) or the prevention of access to facilities (Section 23). The Australian Human Rights Commission (n.d.) has promoted court cases, such as Finney vs Hills Grammar School, as landmark events in inclusive education. Such cases have helped to pave the way for Universal Design, an architectural concept focused on creating access for all. Spatial access is considered a pre-requisite for inclusion (Dischinger & Jackson Filho, 2012). Both place and space *matter*. Soja, in support of this sentiment, coined the term 'spatial justice', an emancipatory practice of contesting "the production and reproduction of unfair geographies" (Soja, 2010, p.54).

Space exists within a variety of contexts (Soja, 1996). In newly constructed special schools, space could be conceived in multiple ways. In the logos of Thirdspace, this translates to 'yes – and'. Each space is considered in different ways, agitating, and searching for new meaning. Inclusive nomenclature regarding educational place and space is evocative of the countering desires to both include and exclude students.

Place: *the mainstream school, the special school, and, historically, the institution.*

Space: *the centre, the corner, the margins.*

The title of the oxymoronic 'inclusive unit', illustrates an attempted re-branding of special education as observed by Slee (2013). The naming of segregated space as 'inclusive' is both a misappropriation of terminology and a misunderstanding of inclusion. There is perhaps a sense of irony in special education facilities being called 'centres' given that special schooling, and disability in general, exists mainly on the fringes or, to borrow from Slee once again, the "margins of civic life" (2011, p.36).

Education Works underlies the importance of place through its locating of previously isolated special schools alongside mainstream settings. This co-location suggests an intent to bring special schools in from the margins (McQuat, 2007), to centre them within an inclusive ideal. If the reforms do not create change in inclusive practices, however, then they could be considered as new ways to recreate old boundaries, reproducing separation (Armstrong, 2007).

This chapter will now describe and analyse the space(s) of the four special schools, including how they are positioned alongside their mainstream neighbours. As outlined in Chapter 3, the researcher's analysis is aligned with Soja's Thirdspace (1996) which occurs across three separate levels. The initial analysis focuses on what's viewable and concrete. The second level of analysis considers the design intentions of new spaces. Themes of interest arising from this level of analysis are detailed and explored at the time. Finally, the third level of analysis considers alternative approaches – thirding-as-othering (Soja, 1996). This last level of analysis, like the researcher's positioning of inclusive education as an 'othering' of the mainstream/special setting binary (Figure 1), seeks to identify new solutions to old or 'wicked' problems (Armstrong, 2017).

5.1 Four sites, Thirdspace

Data from this current study consists of field notes, maps, and photographs taken of four newly planned and co-located special schools. The settings were at different stages of construction and operation when data was collected. Only the first setting, Eyre Centre, was occupied and operating

as a school. The other three sites, Cook Centre, Flinders Special School, and Sturt Centre, were in different stages of construction. Both Eyre Centre and Flinders Special School were identified within *Education Works*. Cook Centre and Sturt Centre, however, were subsequent co-locations.

5.2 Eyre Centre

Data sources for this spatial study included maps and 62 annotated photographs of each site. Annotations reflected the researcher's initial thoughts about the spaces, and included comments made by the school leader who accompanied the researcher whilst the data were collected.

5.2.1 Firstspace

Firstspace epistemologies are focused on the materiality of space: what is perceivable through the senses, what is observable, mappable and concrete. Its existence is critical in informing not just the appearance of space, but also Secondspace and Thirdspace thinking.

Eyre Centre's play areas were positioned alongside the dividing fence between schools. Visibility from one site to the other was afforded from Eyre Centre's play areas, and from the nearby sports courts, car park, and oval within the Birth-Year 12 (B-12) site. Eyre Centre's external play space was sub-divided into multiple fenced areas. These included a bike track area, a play space with trampolines (Figure 11), a Liberty Swing for students in wheelchairs, and a soft fall space, which included equipment such as a ramped play structure and a netted trampoline.

Figure 11. Internal and fenced play space

Internal spaces were linked through a comprehensive network of ceiling tracks, which facilitated the hoisting of students who could not weight bear. Corridors were spacious. Classrooms

incorporated kitchen and washroom elements, and had adjunct spaces planned for either teacher or class use.

The staffroom, offices and spaces for administrative purposes were positioned in a separate wing to the learning spaces, far away from the play spaces which abut the B-12 school.

5.2.1 Secondspace

> Secondspace epistemologies are immediately distinguishable by their explanatory
> concentrations on conceived rather than perceived space and their implicit assumption
> that spatial knowledge is primarily produced through discursively devised representations
> of space, through the spatial workings of the mind (Soja, 1996, p.79).

Secondspace informs an understanding about spatial intent. It is essentially ideational, considering the ideas around, alongside and within space.

Many of Eyre Centre's students used wheelchairs for mobility or required support to weight bear. The intentional design of wide corridors with ceiling hoist systems afforded ease of access to multiple spaces. For teachers and paraprofessionals this enabled them to work in an unconstrained manner. The provision of ceiling tracks prevented the need for portable hoist systems which could intrude on the floor level, occupying space, and presenting a possible trip hazard. Ground space was at a premium, occupied not only by the traditional equipment of classrooms (desks/chairs), but also the equipment of physical disablement and "individual tragedy" (Holt, 2007, p.797): wheelchairs, change-tables, standing frames, water/air comfort chairs, toilet chairs, mini-trampolines, sensory wedges, foam steps, walkers, tilt-tables, modified cycles, sensory tents, and leaf chairs. Previous experiences with equipment clutter had resulted in the new site now having corridors wide enough to allow storage opportunities whilst still affording opportunities for students to transition along their length, and to practice necessary mobility skills. Despite constructed affordances for storage, it was apparent that additional spaces were being utilised for storage. These included classrooms – where outdoor equipment was placed. The school's student population had decreased since its opening, so spaces normally required for teaching had been re-territorialised for storage purposes. Although external sheds existed for storage, it was more efficient to relocate equipment into classrooms to enable easier transitions during the day. Other locations to receive 'clutter creep' were rooms for students to engage in independent life skills, such as a laundry and a meal preparation room. It was explained that the students the spaces had originally been designed for had since graduated, leaving the spaces no longer pedagogically relevant.

5.2.2.1 Bentham's Panopticon

Each large classroom connected onto two smaller adjunct rooms, one for teacher preparation and the other for focussed teaching. In one classroom, cupboards had been placed as a physical barrier to the adjunct learning space, preventing both visibility and access.

Visibility within space is a rich area of discourse and was integral to Bentham's 'panopticon' during the late 19th century, an architectural design for the perfect prison (Symes & Preston, 1992). The panopticon enabled disciplinary power to be exercised through the illusion of continuous surveillance. The imprisoned population would then self-regulate their behaviour as well as each other's through the continual apprehension of being observed misbehaving and consequently punished. Although Bentham's design was ultimately not created in his lifetime, the panopticon concept was influential on spatial designs and later analysed by Foucault (1977), who considered visibility to be the panopticon's trap, with directed lighting serving to illuminate the observed, but not the observer. This observer, hidden by darkness, no longer needed to be in place as the architecture of the panopticon was effective in "sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it" (Foucault, 1977, p.201). The subjects, in effect, subjected themselves within the panopticon's "ingenious cage" (Foucault, 1977, p.205).

Bentham suggested his panopticon design could also easily become "the basis of school construction" (Symes & Preston, 1992, p.207), with the surveilled consisting of both student and teacher populations. Foucault, in considering this panopticon of schooling, stated: "there is no copying, no noise, no chatter, no waste of time; if they are workers, there are no disorders, no theft, no coalitions" (Foucault, 1977, p.201). Symes and Preston suggested that inspection is hierarchical, "with students being surveyed by monitors, monitors being surveyed by teachers, teachers by head teachers" (Symes & Preston, 1992, p.207).

5.2.2.2 Surveillance and the surveilled

Visibility is important in special schools given that their student population is considered to be vulnerable (Government of South Australia, 2011). It is critical in safeguarding duty of care (Government of South Australia, 2007), particularly for students who have health conditions such as epilepsy. School design has long considered the importance of accommodating the health and hygiene needs of students (Symes & Preston, 1992).

During the tour of Eyre Centre, it was noted that many staff members were eating their lunches in classrooms instead of the staffroom which had amenities, ample space, comfort, offered refuge (Symes & Preston, 1992), and provided opportunity for collegial mingling. The school leader from Eyre Centre reflected that this had become somewhat habitual, perhaps due to the staffroom being

located away from the students. Certainly, the individual classrooms afforded views onto the playground and student population, whereas the staffroom did not. Eating in classrooms might have resulted in a more efficient break (not needing to go to the distant staffroom). It also could have served to place teachers in a more desirable location, enabling them to easily facilitate student transitions once lunch had concluded.

The staffroom was centrally located within the administration wing. It was used as a thoroughfare to gain access to offices and was directly observable from the offices of school leaders. As such, those within the staffroom are exposed to frequent surveillance by their line supervisors. The staffroom was an open area, identified by Symes and Preston as "the place where executants are to be found, another instance of panopticism" (1992, p.214). The low usage of the staffroom may have illustrated a reluctance to be subject to surveillance, or teachers' actively re-positioning themselves as observers within their own classrooms (enclosed spaces), surveilling student activity on the playground (open spaces).

One of Eyre Centre's classrooms had recently received an additional lock, placed onto the sliding door that afforded the transition onto the playground space. The school leader mentioned this was currently not satisfying safety specifications, but its use had become necessary in preventing a particular student from absconding. Such activity would likely not be classified as segregation or isolation given that the student was being retained, along with his or her class, in the location where teaching and learning occurred. The identified need to add locks did point, however, to the existence of unexpected challenging behaviours, and a desire to maintain the student's presence in the learning space without resorting to restraint measures.

Spatial segregation was visible in the playground where an internally fenced grass area (Figure 11) served to keep the more vulnerable students safe from the mobile ones who might "bowl them over" (Eyre Centre Leader, Personal communication, October 4th, 2013). This mirrored the fencing around the Liberty Swing which protected both the student swinging and students from being hit by the passing swing. In both cases where space had been demarcated for safety, the territorialisation of the space had also changed. Ownership shifted from *all* students to *some* students. Dischinger and Jackson Filho (2012) have suggested that territorial strategies are ways to mediate control of a population, cautioning that the division of space might not always produce increased safety, yet always produces segregation.

5.2.3 Thirdspace

5.2.3.1 A construction of dependency

 "The more risks you allow children to take, the better they learn to look after themselves" (Dahl, 1993, p.57)

Sibley (cited in Thomson, 2007, p.117) indicated that students who created disorder might be rendered as such through geographies of exclusion, the creation of bordered spaces. Safety or 'duty of care' concerns at Eyre Centre appeared to create spatial divisions that contributed to segregating practices. Risk reduction within schools might be considered a priority by highly safety-conscious educators, working with vulnerable students, however, the development of risk avoidance skills is a learning opportunity that should be embraced (Gairín & Castro, 2011). The privileging of 'care' over 'education' may therefore come at a cost to students' learning. The spatial elimination of risks may limit the development of critical skills, such as the assessment and management of risk, which are fundamental for inclusive participation in one's community. Eyre Centre may be constructing the restrictive environments that inclusive education actively eschews, rendering their students as passive. The protective spaces may enforce a dependency on students, requiring them to have safely fenced spaces duplicated and maintained throughout and beyond their schooling. Educators, as spatial planners and constructors within their own sites, should therefore consider deeply the implications of spatially protecting students and how this might ultimately serve to compromise a student's participation and citizenship.

5.2.3.1 Strategically positioning in the margins

The importance of 'place' within *Education Works*, was illustrated by its decision to co-locate special schools with mainstream settings. Although special educators can feel neglected and marginalised by the education system in which they work (McQuat, 2007), opportunities now exist for Eyre Centre teachers to more easily connect with mainstream colleagues in neighbouring schools.

An adoption of marginalisation by special educators may be a strategic positioning against inclusion as a homogenising practice. Student bodies could be perceived either homogenously (we are all alike) or heterogeneously (we are all different). In the first instance, inclusion is the instrument to 'make normal'. In the second, there is 'no normal': difference between students is the norm. Such a perspective, a celebration and an expectation of diversity, can be successfully adopted as an inclusive position as it recognises individuality without measuring students against what might typically be expected. Special educators may be more likely to consider inclusion in its heterogenic form given that their work requires regularly attending to the individuality of learners, for example, through the use of IEPs. If inclusion is considered as homogenising or normalising,

however, then it may appear an undesirable challenge (Slee, 2013), resulting in lost expertise and a diminished advocacy for both the special education profession and 'their students'. Marginality can therefore be interpreted as a heterotopia of resistance and Eyre Centre may use it to create what Hooks terms "oppositional practices" (cited in Soja, 1996, p.129), as a challenge to mainstream, generalist pedagogy.

The positioning of the new staffroom, and reluctance to use it, indicates how centred, open space could be less appealing than spaces on the periphery. Teachers may feel more empowered when self-excluding to the periphery/margins, into spaces where they are the observers (Figure 12), not 'the observed' (Figure 13). As Hooks reminds us, marginalisation can be conceived as an opportunity as much as an imposition (Halsey, 2013).
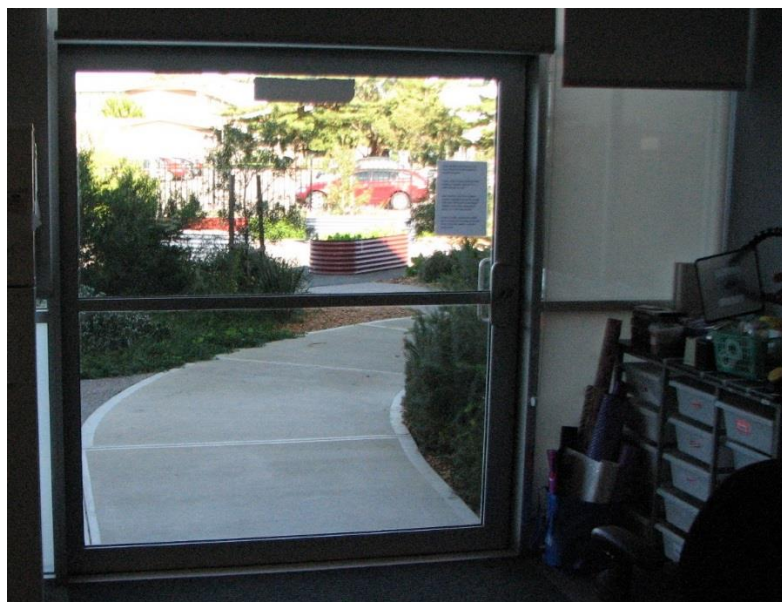
Figure 12. The classroom, looking onto the playground

In considering the centre/decentre binary, both as it applies to schools and teachers, we should look to 'other' possibilities. In her examination of school exclusion, Thomson (2007) proposed the construction of counter-public spaces as an alternative, enabling agency, an escape, and "a tangible shift in identity" (p.125). A blurring of lines between environments might therefore be created through the creation of spaces within each other's school. This already occurs in South Australia. One special school, not used within this current research, has classrooms located in their neighbouring mainstream school. Such decisions do not equate to inclusion, but this territorialising of space by 'the other' could break down rigid perceptions of 'yours' and 'ours', paving the way for future school connections.
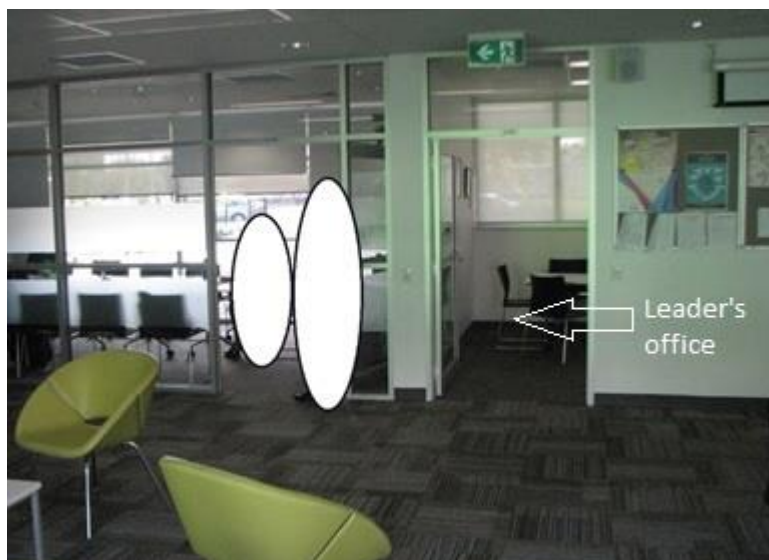
Figure 13. The staffroom, a space easily 'surveilled' from school leaders' offices

5.2.4 Openings and conclusions

Special schools are inherently more restrictive than mainstream schools (Rozalski, Stewart & Miller, 2010). Restrictive environments shape a sense of belonging within social space (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2015). Restrictions are represented spatially at Eyre Centre through real and imagined spaces, the planned environment, and what has been re-considered and recreated as part of the co-location process. The privileging of 'place' over 'space' within *Education Works* highlights the reductive notion that being 'in' means the same as being 'included'. Spatial injustice can occur as easily in mainstream classrooms as it does within specialised settings, its prevalence so historically significant as to suggest that schools are themselves unjust societies, constructed through categorisation and the demarcation of space.

Closing the inclusion gap, between utopia and heterotopia, between centre and margin, between the special school and the "idealised landscape" of the mainstream (Armstrong, 2007, p.100) may be more readily realised if policy makers, school planners, and educators foregrounded 'space' over 'place'. Space is, after all, "active in shaping the experience of school and the understanding of education" (Burke, 2006, p.490).

5.2.5 Member checking

Following the final interview stage of this current research, the researcher was able to ask questions to explore major themes arising from this spatial analysis. The researcher was keenly interested in whether the placement of Eyre Centre towards the centre and away from the margins might, as suggested, have resulted in a changing social positioning for the school. Did they sense that decreased marginalisation might compromise their advocacy and resistance against special education being somehow diluted?

In responding to the question, "In what way has the relocation contributed towards your school's social positioning changing?" the leader stated:

> *Being a part of the [neighbouring school] community I think has made a difference to how their school community and parents see us. I think being placed where we are and inviting our local neighbours has made a difference. They didn't know that schools like ours existed.* (Eyre Centre Interview)

The leader additionally highlighted the social benefits of being valued by the government, and having a brand-new school, but no discussion emerged regarding reduced marginalisation.

Additional questions were asked to determine the accuracy of the analysis regarding the privileging of safety and security above opportunities for students to become increasingly more active and independent learners.

Question: Describe the relationship between surveillance and safety at [new school].

> *Because some of our kids do have degenerative conditions. Many of our kids have seizures and I think that we – it's a tough one. You know, we need to be really vigilant about their health needs, so I would put that into a 'safety thing' rather than a 'surveillance thing' and yet we also encourage our kids to take risks in their walkers or by playing different games or exploring.* (Eyre Centre Interview)

An understanding of the tension between surveillance and safety appeared apparent, as did the difficulty in trying to get that balance right.

Question: Describe the relationship between segregation and safety at [new school].

Spaces were described by the school leader as being deliberately segregated in order to meet specific purposes, such as the meeting of legislation. Demarcation practices indeed occurred in order to protect discrete cohorts:

> *We ended up putting another yellow fence around our big grassed area because with our mobile kids who are really good little runners, but don't necessarily look where they're going, or our other kids who have learnt to walk but really don't worry too much about who they're stepping on, we wanted to have a safe area where kids who were crawling or rolling could get out and not be fallen on by some of our other kids, so we put a fence*

around that grassed area so that the kids in the wheelchairs could get out and climb, or explore, or do different things in there. (Eyre Centre Interview)

In summary, the major theme of strategic marginalisation (including surveillance avoidance), was not supported through the member checking process. On reflection, some additional, probing questions, may have been useful in pursuing this finding more thoroughly. The other major theme produced, regarding the foregrounding of surveillance and safety, via segregation, over opportunities to engage with risk, appeared somewhat supported. Certainly, the school leader recognised the tension and wanted to encourage risk-taking, but safety considerations appeared prioritised.

5.3 Flinders Special School

The data from Flinders Special School consisted of 70 photographs, a map, and a text document developed during and immediately after the site visit. When the data was originally collected the school was in the midst of being constructed. At this time the school was not populated by teachers and students, but by construction workers and the school leader who hosted the tour.

5.3.1 Firstspace

Flinders Special School was a 'new build', placed alongside a large, recently built PPP (private public partnership) school. An expansive footprint existed, with ample space set aside for parking and student transportation. A front office was designed to welcome visitors, record them, and then to regulate their flow, with all doors responding to a secure, swipe card system. Vacant space resided to the south where an Autism Training Centre had been planned but funding was not forthcoming.

Two large classroom blocks resided to the west, separated by a common learning area. A playground space was further west, towards the exterior fencing, due to be subdivided into play areas according to the age of the children. The subdivided spaces were designed to connect, enabling students to ride bikes or walk from one play space to the next.

No gate or connecting path existed between the schools, despite close proximity enabling school populations to directly observe each other. A small 'buffer zone' (Figure 14), recommended by the architect and designed to prevent students from climbing and absconding over the fence, was situated between Flinders Special School and their neighbour's play space.

Figure 14. The buffer zone, a metre of space between external fences

Classrooms in both the junior and primary blocks were annexed with secure outside spaces, to serve as withdrawal areas. Smaller class spaces were described as ILAs (Individual Learning Areas) whilst larger ones were GLAs (General Learning Areas). Two additional classroom blocks, one for middle/senior and another for severely and multiply disabled students (SMD) were to the east.

A large open space in the school's centre was a visual echo of a 'village green' which existed in the neighbouring school. Within it resided a circular construction (Figure 15) consisting of a sensory room, a viewing space for performances, and a garden. The single sensory room duplicated previous practice, reflecting an ongoing desire to mostly meet students' sensory needs in their own classrooms. Another re-created space was the gymnasium, enabling the continuation of the school's Mobility Opportunities Via Education (MOVE) program.

At the rear of the administration block a library was located where students would be encouraged to independently choose and borrow books. Large cavities existed in some library walls, made to shelve equipment such as toys. A decision was made by the teaching staff, however, not to use these spaces as storage receptacles due to the likelihood that items would be thrown to the floor by students. Instead, comfortable pillows would be placed in these nooks enabling students, particularly those on the autism spectrum, to use them as places of withdrawal and relaxation. One window in the resource room had been lowered so students in wheelchairs could easily and comfortably look through it.

A deliberate reduction in corridor space existed throughout, reflecting a desire to not only gain space through their omission, but also to reduce their adoption, by students, as an impromptu break out space. The school leader explained an intention to avoid constructing corridors which might serve as pseudo "escape" spaces for distressed students.

The community space beyond Flinders was developing, with new houses being built, and families moving into the area due to its reasonably priced housing. New community resources, such as supermarkets, were on the horizon. Flinders was previously located close to a major Adelaide shopping centre which was frequently used to teach students valuable community access, language and money skills. Although Flinders had temporarily lost proximity to such community assets, this would be remedied once the community grew around them.

Figure 15. The Central Learning Park, a visual echo from the mainstream

5.3.2 Secondspace

Flinders Special School planned for their known cohort through the installation of lowered windows, withdrawal nooks in the library, and the securing of external fences. Budgetary restrictions, however, limited the scope of the initial build. School leaders and planners believed expansion would ultimately occur (Architectural plan, 2011), with spaces labelled and set aside for a hydrotherapy pool, additional classrooms, and an Autism Training Facility – enabling the sharing of expertise with teachers next door. This new facility appeared unlikely to be constructed especially given the neighbouring school's car park was being extended. Considering school space as a type of discourse, as suggested by Benito (2010), this vacant space (Figure 16) represented a ghostly narrative of lost opportunity. Motor vehicles now formed a physical barrier where a connecting gateway was originally intended. Flinders and their mainstream neighbours had

previously received joint funding to work together on an autism project (Annual School Report, 2012), yet the space idealised to conduct such training was not constructed. Once additional finance was committed to expand on the initial build, desired features could be later realised, perhaps at the cost of practices already being shaped by compromising spaces.

Figure 16. The space where schools were to be connected by an Autism Learning Centre

Flinders' own car park was a possible site of contestation; with the neighbouring principal suggesting Flinders be aware and vigilant should parents attempt to 'claim' their car parks spaces (Flinders Special School Leader, Personal Communication, 2013). This provided another example of difficulties arising from the rapid-fire growth of the mainstream school. If initial experiences between parents across schools involved the contestation of car park space, then this could affect early relationships between schools and the development of positive attitudes towards initiating and developing shared practices.

The western fence at Flinders spanned 150 metres, with play space planned along its length. The space was raw and bush-like, a Froebelian garden (Bollig & Millei, 2018) of sorts, evoking Rousseau's maxim, "The best school is the shade of a tree" (cited in Benito, 2010, p.58). Eventual division and demarcation of student space could, however, be identified through the labelling of spaces into 'individual learning areas', 'secure play' spaces and junior/primary/senior school play spaces (Architectural plan, 2011). Armitage saw children's play as "influenced largely by the environment in which it takes place and the material available that can be included" (2006, p.539). In designating separate spaces to meet the play needs of different ages, and then directing students into those spaces, there may be an assumption that student needs are more chronological than developmental, a view at odds with some educators, such as Sir Ken Robinson, who have considered placement of students into 'aged-groupings' as a rigid practice (Shepherd, 2009). If

students are 'positioned' into spaces according to their age rather than their interests, then their choice is at best, restricted, and at worst, removed.

An exception to the sorting of students by age can be witnessed by the labelling of one building as 'SMD' (Severe + Multiple Disabled) (Architectural plan, 2011). Flinders have foregrounded the disability identifier 'SMD', perhaps reproducing negative labelling and stigmatisation of their students in the process (Holt, 2007). The terminology 'SMD' has justified a need for social exclusion, removing students from the playgrounds they might have accessed if not for the severity of their disabilities. They have become 'othered' in an already 'othered' environment – the special school. Resistance would likely be encountered should any school decide to form classes by characteristics such as sexuality or cultural background, as it would become a form of social segregation, a highlighting of difference from centralised norms, which could lead to stigmatisation. This is cautioned against by Hussein (2011), as school designs should avoid focusing on disability from a deficit position.

'Secure play' individual learning areas (n=17) were provided as possible places for withdrawal to occur, whether to access therapeutic services, for independent study, or as a place to calm. The secure and lockable play spaces surrounded classrooms in a moat-like fashion to provide a buffer from the larger playgrounds. One scenario put forward during the site tour was the school's ability to now move students from the playground to a secure play lockable area should they be agitated or violent during play times (Flinders Special School Leader, Personal Communication, 2013). The aggressor would be segregated, reducing the likelihood of harm to others whilst maintaining a line of sight and duty of care. Although this response would be considered seclusion and possibly a 'punishment' (Children with Disability Australia, 2012), within some positive whole school approaches, such as Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS), it would be an acceptable safety response, within a comprehensive behaviour plan, and with transparent documentation regarding its usage and impact on student behaviour (Horner & Sugai, 2009). Soja (1996) suggested that looking at how human bodies are spatially positioned can be productive in determining how power is both produced and reproduced. Hooper considered bodies as social spaces to be controlled if identified as dangerous pollutants (cited in Soja, 1996).

5.3.3 Thirdspace

5.3.3.1 The pure and the polluted

Flinders Special School appeared to spatially support special education more so than inclusive education. It was physically separated from its neighbouring school, with the co-location revealing no short-term intention to spatially forge a relationship. Nothing appeared shared, despite the newfound proximity. This was perhaps a predictable result given that proximity is a vastly

different proposition to meaningful interaction (Kauffman & Badar, 2013). Visibility between schools was at all times mediated by fencing, a standard practice of separation and division.

A dialectical opposition, with no middle ground, appeared created, with Flinders positioning itself as an opposing educational environment, a counter-point to that provided by their mainstream neighbour. Some new spaces, such as car parking, were not to be shared, but protected against incursions from the other school. Protecting students from 'otherness' was also witnessed within the ubiquitous 'secure play' spaces, microcosms enabling teachers to take control of liminal (Douglas, 1966) bodies of difference. The construction of borders was seen by Thomson (2007) as a way to protect 'self', by keeping the polluted 'other' away. Difference becomes deficit, an impurity to be resisted. Sibley identifies such spatial protection as the creation of a "moral landscape", used to encourage conformity across a cohort (cited in Thomson, 2007, p.117). Such landscapes may also serve to normalise particular students and abilities.

Determining an appropriate least restrictive environment (LRE) for students with disabilities remains a bone of contention (Rueda, Gallego, & Moll, 2000), and complications arise when sites internally increase or decrease restrictions. This was illustrated by the mainstream school's decision to protect their students from harmful aspects within their local community by locking their external gates during school hours, creating a 'gated school' which "shields itself from the populations it regards as polluting ones" (Gulson & Symes, 2007, p.99). A limitation of shielding students from unstable community elements may be the marginalisation of the school from within its community. Inclusive education is fundamentally about changing society through schooling experience. This may be less likely to occur if a distinct schism exists between the school and the community in which it resides. Similarly, the positioning of internal fencing within Flinders Special School to demarcate space and control student bodies, shows a gated approach to protect from and remove certain differences.

In opposition to other spatial approaches, Flinders Special School resisted the assertion of power through a panopticon. Although teachers can observe students continuously through the glass and between fences, multiple classroom blocks and a reduction of corridors prevents some observation. This is curious given the site is the largest of the four within this current research and responding to challenging behaviours would likely require early intervention and prompt assistance. Students have an environment which presents challenges, but also considerable opportunities for independent navigation.

5.3.4 Openings and conclusions

Flinders Special School made spatial choices that appeared not primarily driven by a philosophy of social inclusion. Special education and developing student independence were instead prioritised. The creation of spaces to afford student privacy could prove useful in enabling students to become increasingly confident and independent without feeling monitored. The creation of 'dark spaces', outside of surveillance, permit and advocate for the trusting of students, and the expectation that they will learn to orient and travel independently around the school.

5.3.5 Member checking

Two leaders (A and B) were present for the interview. The opening question was focused on teasing out the thinking behind naming the building 'SMD', as introduced in Chapter 4, and choosing to place 'SMD' students together, based on their disabilities.

Question: Can you describe for me the SMD building, its purpose, and how it was named?

> B: *It's actually now called the MOVE unit, which stands for Mobility Opportunities Via Education. And that's the international program that we use that's a blend of occupational therapy, physiotherapy and standard curriculum … So we actually don't describe the building as 'Severe and Multiple Disability'.*
>
> A: *Any more.*
>
> B: *No, intentionally.*
>
> (Flinders Special School Interview)

A prompting question was utilised to clarify the school's 'intention'.

> A. *So our thinking was, you know, we know what our kids are so we really want to just have a flip of what the unit actually stood for. We know what we are. Let's actually call it what we do … the focus is what we do, and that's across the board now. So rather than labelling …* (Flinders Special School Interview)

Limitations arising from labelling appeared later in the interview. Flinders Special School, as mentioned in Chapter 4, had previously been named after the low socio-economic suburb in which they were based, but consciously made the decision to re-brand themselves once co-located. The new name made a significant difference, as the school appeared no longer unfairly judged by low community perceptions regarding their surroundings.

Flinders did not feel that compromises made during the planning, such as the omission of the planned Autism Training Facility, impacted on the relationship with their mainstream neighbours, but tensions as a result of spatial protection were acknowledged, particularly in relation to car parking.

The school leaders were asked to comment on the construction of spaces to restrict student access, such as the individual learning areas. The researcher was interested in whether the creation of such spaces had made a difference in behaviour management, and inclusive learning.

> A: *So, I think, for so many years they've been locked into this one room sort of establishment. It's how we break them out and say 'you've got this massive array of areas to use' and I think the common areas we've talked about a few times, is a really good example that we've got these amazing, beautiful little areas that are still being under-utilised, but that's our work in terms of building and supporting staff to, you know, embrace those areas. And I think it's purely because of that learnt classroom structure. 'This is my classroom and I must do my lessons in here!' … This sort of thing. And what we're saying is you could do them anywhere you want. And it's just going to take a while. The kids are the easy part (laughter).* (Flinders Special School Interview)

The new spaces, even when asked to describe limitations, were considered more as providing pedagogical opportunities than student restrictions. A 75 per cent reduction of injuries to staff had occurred, perhaps resulting from such spatial changes, enabling students to be more easily directed to spaces outside the general classroom:

> A: *The ILAs were designed for our challenging behaviour students and the purpose of that, we've got a program that we've developed here for a few years and we've just won an award for it, called ICE: Inclusive Classroom Engagement. It's about how we can support those students when they're not in their classroom, as, well, we actually want to leave, so we can support students when they're not in their classroom because of their tough behaviour as well as when they are in their classroom when they're not exhibiting challenging behaviour. So the ICE program uses those spaces to support students when they're not able to be in their classroom because of their aggressive or self-injurious behaviours. The benefits are quite significant. Actually, for our old site, we had makeshift areas for those kids to go. Because when they're hurting other students, you know, we've got to make sure everyone's safe and it was a matter of, where can we put them while we're managing these times?* (Flinders Special School Interview)

Even when the school did not have purpose-built spaces to remove students into, removal and separation existed in practice. Spaces, such as corridors, were utilised to spatially control and separate students. New spaces appeared designed around these 'makeshift' teaching practices, such was the existing desire to maintain safety by spatially separating students from one another.

In summary, the major theme of space between schools being already contested, rather than shared, was supported by the member checking, with transport access a key issue. Increased parking needs had resulted in one shared space (the Autism Learning Centre) not being constructed. Member checking did not strongly support spaces being used to separate students primarily due to their age and severity of disability. The school leaders identified that flexibility, and a desire to change classroom-bound pedagogical practices, were more influential on their spatial decision-making.

5.4 Cook Centre

Cook Centre had recently been co-located from its previous, dilapidated site. Fifty-four photographs were taken. The school, like Flinders, was under construction at the time of data collection. An architectural map was additionally analysed in terms of both its planned spaces, and the language used to describe them. Once again, a leader of the school led the tour. Notes were made, then later collated, summarising observations of the spaces being created.

5.4.1 Firstspace

Cook Centre was well positioned in terms of vicinity. An Early Education Centre (EEC) was based down the road, and they were physically connected to a large mainstream site, experienced in working with students with disabilities. The only entrance to Cook Centre was a large driveway. This driveway would eventually lead buses towards a large hall on arrival, where students would disembark to be welcomed and have their attendance recorded, duplicating what had occurred at the school's previous site. From there students would be instructed to go to one of the six newly built classrooms.

The mainstream school's basketball court was visible from the front, busy with students playing a game. Cook Centre had initially been hopeful of consuming the basketball play space within their own footprint, but eventually backed down on their claims for it (Cook Centre Leader, Personal Communication, 2013).

Visitors would enter through the front foyer where a very long corridor would lead to the back of the school (Figure 17). Administrative offices would be to the right of the foyer, connecting to the

staffroom, positioned away from any student spaces. Just past the foyer would be a space utilised for an open space library, with books positioned in portable shelves so sections could be removed and re-located around the school. The spacious corridor would also be considered as a learning space, with students able to spill out of their classrooms to make use of furniture within nooks and crannies.

Figure 17. The spacious central corridor, looking from the rear of the school.

Four of the six classrooms were linked directly to withdrawal rooms. Secure outdoor spaces existed additionally as annexes. During the tour the researcher was informed that these, like the withdrawal spaces, would be used to help manage misbehaving students. This "use of small fenced areas as punishment for 'bad' behaviour" aligns with previously reported practices of seclusion (Robinson, 2012, p.13).

There was a high level of visual transparency throughout. From the central corridor, for example, a person could see the external playground by glancing through three separate, aligned windows. This would enable a teacher to sight students within withdrawal spaces from the privacy of the corridor. Although blinds would likely be installed, it had not been determined where they would be placed and, consequently, who would have the freedom to raise or lower them.

Play space existed in a horseshoe of space around the main building. Two amphitheatres were to be built in this space, described as 'outside classroom spaces' (Cook Centre Leader, Personal Communication, 2013), with wireless access to portable devices, such as iPads. At the rear of the school a fence separated Cook Centre's play space from that of its neighbouring school. An intention existed to develop a roster system so Cook Centre's students could occasionally use the

mainstream school's open field (Cook Centre Leader, Personal Communication, 2013). Two pedestrian gates existed to help facilitate this eventual practice. Some planting of vegetation would soon occur, but it was not known how this might restrict visibility, which was irregular along the fence line between the schools. Cook Centre had their own, smaller basketball play area, a space for horticulture work, and an outside area for eating.

One classroom space has been designed for a complex group of students, placed to the rear of the school where large accessible toilets were also located, and in close proximity to the school's new sensory room.

Figure 18. Ramped and stair connections between schools.

A physical linking of the two schools, in the form of ramped and stair access, existed in an unexpected location at the rear of the hall (Figure 18). The leader of Cook Centre was unsure of its purpose as it was something they had not requested (Cook Centre Leader, Personal Communication, 2013).

5.4.2 Secondspace

Cook Centre duplicated spaces from their previous site, including a sensory room, a hall/gym and a café, each considered integral to established and ongoing educational programs. Emerging research has suggested ways teachers could change their 'mind frames' when considering the environments in which they'll teach (McEntee, 2016). Educators are encouraged to examine their own beliefs about working in pedagogical space, and to consider new possibilities (Mahat, Grocott & Imms, 2017). Innovative learning environments require an understanding of design principles and how they apply to both teaching space and pedagogy (ILETC, 2018). A desire by Cook Centre teachers to reproduce several of their previous educational spaces (and practices) therefore appears to be a

rather narrow approach. Such spatial reproduction could see elements of segregation and/or exclusion also reproduced.

The only spatial pathway of connection (Figure 18), the ramp and stairs, were designed and built without the knowledge of Cook Centre. (The school leader assumed that it was an architectural contribution.) A grander design within the *Education Works* reform, the creation of space to engender new practices, could have been at play, though it remained unclear *who* was making such spatial decisions, and the depth of their knowledge regarding the students taught at Cook Centre. When architects, or those unfamiliar with students' learning needs, plan with limited knowledge, spaces could mirror misunderstandings (Burke, 2006).

5.4.2.1 Withdrawal and seclusion

Withdrawal spaces exist to enable the removal of students from shared spaces, whether initiated by the students, or as directed by others. The use and suitability of such spaces varies greatly. At best, they are recognised as appropriate accommodations, providing students with a space to avoid "the omnipresent ableist gaze and offer opportunities for disabled children to recoup" (Runswick-Cole, 2011, p.117). At worst, they have facilitated seclusion, where students are physically prevented from returning to their classroom by the physical presence of a staff member or the locking of a door (COPAA, 2009; Government of Western Australia, 2011; Office of the Public Advocate, 2013). Seclusion is both a restrictive and aversive practice (COPAA, 2009). A recent senate report recommended that schools publish their data on seclusion practices, then move towards extinguishing them (Parliament of Australia, 2016). The suspension of seclusion until benefits of its use are evident is supported by Gagnon, Mattingly & Connelly (2017).

People with disability are prone to seclusion in a variety of settings, perhaps due to their vulnerability, which likely stems more from communication issues and compromised networks of support than actual disability (Robinson, 2012). An Issues Paper from Children with Disabilities Australia stated that "children with disability continue to experience restrictive practices in both mainstream and 'special' schools, including being locked in isolation rooms" (Robinson, 2012, p.20). In a Victorian report, 128 parents claimed their children had been secluded into 'special rooms' by their teachers (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2012). This has occurred despite little evidence of seclusion as an effective practice, which is concerning given the potential harm to students (Freeman & Sugai, 2013). Seclusion can occur regularly without positive behavioural support plans existing, without parental consent, and with students remaining secluded long after challenging behaviour has concluded (COPAA, 2009). The review of the Disability Standards highlighted concerns from advocacy organisations over teachers not being well equipped to manage the behaviours of complex students (Australian Government,

2012). Seclusion is therefore of current concern within Australian education, particularly in the field of special education.

Recommendations for reducing the use of seclusion include: increased staff training on de-escalation strategies (Freeman & Sugai, 2013; Villani, Parsons, Church & Beetar, 2011; Gagnon, Mattingly & Connelly, 2017), the implementation of School-wide Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS) or similar whole school frameworks of support (Freeman & Sugai, 2013; Gagnon, Mattingly & Connelly; 2017), and quality assurance strategies such as the regular reviewing of seclusion data (Villani et al., 2011). COPAA (2009) have suggested the prohibition of seclusion if contraindicated for a student due to medical or psychological reasons. Furthermore, it was recommended that seclusion only be used should there be "an imminent threat of immediate bodily harm" (2009, p.10).

South Australian educators have been advised to never use restraint involving "confining a child or young person in a locked room or limited space" (Government of South Australia, 2011, p.18), although careful interpretation is allowed "when applied to children and young people with additional needs or disabilities" (p.19). This provides some concern given that students with disabilities are entitled to be treated 'on the same basis' (Australian Government, 2005) as their non-disabled peers.

Despite a litany of concerns regarding aversive practices, such as seclusion (Dean, 2014), withdrawal rooms at Cook Centre appeared nevertheless ubiquitous, and were privileged over other types of space. Considering that spaces shape practice, there is an increased likelihood that spaces designed to withdraw students could also be used to seclude them. The outdoor annexes were described as additional places that could be used to calm students. If considered as pseudo-withdrawal spaces, Cook Centre would now have more withdrawal spaces than those designated as general classrooms. Outdoor annexes were described as "our cages" by the school leader (Cook Centre Leader, Personal Communication, 2014), sounding more like the language of restriction than that of the pedagogical opportunity provided by an al fresco learning space. Withdrawal rooms may be used to teach anxious students or meet their sensory needs, but they also serve as what Foucault termed 'disciplinary spaces', normalising a community to an institution's rules (Benito, 2010). Foucault considered spatial compartmentalisation as a way that institutions regulated power roles and conditions (Tremain, 2005).

The windows from the corridor – reaching through inside spaces, then outside space (Figure 19) – suggest a desired panopticon. A greater ease of surveillance exists of both the teacher and student populations, with school leaders able to surveil practices occurring within multiple environments.

The placement of blinds, and who can control them, would be telling in terms of where power resides – who sees who, and who can prevent themselves being sighted.
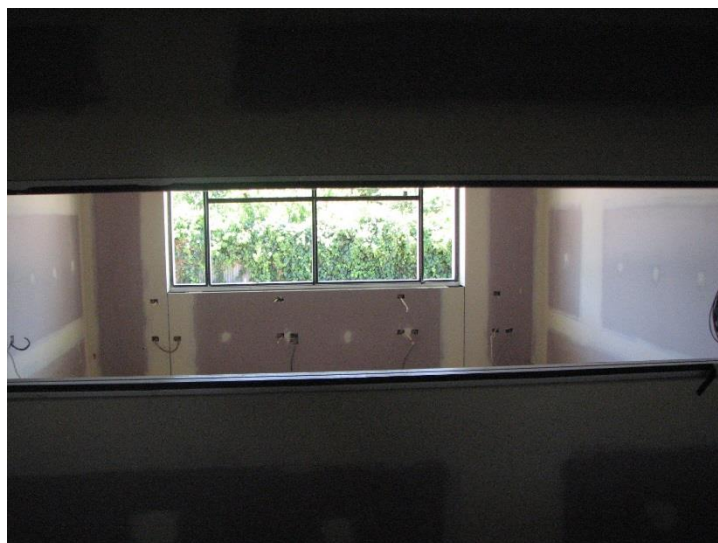
Figure 19. A teacher preparation room affords a view of a withdrawal space.

Non-aversive spatial solutions to challenging behaviour could include the modification of classrooms to increase engagement (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). The removal of locks would also reduce the likelihood of seclusion. When considering inclusive practice, it is beneficial to consider the wider society that students are a part of. Spaces designated for the 'withdrawal' and the calming of people are not commonly represented within communities outside of the most restrictive of locations, such as asylums or detention centres. A schism therefore exists between the spatial environments within Cook Centre and the broader society it is helping prepare its students for.

5.4.3 Thirdspace

5.4.3.1 Reproduction and consultation

Some of Cook Centre's new spaces were replicated from their previous site in order to preserve and maintain established teaching practices. Considering *Education Works* as a reform initiative, a desire to replicate could be limiting. Schools would benefit from reflecting critically on previous spatial practices to determine whether they were student centred, research informed, and inclusive. From a spatial justice perspective, consultation processes are critical when designing new facilities. This has been witnessed in cities, for example, where 'shared space' approaches were adopted whilst ignoring concerns raised by a disability organisation, resulting in dangerous space (Moody & Melia, 2014). Dischinger and Jackson Filho (2012) likewise found that social exclusion had been reproduced when people with vision impairments were not consulted during the installation

of appropriate tactile walkways. Older, existing schools were likely planned when people with disabilities were not meaningfully consulted. If and when replicating historical spaces, schools would likely now benefit from correcting this ableistic oversight by capturing the voices and experiences of people with disabilities, including students.

5.4.3.2 Withdrawal – the removal of surplus populations

People with disabilities can be considered as a surplus population (Slee, 2013), removed into segregated schooling to relieve general education environments of their 'burden'. This notion of population removal as solution can be conceived within Cook Centre, their own surplus population, as students with highly challenging behaviours are removed from general classroom spaces. Armstrong sees marginalisation as coming from a perception of the ideal student (2007). Special schools, such as Cook Centre, may also have idealised students whose disabilities do not manifest as deviant behaviour, those whose communication skills enable them to better understand and self-regulate their behaviour. In creating a schooling environment replete with spaces to withdraw or seclude students who do not fit such ideals, Cook Centre may have been built to suit practices which are not only restrictive, but could eventually be outlawed (Parliament of Australia, 2016).

5.4.4 Openings and conclusions

Interpretations of inclusion are likely to be influential when designing and creating special school spaces. If spaces for withdrawal/seclusion are considered more inclusive than student suspension then they may be embraced, enabling students to remain at school. Within the restrictive environment of Cook Centre, additional restrictions appear to have been spatially created. The school has become more spatially restrictive, perhaps in response to an increasingly challenging student cohort, or a need to minimise injuries and attend to the wellbeing of others at the centre – teachers, and idealised students.

5.4.5 Member checking the major themes

Major themes provided by this analysis – seclusion, surveillance by panopticon, and duplication of previous pedagogical practices and programs – were checked for validity through interview questions with a leader at Cook Centre. Questions posed to the leader were designed to elicit perceptions on how new spaces might restrict inclusion. An early question asked how the new withdrawal spaces had changed the way teachers managed and supported student behaviour.

> *Okay, that's a pretty easy question to answer. It's ... when the classroom is nice and quiet,*
> *everything's beautiful, and then occasionally one person may have that little meltdown,*
> *that sensory meltdown, and we're able to slide them into an area close to their class, or,*

maybe if they haven't got one we can find one, but generally the kids with behaviour
problems, they do, we do have them closer to withdrawal rooms, and that segregates them,
and you can't hear anything in the other room. (Cook Centre Interview)

This response supported the analysis of these spaces being primarily used to segregate students as a behavioural management approach. Teachers controlled the bodies of students within space, with no apparent self-selection of spaces by students. Students being 'seen but not heard' positions them as both visible and invisible due to the exclusion of their voices (Thomson, 2007). A follow up question asked whether teachers used the withdrawal and gated spaces consistently across classes. The leader's response, *"I don't like to call, it's got a, like a jail, but it's not, it's just got bars and you can get in and out",* aligned somewhat with the earlier description of environments as 'cages'. I was told that one particular student was being taught alone, in a space designed and designated for teacher preparation (Schematic Floor Plan – Room 1.11), due to extremely challenging behaviour. This example supported the theme of student removal as a viable solution to behavioural challenges.

When asked about the design of the corridor that afforded ease of surveillance of a multitude of spaces, the leader responded:

You can also walk right down within thirty seconds and get a feel for what's happening
and, visual, visual, because you can't hear it. The doors are closed. The glass doors are
closed. You wouldn't have a clue. So, it was basically planned for the visual so you could
get down from one point to the other point very quickly. (Cook Centre Interview)

This supports the design as affording opportunities for sighting many teachers and students, with ease, and opens up the possibility for such sighting to be used as a method of social control. On viewing a student, withdrawn, through the windows, the leader described the situation: *"I'm standing outside, looking through the window to her and you can't hear anything. So that really helps because she screams, she spits, she throws things, she does it all."*

When asked about the importance of replicating previous spaces, the leader spoke of a university-led practice they had employed, whereby the voices of both staff and students were captured by photographing the spaces they liked. Photographs were then culled down further by asking them which spaces they preferred, and why. Students with complex communication needs were inclusively supported to participate throughout this process. This corroborated the theme of desired replication, but additionally showed that the school had indeed valued all

stakeholders and invested time in ensuring that student preferences were acknowledged and influential in the school's planning processes.

5.5 Sturt Centre

Sturt Centre was under construction when data was collected. Data included 89 photographs, a simplistic map with minimal descriptions, and notes made by the researcher during and immediately after the tour. Once again, a leader of the school accompanied the researcher during data collection.

5.5.1 Firstspace

At the front of Sturt Centre a sign announced the "construction of a purpose built special school based on 21st century teaching, learning philosophies and technology". Sturt Centre resided on a narrow stretch of land, its rectangular footprint so closely positioned alongside its neighbouring school that decorative banners from the mainstream site were flapping above the researcher's shoulder as he approached the foyer. The same entrance will be required of staff members after parking their vehicles in the neighbouring school's car park, expanded as part of the co-location.

Sturt Centre has a long driveway down its left flank and a walkway down its right. Sub-schools, including junior primary, primary, middle-school and secondary, can be observed by walking along this route. Each sub-school had a defining colour from the blue-purple 'cool' end of the colour spectrum – tones chosen for their 'calming qualities' (Sturt Centre Leader, Personal Communication, 2013). Guidelines for optimal environments for students on the autism spectrum, have indicated that "light, warm, neutral colours are best", but lighting, quantity of colour, and contrast are equally important considerations (Gaines, Bourne, Pearson & Kleibrink, 2016, p.57).

Sub-schools were each provided with a motif, such as a sun or a tree, to assist students with orientation and navigation. Each had a separate, age-appropriate playground, which could double-up as break out space if required. Some play equipment had been exported from the previous site to minimise costs. Spaces designed for the development of living skills existed within each sub-school, as did separate sensory rooms and spaces for student withdrawal. Some classrooms spilled directly out onto the playground or led to outside spaces which would soon contain sensory swings and be surrounded by a secure mesh material (Figure 20). The mesh would be metallic and afford line of site through a multitude of tiny holes, each roughly the circumference of a finger. One such space had been designed with the placement of a specific, highly challenging student in mind (Figure 21). No information was supplied regarding what would happen to the individualised learning space once the student had left the school.
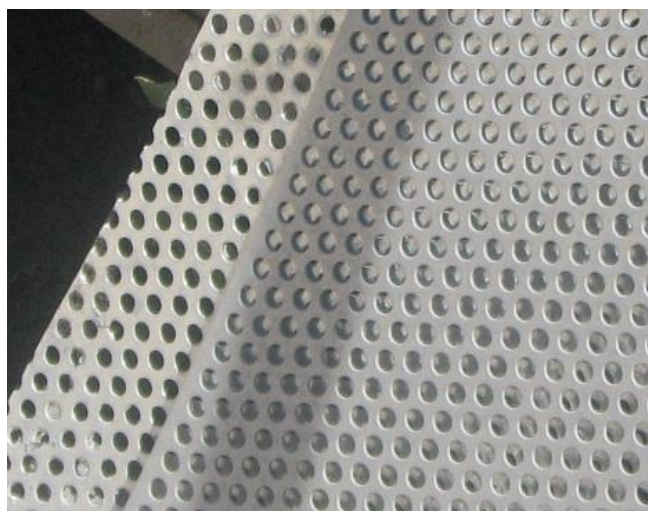
Figure 20. Mesh material to surround outside spaces, affording some sight.

Figure 21. Outdoor classroom space for one student, to be secured with mesh.

Spatial divisions within the sub-schools were outlined during the tour, including sliding doors to separate teacher and student spaces. The school bags of the youngest students were placed in corridors, not within classrooms, spatially preventing students from obsessing over items located in their bags, such as food. At the secondary sub-school, at the rear of the school, play equipment was designed to be more physically challenging whilst still meeting the sensory needs of students through a variety of motions. The researcher was told that the secondary playground specifically did not have a sandpit as it was considered not to be age-appropriate for secondary students.

A formidable concrete shield divided Sturt Centre from its neighbouring school, greatly restricting the line of sight between schools. Select spaces remained, however, placed along the shield so that students across schools could view each other through the vertical bars (Figure 22). The school leader explained that this was a decision to protect Sturt Centre students (Sturt Centre Leader, Personal Communication, 2013) should they choose to engage in self-stimulatory behaviours. This

protection of dignity was also reflected in the design of the junior sub-school toilets, with frosted windows enabling staff to maintain duty of care and line of sight, whilst not infringing on personal privacy.

Figure 22. Visual connection between schools, afforded in discrete locations.

Sturt did not have ceiling tracking for hoists due to their students being mostly independent walkers. Their cohort would likely change, however, so the school had ensured their ceiling was reinforced should tracking need to be installed later. Adaptability can also be seen through the design of their flexible learning area. This area, located beside a horticulture space, could operate later as a general use classroom if the school's population increased.

A gymnasium was located at the front of the school, to the left of the entrance. This hall space had previously belonged to the mainstream site, but was deemed "surplus to needs" (Sturt Centre Leader, Personal Communication, 2013) before the co-location, enabling Sturt to take possession of it. The gym held innovative features, such as a climbing wall at one end, built deliberately low to promote safer horizontal movement along its length. At the opposite end of the gym there was a mezzanine. An elevator would enable full access to this space, which was to be used as a viewing platform by educators, parents, or under-graduate teachers from local universities. The neighbouring school would be invited to use the ball courts after school hours in an attempt to broker peace between schools and develop a good early relationship. Beneath the mezzanine an exercise gym was located, stocked with stationary bikes and running machines. This would be used to increase student fitness. The doors to exit the gym had been altered to restrict ease of egress and reduce the likelihood of Sturt Centre students absconding.

5.5.2 Secondspace

Sturt Centre began their spatial journey by creating an 'Education and Care' plan, outlining how they wanted to teach their children. No attempts were made to visualise the space, leaving that task to the architects who were considered 'the experts'. A suggestion was made to divide the rectangular footprint into four sub-schools which enabled Sturt to stratify their diverse population and focus on separate, age-appropriate learning and play spaces. Sensory rooms and withdrawal spaces were greatly increased throughout the new school space.

5.5.2.1 Protecting the population

The building of a concrete wall between Sturt Centre and their neighbouring school is a strong measure in visually protecting their students from their mainstream peers. Self-stimulatory behaviours, including masturbation, are commonplace amongst adolescents, however, students with intellectual disabilities may have greater difficulty in identifying social stigma or abiding by societal rules relating to normalised sexual practices. Shielding inappropriate sexual behaviours can assist to safeguard student dignity, and prevent exposure of sexualised behaviours to neighbouring peers. One possible limitation, however, is that the spatial solution may remove the impetus for a behavioural one. Schools may consider they have succeeded in managing inappropriate sexual behaviours, simply by removing them from public sight (Fernandes & Fernandes, 2014). The concrete shield does not extinguish sexualised behaviours and, without a behavioural solution, may serve to normalise them. It is important to teach students with disabilities socially acceptable behaviours as they are, historically, a population vulnerable to sexual abuse. It is not helpful or dignified (Fernandes & Fernandes, 2014) to assume that appropriate sexual behaviours cannot be taught. The visual protection afforded by the concrete wall should not decrease the importance of teaching students social and sexual behaviours that will enable them to participate inclusively in their broad communities.

The concrete shield positions the Sturt Centre students as 'the hidden'. There are, however, spatial examples where the adults assume this position, such as the walkway on the right flank, and the mezzanine above the gym. Educators are always in control of who sees, when and where, and who is hidden, and for what reasons. Some spaces, such as frosted bathroom windows and meshed metal panels, illustrate a balancing act, wanting to both reveal, for reasons of duty of care, but also to hide in order to provide student dignity.

5.5.2.2 Spatial contestation

Although the gym was re-possessed by Sturt Centre as a result of it becoming 'surplus', it was unclear who made this determination. It was evident, however, that the removal of both space and spatial assets from one school, to provide to another, constructs a binary of spatial ownership –

your space/our space – which invites contestation over space. The only exception appeared to be the shared car parking space, a vastly different approach towards of the spatial contestation at Flinders Special School. This strategy was afforded by extending the car park within the mainstream school, and spatial allowance to do so. This sharing may create future opportunities for informal greeting, sharing, and farewelling, as staff from either school arrive or depart for the day.

Thirdspace

The shielding of Sturt Centre students from their mainstream peers shows a resisting of inclusive principles, and a retreat to an outdated 'care and protect' ideology. The concrete barrier, unlike fencing, legitimises that Sturt Centre students need to be hidden due to their undignified behaviour. Such positioning can be traced, in South Australia, back to the 19th century, with the naming of an institution for 'weak minded children' as Minda, the Kaurna word for "place of shelter and protection" (Disability Information & Resource Centre, 2007, para.3). Children with disabilities have historically been the sheltered, protected against their own society. They are effectively then 'othered', excluded from the normative centre. Sturt Centre, through this process, therefore becomes a site of 'otherness' where student bodies are considered problems (Holt, 2007). Sturt Centre have denied their students visual proximity to their mainstream peers, who would play sometimes a metre or two away from them. As a result, they would rarely view modelled social skills or have informal opportunities to connect and build relationships through observation and communication.

Tensions over contested space, initiated by the repossession of the gym, could be reduced by a sharing of space between schools. An example of this exists at Gordon East Special School in Mount Gambier. A new gymnasium was built on neighbouring land which belonged to a poorly funded community organisation. An agreement was reached that the asset would be considered shared and utilised fully by both communities – the special school and the community organisation. Such agreements remove the binary of yours/ours and create opportunities for shared ownership of space, opening up additional opportunities for the later sharing of events, activities and practices.

5.5.4 Openings and conclusions

Sturt Centre (re)produced their students' segregation, even when moving to a co-located environment, through its concrete barriers. Although there are some lines of sight, planted shrubs will obscure these spaces further, increasingly positioning Sturt Centre students as hidden, and their school hierarchically below that of idealised, normative schooling (Holt, 2007). Despite the diversity of their population, shielding all students may have the effect of homogenising them, grouping them as 'the disabled', and hiding individual skills, characteristics and abilities. The way

students from the neighbouring school view students with disabilities is therefore unlikely to be challenged, questioned or changed. Their otherness has been spatially constructed and socially replicated. The opportunity of "transforming representations of dominant identity positioning" appears to have been lost via spatial and visual separation (Holt, 2007, p.799). This firming up of otherness perhaps underlies the reluctance to share student spaces, instead privileging the need to protect and dignify, even at the cost of reproduced segregation.

5.5.5 Member checking

The two dominant themes of spatial contestation and student protection were explored in the member checking process. When asked about possible tensions between schools, the Sturt Centre leader reinforced that the neighbouring school had indeed not benefited from their being co-located with Sturt Centre. This was in contrast with some mainstream environments within *Education Works*.

> So they haven't really gained any positive benefit from this big whiz-bang school being built next door, not really at all, except to lose some land and their hall, so I think that's been hard for them. (Sturt Centre Interview)

Continual spatial contestation was also suggested by the leader stating that they were growing and knew where they would have to further encroach on the neighbouring school's space.

> I mean we have had to plan for, we've talked about where our footprint may extend, but it hasn't been part of a joint conversation with [neighbouring school] yet, so that's for our future isn't it? (Sturt Centre Interview)

This supports the analysis regarding space existing as a binary, creating ongoing tension between schools.

The Sturt Centre leader did not identify visual affordances or protection as an area of tension, so prompting occurred, with the researcher directly asking: "Was there any tension around how and when students were able to be visibly seen?"

> Well they are seen, I mean, through the fence but as the shrubbery grows up they'll be less visible. Certainly when we built this school I knew that when my children when they reached puberty they would indulge in what we call unacceptable self-stimulatory behaviour and don't understand the social implications of those so therefore I did speak through the education and care brief to the architects about making a fence towards the end, the upper

ranges of the school so the middle and senior school level where my children could see out but the [neighbouring school] children couldn't see in. So, yes, that's probably what you're talking about. And that has been done really, really, really well. (Sturt Centre Interview)

Traditional fencing is more evident in the younger sub-schools. The degree to which secondary aged students can 'see out' is contested, as this is mediated by the concrete shields, vertical bars, and growing foliage. This response does support the notion that adolescent students' bodies become problems requiring spatial solutions.

In summary, both major themes were supported by the member checking. Space exists as a binary, creating contestation and tension, and student bodies, particularly those of adolescents, are protected spatially from the eyes of neighbouring students, resulting in spatial divides that reproduce segregation and may affect the necessary teaching of appropriate social behaviours.

5.6 Summary

"The conception of space has changed from something which can be marked and reserved for particular populations – think about Indian reserves or Jewish ghettos – to something which has to be organised in such a way that it enables all people to live in the presence of others" (Masschelein & Verstraete, 2012, p.2)

Space was used across the four special schools to maintain and increase student safety, at times resulting in the sheltering of students from people within their own community. A tension appeared between protecting students and enabling them to learn from risk-taking. Three of the four schools developed a panopticon of sorts to surveil their population. This could result in leaders having increased awareness of school activity and improved response time during emergencies, but also contributes to the construction of unequal power relationships where non-disabled adults are positioned always in control through an ableist gaze. Dark spaces, enabling students to feel trusted, independent and, importantly, unobserved, appeared limited. Another continuing theme was spatial marginalisation – either being marginalised due to age, behaviour or disability factors (students) or strategically selecting a position of marginalisation to avert another's gaze (teachers at Eyre Centre). Space between the special schools and mainstream schools appeared to be challenged and contested, rather than identified as locations for sharing.

The voices of school leaders were important in checking the analyses made throughout each of these spatial studies. In Chapter 6 leaders from the special schools were interviewed to determine their perspectives and insights regarding inclusion and the development of inclusive practices within and across schools.

Chapter 6 – Interviews

Introduction

The interviews of school leaders from each site were undertaken after initial analysis of both the document study (Chapter 4) and the spatial study (Chapter 5), enabling member checking of emerging themes. Each of the four sites was fully operational as a special school at the time of the interviews, providing an ideal opportunity to reflect on how initial planning was being enacted daily. The interviews provided leaders who had been influential in the planning stages with an opportunity to reflect on how the co-locations had affected relationships between schools and shaped inclusive practices.

As stated in Chapter 3, data was analysed using cycles of open, focused, and selective coding. Once saturation of analysis was reached discriminant sampling occurred, followed by the use of thick description from the transcripts to support key findings.

6.1 Eyre Centre

As an initial *Education Works* site, Eyre Centre was the first built of the four school sites. By the time of the interview they had therefore been well established alongside their neighbouring school. A full transcript of the interview was provided to the leader for confirming intent of meaning. No changes were suggested.

Eyre Centre's leader spoke passionately about inclusion throughout the interview. The leader's interpretation, however, did not align with that of either the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) or the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006), which stated that inclusive education meant all students being taught in the general education environment (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016, p.3). Instead, inclusion was conceptually identified as being about the meeting of diverse student needs, regardless of the educational environment. This echoed the view of Forbes (2007), shifting the focus away from 'place', possibly as an attempt to protect special schools from being perceived as exclusionary.

> *My personal beliefs are that inclusion is not a place. It's not a building and a place. Inclusion is the relationships that you develop regardless of where you are. Inclusion is bigger than that as well.* (Eyre Centre Interview)

Exclusion was positioned, not as segregation from general education, but as the omission of students with disabilities, sometimes captured through public, homogenising statements.

> *I think the thing that really initially upsets me is when people or politicians make those statements about 'all students' and you think, 'Well, you know what sunshine, you have just missed a whole group of kids and seriously, it doesn't matter whether they're a special school, special class, disability unit in a mainstream school, or straight in a mainstream class, as soon as they say 'all students will be literate' or numerate or whatever, or will be functioning at their age appropriate level at literacy and numeracy, they have just ignored a whole heap of kids, which makes me very angry.* (Eyre Centre Interview)

Major themes

6.1.1 Unequal relationships: Work placements and doing 'for'

The leader's perception of inclusion influenced responses to most interview questions. Early connections between schools, considered to be evidence of inclusion, appeared more aligned with practices of integration (e.g. combined events, the sharing of a canteen), replicating one of the findings from the document analysis (Chapter 4). Another finding from the document analysis was unequal relationships between students, with those from the mainstream sometimes acting 'for' the Eyre Centre students. This theme was replicated in their interview data, with transcripts showing that programs of connection were identified as 'work placements'.

> *The opportunities for [neighbouring school] kids to come and do work placement with us as well, and for our kids to just have peers who are similar in age to them, playing with them, and spending time with them, and talking to them, and playing ukuleles with them, and doing face painting for them, so at Sports Days some girls came over from [neighbouring school] and did all the face painting for us – and it's just precious. And they help them play skittles and knock down the water ducks and, you know, everyone got soaking wet and the kids all had a great time. It was good. So, yeah, it's just that lovely interaction between kids. It's just beautiful. Our kids love it.* (Eyre Centre Interview)

The language of 'for' (face painting) markedly differs from that of 'with' (playing) in terms of positioning visiting students as either assistants or friends/peers. The degree to which activities occurred on an equal basis, with equal benefits, is unclear. If students from the mainstream perceived themselves to be in support roles, however, then it would be unlikely that any prevailing ableist beliefs would be challenged.

6.1.2 Staffing and spatial needs: "A bit of a barrier"

Movement of students between schools was commonly from the mainstream to the special school. Eyre Centre had attempted integration of their students into the regular classrooms, but this had encountered early difficulties and therefore stalled:

> *We started off looking at some of our kids going into regular classes for some sessions, and that worked initially, and then it really, and I don't know whether there was a staff change or what happened, but that's something that we'd like to look at and pursue again. It hasn't happened this year.* (Eyre Centre Interview)

The unsuitability of small learning spaces within the mainstream was considered problematic, as was the identified need to send accompanying support staff, suggestive of a funding or resourcing constraint. Finding time to negotiate with the mainstream school, to organise the visits, was also identified as a difficulty. The mainstream school's key liaison had changed roles and not been replaced, hampering progress with the fledgling program. This confluence of barriers suggests Eyre Centre would have benefited from additional integration planning, a recommendation made by the recent Select Committee on Access to the South Australian Education System for students with disabilities (2017).

6.1.3 Advantages of proximity: "In each other's faces"

The initial relationship between schools was felt to be very positive, with Eyre Centre feeling welcomed *"from the word 'go'"* by their excited neighbours. Parents between schools were connected through a discussion group – 'My Time', with participating parents from the mainstream school invited because they also had children with disabilities.

The Eyre Centre leader clarified that their families, unlike families from mainstream schools, usually resided outside of the local area, making it more difficult to interact regularly. Spatial proximity was identified as an advantage of the co-location:

> *I think being adjacent to [neighbours] we're in each other's faces and because we do, we're part of the same partnership and, previously cluster, and because we do PD together it's easier for us to form relationships with their staff and then talk about, okay, well what could we do together and they get excited about that too.* (Eyre Centre Interview)

In describing their previous location, the leader identified a lack of visibility as responsible for them feeling socially isolated:

At [old site] we didn't interact with other kids, because, it just, there weren't any other

kids to interact with, so we were out the back of the [business] building, and really nobody

knew we were there. (Eyre Centre Interview)

Such statements supported an intention of *Education Works*, with proximity providing increased

opportunities for students to mix. Eyre Centre's leader believed this spatial design existed so *"we*

could have age appropriate peers adjacent to our school".

6.1.4 Letting go of the past: "Strange Things"

From the outset teachers appeared reticent to let go of their previous, outdated environment and

resources:

The staff requested some unusual things like 'can we please take this with us, can we

please take that with us' and I guess part of that was their ability to trust and foresee into

the future and believe that what they were going to get was better than what they had. And

that was really difficult, because they really wanted to take some strange things with them,

some really old swings, the old boat, you know. It was and so it became difficult to keep

saying, 'no, you can't take that'. (Eyre Centre Interview)

Wanting to take 'strange things' suggested a comfort in retaining established teaching habits

(Greenberg & Baron, 2000). Fullan noted that resistance to change could reflect a fear of the

unknown (cited in Zimmerman, 2006). It is possible that educators at Eyre Centre were fearful, but

equally, they could have been exercising professional discretion, or responding to a need for more

time, resources, or support (Hargreaves, Earl, Moore & Manning, 2001) before acquiescing to

change. Some teachers may have provided resistance because they saw possibilities the leaders did

not (Fullan, 2001), that other options, such as the retention of familiar artefacts within new spaces,

were available too.

6.2 Flinders Special School

Two leaders at Flinders Special School were interviewed together, a few months after co-location.

This was identified by participants as the best approach as they brought different perspectives and

had different levels of involvement during the process. Although both leaders were supplied with a

copy of the final transcript, to check accuracy and content, neither chose to make alterations. It is

therefore considered to be accurate, and representative of their views. The data was not separated

for each interviewee. Instead, comments were conflated as representative of leadership within the

school. At no stage did the leaders disagree with each other's comments. Instead, they took turns to

provide alternative or additional information.

Major themes

6.2.1 From "big believers" to "anti" inclusion

Both leaders were supportive of inclusion as a principle and as a philosophy. This support was tempered, however, with commentary on its perceived limitations.

> *I'm a big believer in inclusion as long as we're looking at each case, individually, for inclusion. But I don't believe in inclusion for the sake of inclusion. It's actually got to benefit the students.* (Flinders Special School Interview)

Previous experiences of educators being forced in the direction of inclusion were noted, with teachers described as sometimes holding attitudes which were "anti" inclusion. These teachers needed to be convinced, by school leadership, of the benefits of inclusion.

Flinders' pathway classes, situated in other mainstream schools, were provided as proof of their established inclusive ethos. One of the partnering mainstream schools had recently, however, undergone a philosophical change. As a result, their pathways class had been stopped.

On inclusion:

> *It needs to be a philosophy that's held by the teachers working with the kids and the teachers in host schools. Unless there's a shared philosophy then it can be tokenistic.* (Flinders Special School Interview)

At no stage during the interview was the requirement of a shared philosophy of segregation posited.

'Time' was the most frequently mentioned barrier, preventing inclusive practices from occurring. The Flinders Special School leaders felt it was best to explore inclusive practices in a *"timely way"*. This meant waiting until staff and students were first settled into the new premises. Pursuing inclusive opportunities during the establishment phase was considered unfeasible, adding to teachers' already full workloads. Some teachers had also found it emotionally difficult to let go of their old school:

> *We're still, you know, we've still got people who are still mourning the move and dealing with that change.* (Flinders Special School Interview)

The need to manage these emotions may have become a factor in not wanting to rush ahead quickly into new relationships.

6.2.2 "Dream Stuff": using space to create new learning and possibilities

At the pre-tender stage everything was possible. Flinders Special School began with a blank piece of paper, a tabula rasa, and it was not until much later that financial limitations surfaced.

> *It really was dreams stuff to begin with and then once the reality hit, that, you know, this*
> *couldn't happen because it's a two million dollar piece of equipment or whatever.*
> (Flinders Special School Interview)

Flinders Special School had the luxury of ample space upon which to plan and build. Like Eyre Centre, an application for a pool was rejected, though Flinders still installed expensive underground pipework in preparation for a pool installation at a later stage, presumably funded elsewhere.

Flinders looked at other special schools to assist them with their planning. These included those in other Australian states, and in New Zealand. Their focus was on the quality of the school build, the design features, and how these schools worked in practice. Throughout the interview an understanding of how space shapes practice was evident.

> *What we did know is that we wanted an open space 'feel', we wanted a bit of a community*
> *'feel', and we wanted students to be not in corridors, but outside if they weren't in*
> *classrooms. So, we wanted a much more open environment.* (Flinders Special School
> Interview)

This open environment was desirable as it better facilitated learning opportunities. Spatial solutions to students' challenging behaviours were rejected if they prohibited or limited the way students learned. Corridors were avoided because students running up and down their length, sometimes screaming, were considered disruptive to learning. In eliminating many corridors Flinders hoped to open up possibilities for staff and students. They rejected individual/segregated play yards for each classroom. Within rooms the use of space to replace learning opportunities was deliberately eschewed:

> *A lot of special schools have their microwaves, TVs, computers, whatever with a roll-down*
> *cover on the front of it and we actually didn't want that in our school. We wanted to teach*
> *children the life skills of using those things that they find in their homes. And teaching*

them at school how to use them rather than to lock them away. (Flinders Special School Interview)

The leaders had already noticed that the new facilities had begun changing the way teachers worked with their students. One perceived outcome was an increased sense of wellbeing across the school. The leaders noted a *"complete reduction of students' anxiety and anger levels"*, which had resulted in dramatically fewer incidents of aggression. Although the school had withdrawal spaces, it was the open spaces in the new design that were considered influential in reducing student anxiety. For students on the autism spectrum, Gaines et al. (2016) have suggested that wide open areas are problematic, however, due to students having difficulties in segmenting their environment. Instead, they recommend clearly marked zones for specific types of activity. Demarcations of colour or patterns could prompt students to better understand the function of certain spaces.

6.2.3 Building barriers/buffers

The size and nature of the neighbouring mainstream school also impacted on the spatial design. Flinders was not built to exist in a void:

> *We were very concerned about the number of students at [neighbouring school] being 1600, or whatever their numbers are there, and how that would, the noise during their play period, how that might impact on our kids as well, so the barrier has – 'barrier' is a terrible word – that buffer just gives us that little bit of subtlety in how we work. It certainly was a big part of the planning.* (Flinders Special School Interview)

The leader's rejection of 'barrier' illustrated awareness of inclusive language, as well as a desire to protect students from being overwhelmed. The leader expanded, suggesting the creation of a 10-15 metre buffer between schools protected the dignity of students when they were "not being at their best". Initially no buffer/barrier existed between the schools. After consultation, however, it was decided that some spatial protection was necessary:

> *Once we started talking as a staff about the pros and cons we realised that actually we don't have an issue about accessing or working together, but it might not always be appropriate all the time, particularly when things aren't going great.* (Flinders Special School Interview)

The leader did not provide detail on which behaviours required shielding from the "prying eyes" of their neighbours. This perceived need to visually protect vulnerable students will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

6.2.4 Speaking about others

Staff members were not the only ones who provided input into spatial considerations. Parents were also involved in discussions regarding early designs. Student participation in planning was, however, not considered: *"Students…I don't know if the students had much to do with the planning to be fair."*

In not involving children in the planning of their school, adults privileged their voices, despite students using the spaces equally and with different purposes. This omission is not considered an inclusive approach as it assumes others have the required knowledge of the child (Burke, 2006). An inherent danger is that the school may have been designed and constructed by teachers, for teachers. Students should be able to self-advocate for their needs as much as possible, yet it appears not to have occurred in this process. Alcoff argued that speaking for others co-exists with speaking about them, and, in doing so, the values of the person speaking are likely to be more deeply represented within the discourse (cited in Fielding, 2003). Therefore, the planning of student spaces at Flinders, even when teachers believed they were making decisions in the best interests of students, were more likely weighted towards the teachers' own best interest.

6.2.5 Debunking disability

Despite a lack of connecting practices linking students across schools, the school leaders do reveal one of their aims, a changing of perceptions:

> *It's also got that dual purpose as well. What we want to do is have, our students to have those opportunities to be included with their peers whether they've got intellectual disability or not, but we also want to teach them a level of understanding so that the [neighbouring school] students have an understanding and an appreciation of our students and what they stand for, so it's about 'debunking disability' I suppose in essence, that, you know, a disability is normal, not abnormal, okay, it's a part of everyday life.* (Flinders Special School Interview)

At the time of the interview ideals such as 'debunking disability' had not begun to be realised as the only shared space was a canteen facility within the mainstream school. Even car parking was separate, and identified as spatially contested. Flinders had, however, supplied School Support Officers (SSOs) to their neighbouring school in order to help them support students with autism.

Although these students did not fit enrolment criteria for special schooling, their needs were significant and such provision of staff had helped forge a professional connection. Future plans between schools focused on the development of connections. One example was the possible establishment of a senior pathways class, an example of *"the bigger picture stuff"* in mind.

One difficulty in 'debunking disability' as a special school, is that the very nature of the segregated environment creates 'otherness' which contrasts with normalisation (Wolfensberger & Tullman, 1982) – the living of as normal a life as possible.

6.3 Cook Centre

Cook Centre had only been co-located for a couple of weeks prior to the interview. Its identity as described by the leaders was *"about 60 per cent autism"*, consisting of *"a group of Aspergers"* and both *"a very low functioning group, we call them that"* and many children under guardianship. The school was itself summarised as being *"very mild intellectual"*, possibly the only special school in Australia to enrol students without intellectual disabilities (*"They're the Asperger's group"*). Cook Centre was considered to have expertise in behaviour management and was more *"like a behaviour unit"* as a result.

> *A lot of our staff, we've got a few, are doing one on one with kids under RAP, which is funding from the department. We've got, and we do that fantastically, we picked up a girl about three years ago from another special school who wasn't really doing that well and she's come here and the psychiatrists don't know what she's got, they want us to tell them. She's very violent. She's extremely violent. We get a full teacher for that, and that's a pretty big one for us because as I said to you before, you know, we've got kids from [another school] who have been suspended and we turn them around.* (Cook Centre Interview)

The restrictive nature of Cook Centre is inferred, with students transferring there after failing at other specialised, segregated schools. Students sometimes received their own teacher in order to manage violent behaviours: *"They would, you know, kick us in, they'd kick you and bite you and we'd have lots of those incidents."*

For some families, placement at Cook Centre might appear more inclusive than educational exclusion as a consequence to challenging behaviour. A placement within a special school, into a classroom with an individual teacher, is, however, highly restrictive and suggests a segregation which is as much pedagogical as it is spatial. Interactions with peers, as a result of such specialised and focussed teacher attention, is likely to be both reduced and highly monitored (Groch, 2018).

Major themes

6.3.1 Inclusion as 'maindumping' or Hobson's choice?

The leader at Cook Centre saw countries that had come closer to achieving full inclusion as undesirable:

> *I know that other parts, especially of the world for instance, in Canada they don't, they just put them in mainstream because they don't have special schools, so I wouldn't believe in that sort of stuff.* (Cook Centre Interview)

The implication is that mainstream schools remain unchanging, whether through unwillingness or inflexibility. This aligns with practices more commonly known as 'maindumping' (Chapman, 1988) rather than inclusion.

The leader considered school choice to be important:

> *Well my belief is that we've got units, we've got special classes, and we've got special schools. Now some people say, you know, negative about one or the other. I think it's important that we have them all so that the parents have a choice to either put their student or their kid into a special school, or an annex, or in mainstream.* (Cook Centre Interview)

An over-representation of South Australian students with disabilities in both home schooling and Flexible Learning Options enrolments (ARTD Consultants, 2013; Select Committee on Access to the South Australian Education System for students with disabilities, 2017), might similarly be framed as parental choice, though more likely represents 'Hobson's Choice' – a selection at a time when no viable alternatives have been offered. Research has indicated that the driving motivation for home-schooling children with disabilities is not parental ideology, but the failure of traditional services offered by schools (Cook, Bennett, Lane & Mataras, 2013).

Cook Centre's leader did not want parental choice to result in enrolment at their neighbouring school at the expense of their own viability: *"Both of us want sort of inclusion, but not taking enrolments away from us."* This 'sort of' inclusion sought to secure the position of special schools and professional self-interest (Slee, 2018, p.26) and considered choice more of a threat than a parental right. This will be explored in more detail in Chapter 7.

The facilitation of student voices to inform the planning of the new school was identified as an inclusive practice. At no point was inclusion mentioned in regard to students accessing their

neighbouring school to develop meaningful peer relationships. (The exception to this was the future possibility of buddy classes.)

Descriptions of inclusive practices were not strongly evident within the interview data. The leader at Cook Centre had attended events at the neighbouring school and intended to bring their leaders to Cook Centre's own events, such as graduations. Leaders across schools had met to begin developing *"a very strong bond"*. Plans to connect further were on the drawing board. These included classes using the woodwork facilities next door, students visiting Cook Centre for work experience, and *"maybe buddy classes"*.

When asked to identify any inclusive practices that were not occurring between schools, the response was: *"No, I can't think of any."* This was despite a paucity of inclusive practices being described. When prompted to provide some detail on inclusive practices, most resembled 'special education' practices, focussed on meeting individual learning goals. Parents shared no interactions across schools, students had not connected in any manner and, although there was intention to build a good relationship between teachers, this was very much at a preliminary stage. In fairness, Cook Centre had only just moved into their new premises. However, other co-located special schools, such as Sturt Centre, had initiated programs prior to co-location occurring. It's possible that the perceived threat of the neighbouring school taking enrolments from Cook Centre, was a factor behind the initial caution.

6.3.2 Unwanted: "not very happy about us coming here"

An attitude of being cautious, and even reticent, towards engagement with the neighbouring mainstream school emerged throughout the interview:

> There are ideas of what we want to do, but we're doing it very, very slowly … So just taking it very, sort of slowly … So we're taking it baby steps at this stage, and this term I wouldn't think that we would be going in at all, to them. (Cook Centre Interview)

And in responding to a question about increased student interactions due to the relocation: *"Well we haven't had, across schools at the moment, we're not touching it. We're not ready for the big jump."*

Reasons for such caution were provided, including previous failed attempts at inclusion. The leader described Cook Centre's students as having been abused, suspended, excluded, and laughed at – *"because they had Asperger's or whatever"* – whilst in mainstream settings. Other co-located special schools had advised them to take it slowly because of their spatially intruding on the

mainstream school. Cook Centre was additionally highly conscious of parents from the neighbouring school and how they felt about the co-location: *"We want to integrate slowly because the parent group around here are not very happy about us coming here."*

The parent group's unhappy nature, which was not expanded upon, contrasted with the research on attitudes of parents of children without disabilities towards inclusion, which are generally positive (de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2010). Cook Centre's leader described their school as being *"unwanted"* by others. They did not get to choose their neighbours, but were eventually *"accepted"* after being rejected elsewhere:

> *A number of the schools in the [direction] were asked and they wouldn't take us, so we just kept looking and [a neighbouring school] said, 'Yep; we'll have them.' And, so that's how it was. I didn't, I didn't get a say.* (Cook Centre Interview)

This experience of feeling unwanted was also conveyed when describing the placement of students into post-school options:

> *We're going to be knocking on doors to see if they'll take some of our kids, but just different open employment. Which is our mild intellectual. There's not many people who are willing to take those kids on. It's really hard to find, but there are some companies that we go through, some of the employment groups that we get in and it's getting better, but it's not a hundred per cent.* (Cook Centre Interview)

These experiences illustrate that Cook Centre saw themselves, and their students, as being undesirable to others. Such a perception could result in fewer approaches towards others, and the school becoming more isolated as a result. Feeling *"unwanted"* provides an explanation as to the absence of inclusive discourse and advocacy within the interview, suggesting that lived experiences and attitudes negatively affected each other, restricting the emergence of inclusive practices.

6.3.3 Student and teacher voices: requesting reproduction

Benefits of the co-location were largely considered to stem from the new spatial design. Input into the school design was received from teachers and parents through consultation processes. Students provided input through a survey, stating they wanted features such as a bike track and a meeting room – both of which they received. Cook Centre also engaged in a local university project to include the voices of students with complex communication needs. This was achieved through the taking of photographs: *"Every kid was given a camera and what they had to do is take photos of*

things that they liked". Students then indicated which photographs best represented the spaces they wanted reproduced in the new school.

To Cook Centre's credit, they were adamant in the need for their students' voices to be included:

> *Now the idea of doing this this way is because it's inclusive of all because the lower functioning group have never been in the surveys and this was a way of doing survey a bit different. And what we found when they were sitting down, even though they couldn't talk and communicate, they could tell you. One of the girls who was fairly low and behaviour, she was going, she'd put this here and she goes [tapping on table]. … It was outstanding. And we picked up a lot of the stuff, that what they wanted, through that process. So we bottled it.* (Cook Centre Interview)

The practice described aligned with photo elicitation (Briggs, Stedman & Krasny, 2014), which has previously been successful in valuing and collecting marginalised voices. Such methods, used to capture a sense of place and attachments, are limiting when the goal is the creation of a new learning environment, specifically because students could only reproduce elements, as opposed to making new environmental suggestions. Given that the previous school was old and dilapidated, with areas closed off due to safety concerns, some reproduction would have clearly been undesirable. This notion of 'reproduction' occurred elsewhere in the interview, when describing the process of engaging with the architects: *"Okay, from the start, the briefing on the architect was 'same as what we've got at [previous school's name]', so same type of cohort"*.

A desire to reproduce elements from the previous school was also evident within the teachers' voices. Opinions, however, were not always congruent between teachers and school leaders: *"Some of it...they wanted swimming pools and stupid things, you know"*.

Attempts by teachers to reproduce spaces from the original school were declined due to the need for spatial compromise:

> *The cafe has to be a little bit smaller and they didn't like that. They wanted a bigger cafe like we had, but what I said to them was 'the cooking area is probably bigger', but they wanted chairs and tables inside the cafe. I said 'you can't have it all' so what we've done is build it on the back of our gym.* (Cook Centre Interview)

Although strong opinions emerged regarding the use of Cook Centre's teaching and learning spaces, developing spatial capacity by sharing spaces with the mainstream appeared not to be on the agenda.

6.3.4 Withdrawing

The co-location had not become a catalyst for developing practical connections between schools, evident in this response to a question asking what the schools didn't share: *"What don't we share? They're not coming…well, we're alone."*

Isolation appeared reproduced, whether desired or not. Internal spatial changes were seen as more beneficial than the geographic co-location. To inform the school's spatial design, teachers were asked to suggest features they most wanted: *"They all want more withdrawal rooms. They all want bigger classrooms"*.

One of the stated reasons for needing larger classrooms was the physical size of their secondary students: *"especially some of the boys – they're huge"*. The addition of withdrawal rooms created opportunities for more mindfully removing challenging students from their classrooms.

We've put withdrawal rooms in. We've got eight classes, and four withdrawal rooms. A number of our students, especially the autistic students, some of them are, have got challenging behaviours, huge challenging behaviours, and we're able to put them into those withdrawal rooms next to their classrooms so it can be a lot more quieter. (Cook Centre Interview)

Such language indicated that students were 'put' in rooms by staff, as opposed to self-selecting such spaces. Cook Centre's co-location had been delayed, and during that time the school had been over-capacity by up to 20 students. This led to crowdedness: *"There were lots of, not fights, but pushing, shoving, we had a basketball ring in the middle of all this. It was horrendous"*.

Since the co-location, the new withdrawal spaces resulted in the challenging behaviours of students being easier to manage:

> *That's five weeks without an incident which is, which is, so it's making sure that we could separate some of the kids in the classroom if they were having a meltdown, and those withdrawal rooms were fantastic.* (Cook Centre Interview)

The students were placed in the withdrawal room as an intervention measure, enabling de-escalation and minimal interrupt other students. The school leader felt there had been 60-70 per

cent fewer incidents of aggression at the new site, which meant: *"less stressed kids and healthy teachers because they're not being attacked like they were"*. Concerns over any possible misuse of segregated spaces, as outlined in Chapter 2, were not voiced at any stage during the interview.

6.4 Sturt Centre

One leader from Sturt Centre agreed to be interviewed. At that time the school had been co-located for several months, so responses could address what occurred prior to the co-location, and post co-location. An initial copy of this transcript was sent to the interviewee for checking, and some minor alterations were made. In certain areas of the interview transcript supplementary information was also added.

Major themes

6.4.1 Inclusion as ambiguous, but not 'maindumping'

Inclusion was perceived as something needing to be *"unpicked"* and explored. Inclusive practices were viewed as inconsistent, and open to diverse interpretation. The interviewee framed inclusion as lacking meaning and relevance for students. Maindumping was not conflated with inclusion, yet concern was raised over students being shoe-horned into unsupportive mainstream schools simply because they were seen as less restrictive (Chapman, 1988):

> Inclusive practice is about what is inclusive for this particular child at this particular time and what actually allows them in the longer term to be included in their community to the best of their ability in a way that is relevant for them. It's is not simply picking up a kid and dropping them into the mainstream, because that it is not inclusive.

Such positioning where mainstream sites exclude, whilst Special School principals can become "the custodians of inclusive education" (Slee, 2018, p.28) aligns with the views of the Australian Special Education Principals' Association (Forbes, 2007), where place is unimportant to achieve inclusion. This will be elaborated on in Chapter 7.

6.4.2 Benefits of prior connections – positive, "seriously cool" peer relationships

Sturt Centre had begun using the mainstream school's kitchen classroom, contributing to their students' visibility within that site. Such opportunities were seen as clear advantages of proximity.

The peer relationships between students across co-located schools were described as genuine friendships:

But what I see here is really positive. Not always, but mostly it's really positive and when you see true and real friendships you think wow, this is seriously cool. And it is, really. (Sturt Centre Interview)

These relationships existed prior to co-location, due to the peer mentorship program which had provided students with an age-appropriate peer. This had been helpful for settling into the new school. Mainstream students benefited from these relationships through an increased awareness and understanding of social justice. They had stepped in to advocate for their mentees/buddies on occasions when others acted inappropriately towards Sturt Centre students (e.g. name-calling). Toys and magazines had been shared, and students began seeing they were: *"more like them than they're unlike them"*. Conversations between students were occurring naturally and out of hours connections, such as play-dates and sleepovers, had happened. The developing relationships were described within the interview as genuine, and not induced by any sense of pity. As stated in Chapter 4, however, friendships at Sturt Centre appeared to end once peer mentor programs ended and were not sustained during school holidays (Mainstream newsletter, 2013).

6.4.3 "Softly, softly, slowly, slowly"

Although practices between schools already existed, such as the peer mentorship program and use of the kitchen space, future connections were additionally being considered: *"tremendous opportunities that we are gently and slowly exploring"*. A language of caution, however, was repeated throughout the interview:

We have looked at a very softly, softly, slowly, slowly process. … This is the sort of way in which we wanted to slowly embed. … My view is that this must be done in a slow and considered way, because otherwise you have the potential to do something that is less positive. (Sturt Centre Interview)

These examples indicated danger in accelerating the relationship too quickly. The necessity to plan slowly echoed the leader's earlier criticism of students being rushed into mainstream schooling, without adequate supports (Chapman, 1988).

Suggested future practices included the development of buddy classes, a teacher exchange, and invitations to share other spaces, such as Sturt Centre's new gymnasium. Students within the mainstream currently were able to do a Certificate 1, 2 or 3 at other mainstream schools, but the intention was to offer this service at Sturt Centre.

Existing shared practices were also well detailed throughout the interview, capturing connections between students (peer mentorship, events, buddy class), teachers (visits, professional learning, social opportunities, conversations in the shared carpark), leaders (regular meetings), and parents (shared governing council meetings). Existing and potential connections indicated a healthy, active relationship between schools, founded on "mutual respect". It is not known, however, whether these positive intentions and strategies impacted the development of new and inclusive practices – and to what degree.

6.4.4 Limitations of student voice: inequitable input

The spatial design of Sturt Centre was informed by the school's leaders, teachers, parents and students, and captured within an 'Education and Care' brief which was how they wanted to teach. The architects were given the role of converting these pedagogical considerations into spatial designs:

> *It is not our job as trained, you know, teaching professionals and parents who know children exceptionally well to work out the colour the furniture should be, or we did have a say in that, or how big the rooms are or how the fence should be, or how the roof structure should be. That is the job of other professionals, such as architects and engineers and those sorts of people.* (Sturt Centre Interview)

A high level of security was important for both teachers and parents, as identified by the leader here:

> *Obviously, security was very important, and it's important to parents. They rather like the idea that their children are still going to be here at the end of the day. Some of our children are basically related to Houdini and can climb anything at any time. So security was pretty important to us.* (Sturt Centre Interview)

It is unclear how students contributed to conversations about security, if at all. They were asked to identify features they wanted retained from the previous school. A list was constructed of items to transfer across, such as dustpans and brooms. Students suggested colours for furniture, which enabled them to have some control over what was a significant change. This level of contribution, however, did not equate to the range of spatial input offered to the adults. Some students were considered to not have the capacity to provide feedback, and the scope of requested input appeared focused more on resources and aesthetics than restrictions or functions.

6.4.5 Limitations of space: ripping off the neighbours

Spatial design limitations were clarified throughout the interview, including the *"long thin site"*, which was effectively a narrow rectangle of land flanking the neighbouring school. The narrowness eliminated alternate design options, such as being able to develop a school community around a 'village green'. This limitation appeared likely to affect the growth of the school. Sturt Centre was nearing capacity and would soon need to expand onto the land currently occupied by their mainstream neighbours. The loss of land had already been identified as a possible bone of contention, evident within this response regarding the relationship between schools: *"Well I think it's reasonably cordial for someone who's ripped off and taken half their land"*.

The mainstream school's previous school hall had become the new gymnasium at Sturt Centre, so they had previous experience in relinquishing land. Sturt Centre had invited them to share the space as an olive branch of sorts. This land acquisition had likely contributed to Sturt Centre's stated desire to take things *"softly, softly, slowly, slowly"*: "*I didn't want to inundate [neighbouring school] with 'Can I please share this?', 'Could I have that?', 'Umm, by the way, we're taking half your oval'."*

6.5 Summary

Although the leaders did not have overlapping definitions of inclusion, they did align strongly with that of Forbes (2007) where inclusion could occur within special schools. Graham and Spandagou (2011) found differing principal understandings of inclusion resulted in "gaping holes" (p.234) that swallowed the system's most vulnerable students. The interpretations of inclusion voiced by the school leaders did not appear congruent with the intention of the *Education Works* reforms:

> "Relocating these special schools to mainstream schools will allow children to be part of
> the broader school community, while still ensuring they have the special supports they
> need" South Australia Education Minister, Jay Weatherill (Hood, 2010, p.1).

Although some isolated practices were evident between schools, such as peer mentoring (Eyre), early tensions were evident (Flinders) and neighbouring schools were seen as either unhappy bedfellows (Sturt) or threats to future enrolments (Cook).

Time was seen as both barrier and opportunity. Eyre and Flinders found it difficult to find time to connect with their mainstream neighbours. Teachers had full workloads and were still adjusting to changes. Inclusion, within this discourse, appeared to be positioned as additional to the core work of teachers. Sturt Centre were grateful, however, that time enabled them to slowly commence a tenuous relationship following the acquisition of their neighbouring school's land.

Spatially there were factors that resisted or enabled greater inclusion. Proximity, as a result of co-location, was considered beneficial and created greater opportunity. This compared to a sense of isolation pre-co-location. The restricting of their own spatial environment, however, through withdrawal spaces and buffer zones, presented new barriers to be navigated.

In the final chapter, Chapter 7, major themes for each school will be summarised, and thematic connections between schools made. The research questions (Chapter 1) will be answered, and major findings from the thesis will be both stated and discussed, with recommendations made for future research.

Chapter 7 – Discussion

 "The one thing we will not be doing is institutionalising our children, segregating them off from the rest of the community." (South Australia Education Minister, Jennifer Rankine, Nine News Adelaide, 2013)

Introduction

The purpose of this current research was to better understand the *Education Works* reforms, and whether the co-location of special schools with mainstream schools was likely to bring about inclusive change for both students and teachers. To ascertain and describe such changes, three separate research studies were conducted across the four different co-located special schools. This chapter synthesises and articulates key findings from Chapters 4 to 6, providing an opportunity to interpret each school's journey through the reforms, and, finally, make conclusions on the reform measures as a whole. For each school, opportunities for inclusion and barriers against inclusion were identified, with final recommendations made to help guide future policy on inclusion.

This chapter returns to the guiding questions outlined in the introduction, providing answers as informed by the three research methods:

How have the Education Works reforms changed the manner in which schools respond to the inclusive education agenda?

How have attitudes towards inclusive education changed because of the reforms?

What opportunities for inclusive education have been sought because of the reforms?

What barriers continue to inhibit the realisation of Inclusive Education?

Is the reform, overall, a successful approach to increasing inclusive education?

As stated in the literature review, claims have been made by both policy-makers and politicians, suggesting that co-location provides students with disabilities with an increased access to general education and helps connect them with non-disabled peers (Schriever, 2014). Closer physical proximity has been identified as instrumental for increased interactions across and between schools (Government of South Australia, 2006b), a claim which appears disconnected from the previous research on barriers (as outlined in Chapter 1). Inclusion requires a focus on multiple factors for success, including teacher preparation and support, an agreed upon definition, advocacy from the

school leadership, and positive attitudes from school communities (Ainscow, 2004; Westwood, 2007).

7.2 Eyre Centre

Eyre Centre shared their neighbouring school's excitement about possibilities arising from co-location. Proximity and visibility were considered to be advantageous to both. Initial forays in connecting had been attempted between schools, including the inclusion of one Eyre Centre student into mainstream lessons. When students from the mainstream visited Eyre Centre, they engaged in educational activities for mutual purpose and enjoyment. They learned new skills in order to communicate, such as the utilisation of AAC devices. Following such structured experiences, they described Eyre students positively, showed a richer understanding of disability, and were able to identify students' strengths – challenging outdated deficit or medical model thinking (McDougall, 2017).

Barriers towards developing inclusive practices included starkly different roles and expectations between the disabled and non-disabled students. In both the Document and Interview studies (Chapters 4 and 6) interactions between students strongly resembled integration (or 'reverse integration') rather than inclusion. Students from the mainstream were utilising Eyre Centre ostensibly as a work placement location. Relationships were sometimes strained due to the vulnerability and health complexity of Eyre students. This was noted by teachers and students alike, resulting in sadness and creating an additional marker of difference. Early practices between schools appeared contingent on ongoing, supportive personnel, and accessibility. Spaces within Eyre Centre were at times segregated due to the perceived vulnerability of some of its students.

To address the barriers to inclusion – as captured in the data and summarised above – Eyre Centre could reconsider the conception and nature of interactions between students, providing a focus on students engaging for mutual benefit and purpose. Peer programs could additionally benefit from increased frequency (Copeland et al., 2002), and participation beyond school activities, including after-school sports and clubs, or other community-based events (Hughes et al., 1999). Newly planned spaces in the neighbouring mainstream school would benefit from a universal design approach (Burgstahler, 2015), focusing on the accessibility needs of future students, as well as students from Eyre Centre. Sharing of spaces across sites, such as classrooms, could purposefully muddy the lines of segregation. (Such a practice already occurs elsewhere in the state, as previously mentioned.) Although this would ultimately represent another form of segregation, it would appear less restrictive, and could contest notions of 'yours' and 'ours' regarding educational space and students.

7.3 Flinders Special School

Flinders Special School asserted that they were largely supportive of inclusion as a philosophy. They were able to critically reflect upon and change some of their practices, such as the deficit labelling of learning spaces. Flinders appeared focussed on creating an educational environment that valued student learning above behavioural compliance. This was represented through fewer narrow corridor spaces, the creation of 'dark spaces' outside of teachers' sight, and the removal of physical features, such as roll-down covers on computers. Flinders were conscious of architecturally designing to meet diverse student needs, such as lowering windows to wheelchair height. They sought a visual connection with their neighbouring mainstream school and had planned to create a shared pedagogical space: the Autism Learning Centre.

Barriers included funding (which was not always timely), preventing the Autism Learning Centre from ultimately being realised. Spatially the school sought to protect their students through a physical 'buffer', reducing noise and maintaining privacy when, *"things aren't going great"* (page 6 of interview). Such practices align with what Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2015) consider as a hiding away from the "mainstream public sphere" (p.54). The absence of physical points of connections, such as gateways or pathways, suggested that the relationship between schools was not spatially prioritised. Planned activities, such as pathway classes, represented integration practices more than evidence of inclusion. Both Flinders and their mainstream neighbours demonstrated gated practices (Dupuis & Thorns, 2008). The mainstream school used locked gates to protect themselves from elements within its own community. Flinders separated student cohorts according to disability severity. Early tensions between the school communities were evident, such as the contestation over car parking space which emerged in all three studies and resulted in a ministerial complaint.

To address these barriers Flinders would benefit from developing a spatial plan alongside their neighbours which mutually connected communities and spaces. A removal of the physical buffer would enable students to exercise choice and develop control over levels of privacy (Gaines, Bourne, Pearson & Kleibrink, 2016). Flinders' leaders identified that some teachers were philosophically against inclusion, conflicting with an earlier statement about being largely supportive. They themselves questioned whether inclusion was always educationally beneficial. In response to this the professional development of staff, which highlights the benefits of inclusion for both students with disabilities (Oh-Young & Filler, 2015) and without disabilities (Szumski, Smogorzewska, & Karwowski, 2017) is highly recommended.

7.4 Cook Centre

Cook Centre campaigned for co-location when meeting with South Australian politicians (Newsletter excerpt, 2012). This involved outlining benefits which closely resembled those of inclusion (Foreman, 2017); more socialising, increased participation, greater access to resources and curriculum. Cook Centre avoided being labelled 'special', recognising that students with 'special' educational needs were taught across all settings. They were industrious in ensuring everyone's voices were captured during the planning for the new site. Cook Centre teachers communicated with their students to determine features from the previous site that they wanted retained. Additionally, they utilised photo elicitation (Epstein, Stevens, McKeever & Baruchel, 2006) to capture the views of students with complex communication needs. When teachers acted as gatekeepers during those facilitated opportunities, the Cook Centre leadership intervened, protecting student voices from being either misinterpreted, misrepresented, or excluded.

The barriers towards inclusion appeared significant and frequent. Cook's leader did not believe in 'full' inclusion and viewed the possible loss of enrolments to the mainstream school as a threat. The only planned practice between schools appeared to be possible 'buddy programs' which would enable students with disabilities to receive support from their peers rather than their teachers (Copeland et al., 2002). This does not, however, equate to inclusion nor to inclusive practice (Giangreco, Doyle & Suter, 2012). The replication of key features from the previous site appeared designed to reproduce the previous teaching practices. The new increase in withdrawal spaces was teacher directed and desired, with the interview study revealing that such spaces could be used restrictively at a time when seclusion practices are both controversial *and* unsupported by research (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016; Gagnon, Mattingly & Connelly, 2017). Some parents of mainstream students had expressed a reluctance for Cook Centre to be co-located with them, and spatial contestation had already occurred, over the potential use of the basketball court. Although a ramped pathway connected the special school with the mainstream school, this was not a spatial nor inclusive decision made on behalf of Cook Centre. They remained unsure of why the physical link was indeed created.

Cook Centre should benefit from engaging with a whole school behavioural framework, such as Positive Behaviour Intervention and Supports (PBIS). Although PBIS permits seclusion as a last resort (Horner & Sugai, 2009), its focus is on the prevention of challenging behaviour through the teaching of expected behaviours, and the use of positive and inclusive evidence-based interventions (Horner & Sugai, 2009; Gagnon, Mattingly & Connelly, 2017). Engaging with the mainstream community through shared events and educational programs could serve to remove initial feelings of being 'unwanted', reduce tensions over space, and generate fresh opportunities to consider future combined teaching and learning possibilities.

7.5 Sturt Centre

Of the four special schools at the centre of this current research Sturt had invested the most time, prior to co-location, towards initiating and developing relationships between their students and those in the mainstream school. The Peer Mentor Program had been well established prior to moving and involved multiple teachers and students across sites. Some of the relationships between students had produced positive connections outside of the school, with play dates and sleepovers occurring. Spatial sharing had occurred (utilising the mainstream's kitchen) and more sharing was planned involving students, teachers, and parents. Student voices had been sought to inform the planning and designing of the new school.

The Peer Mentor Program fundamentally produced relationships. However, these appeared socially *unequal* in terms of roles, methods of assessment, and rewards. The mainstream peers identified themselves as being in roles akin to teacher's aides or paraprofessionals, assisting teachers to supervise and support Sturt Centre students. This contrasted with peer buddy advice (Copeland et al., 2002), reminding organisers that peer buddies are "not educational assistants" (p.20). Such unbalanced roles and social identities are more aligned with integration (Foreman, 2017) and ableism (Storey, 2007), reinforcing limiting stereotypes more so than inclusion. Activities within the Peer Mentor Program were like those found within a buddy program (Conway & Foggett, 2017). In both peer and buddy programs, reversing student roles can result in greater benefits (Conway & Foggett, 2017). Despite this, such reversal did not seem to be occurring at Sturt Centre. Instead, roles of 'supporter' and 'supportee' appeared firmly grounded in historical roles of the 'helper' and 'helpee'.

The mainstream school expressed angst about losing their multipurpose hall/gym. Tensions between schools appeared evident in anticipation of Sturt extending their footprint further into the mainstream's remaining space. In designing learning spaces, Sturt appeared to have reproduced their previous spaces of segregation. To protect student dignity, large concrete walls had been constructed, hiding Sturt students from other children, including their assigned peers. This stark, visual 'othering' could serve to mirror or indeed magnify exclusionary attitudes towards students with disabilities and deprive Sturt Centre students of both choice and control regarding desired levels of privacy (Gaines, Bourne, Pearson & Kleibrink, 2016).

Students involved in the Peer Mentor Program could benefit from sharing break-times with each other, as consistency and frequency of opportunities across a regular school day is important (Conway & Foggett, 2017; Copeland et al, 2002). An increased utilisation of shared spaces (as is already planned for the gym) might reduce the likelihood of future tensions regarding loss of space and resources, leading to more positive relationships and increased integration opportunities.

7.6 Paired comparisons

Eyre and Flinders each saw 'place' as being unimportant for inclusion to occur, contrasting with the advice provided by General Comment No. 4 (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016) which specifies that inclusion occurs only in a shared, not segregated setting. Flinders' leaders were largely positive about inclusion, but did not see it as beneficial for all, with some of their own teachers described as being anti-inclusion. Both schools utilised space to protect their different student cohorts and to strategically segregate them.

Flinders and Cook each had staff members who viewed inclusion as not always being effective. Both schools saw visibility as an important spatial factor – either for the surveilling of their student population or for protecting themselves (teachers) from the gaze of their school's leadership.

Eyre and Cook both used space to segregate and protect cohorts from cohorts, and students from students. Staff at each school had difficulty in 'letting go' of resources from their previous schools, which were considered as 'old' or 'stupid' by their leaders. Each school misinterpreted inclusion as being inherently about special education. (Although this might be interpreted as a benign conceptual interpretation, Slee has suggested that this positioning represents the "colonisation" of inclusive discourse and an attempt to silence inclusive philosophy (Slee, 2018, p.11).)

Flinders and Sturt both experienced new spaces as being highly contested. Flinders had tensions over their neighbouring school due to car parking scarcity, whilst Sturt had tensions resulting from their involuntary acquisition of the neighbouring school's land and structures. Flinders and Sturt both used walls/buffers to visually protect their students from the gaze of their neighbouring schools, despite students benefiting from environments that enabled them to choose their level of privacy (Gaines, Bourne, Pearson & Kleibrink, 2016). Each school viewed inclusion as not always being beneficial. Neither site strongly and inclusively involved their students in the planning of their new school.

The analysis of both Eyre and Sturt produced similar themes which evolved from their buddy and peer mentor programs. Each program resembled a form of integration, with mainstream students cast in considerably different roles compared to the students with disabilities. Students without disabilities were more often doing 'for' rather than doing 'with'. All students nevertheless appeared to enjoy and benefit from the programs, with some students consequently arriving at thoughtful insights regarding both disability and diversity.

Cook and Sturt were both cautious about developing new relationships with their neighbouring schools. Each school viewed inclusion as problematic as a result of being unsupported, or as a

threat to special school enrolments. Sturt did not appear to facilitate strong student voice in the planning of their new school. Cook, however, was more conscientious of this, using photo elicitation (Epstein, Stevens, McKeever & Baruchel, 2006) to incorporate the views their most complex communicators. Teachers at Cook were sometimes viewed as gatekeepers who did not always value or perhaps understand their students' requests.

7.7 What the reforms promised and delivered

Education Works was not a reform focused primarily on inclusion, and, yet, an intent to foster and move towards more inclusive schooling appeared evident:

> "Relocating these special schools to mainstream schools will allow children to be part of
> the broader school community, while still ensuring they have the special supports they
> need." South Australia Education Minister, Jay Weatherill (Hood, 2010, p.1)

Becoming part of a broader school community appeared to be a challenge left to principals once the co-location had occurred. Leadership from each of the four schools indicated they were happy to receive the new, purpose-built teaching and learning environments resulting from co-location. The leader from Eyre Centre had acknowledged that the previous school location had left them feeling isolated and disconnected from their community. Co-location had enabled schools to more easily approach teachers next door to begin integration programs and develop professional relationships. Flinders' leaders saw future opportunities as dream-like. Sturt Centre's leader recognised that many positives had resulted from the co-location, including fledgling relationships between students and neighbouring peer buddies.

Sturt Centre had a strong and well supported Peer Mentor Program, which was initiated prior to the co-location. Eyre had their own peer program, one that more accurately represented a form of reverse integration. Cook Centre was considering their own buddy program but was initially cautious and happy to bide their time. Although Flinders did not have an established buddy or peer mentor program, they did have pathways classes which had been established prior to co-location. The limitations of buddy programs suggest they are problematic pathways towards inclusion. Although the proximity of co-location enables integration practices to occur with greater ease, the unequal relationships offered reaffirm student difference and the reduced roles of people with disabilities. A paired program that operated frequently and involved students participating under similar conditions would appear a stronger approach – with the aim of significantly increasing both academic and social time together.

7.8 Integration and segregation – the continual contestation of the 'othering' of inclusion

As previously stated in this current research, the language of inclusion is commonly misappropriated, often for the purposes of maintaining the status quo of the mainstream co-existing alongside specialised settings (Slee, 2013a), naturally and unquestionably, often in response to 'family choice'. This binary was captured in Figure 1, Chapter 1, and is reproduced below (Figure 23).
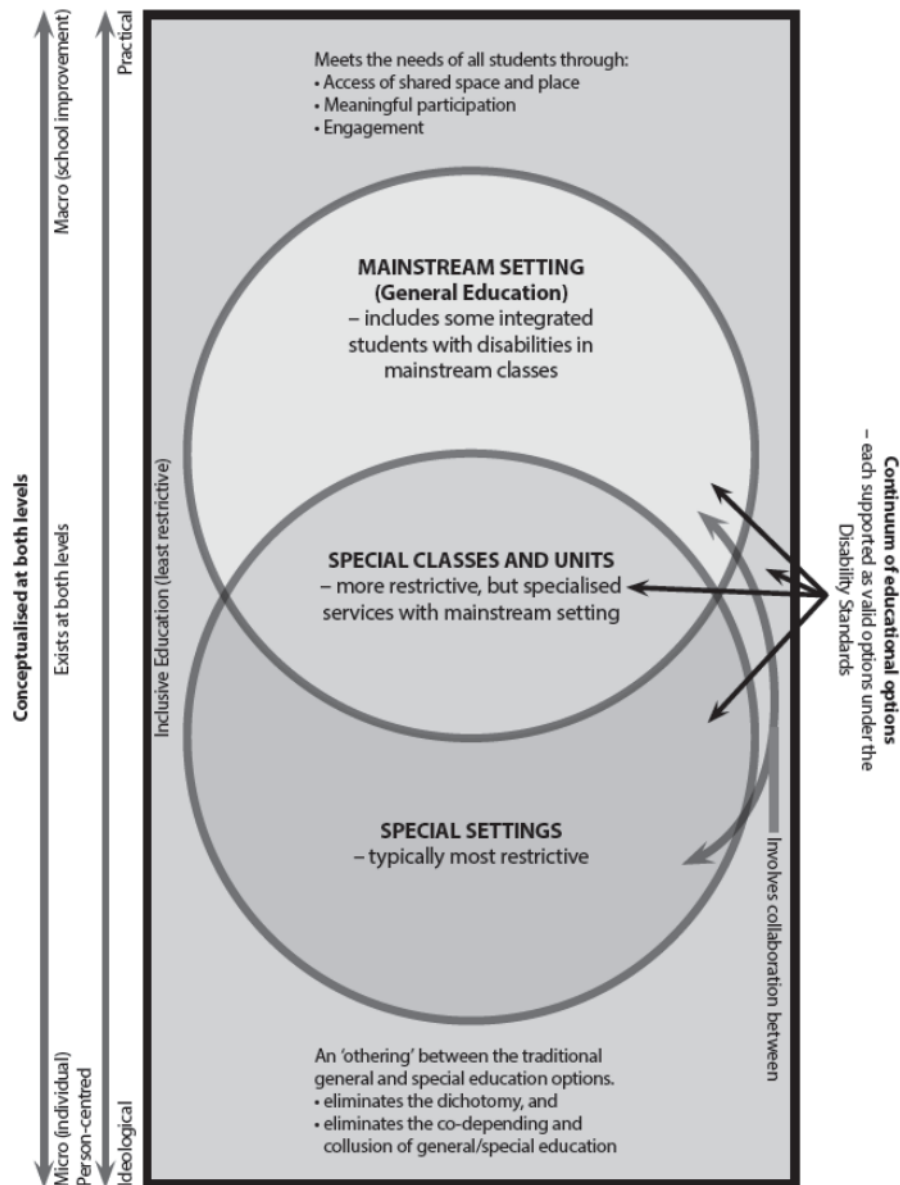
Figure 23. Inclusion as an 'othering' to mainstream and special settings

Many practices put forward within this current research as examples of inclusion, such as peer mentor programs, fall short of that defined and clarified by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016). However, they align with South Australia's public

school policy (Government of South Australia, 2014) and recent advice from the Ministerial Advisory Committee (2017) on the principles of inclusion. Such advice, in omitting key discourse regarding 'place', permits educational segregation to continue unabated. In contrast, the Queensland Government's Department of Education (2018) has produced an inclusion policy which is faithful to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which Australia has commitment to (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). The Queensland policy defines inclusion from the outset, contrasting it starkly with 'integration' and 'segregation', where "students learn in separate environments, designed or used to respond to their particular needs or impairment, in isolation from other students" (2018, p.1).

Given this policy disparity from state to state, it is perhaps unsurprising that South Australian special school leaders framed themselves as active inclusive practitioners. For these leaders, inclusion was not simply the unattainable "utopia" as posited by Forbes (2007), but rather, it was enacted regularly in special schooling as naturally as in mainstream schools. Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou's (2011, p.31) warning of inclusive discourse "meaning everything and nothing at the same time" is evoked here, a blancmange of words promoting inactivity. Inclusion realised through segregation. Together, apart.

Full inclusion was viewed by special school leaders as often faulty, problematic and a threat to the sustainability of special schooling. A perception of inclusion as a myriad of placement options is suggested within the controversial Leading Learning 4 All (LL4All) resource, developed by ASEPA (Australian Government, 2018). LL4All, costing more than $646,000, was created in response to the review of the Disability Standards (Australian Government, 2005), which highlighted a pressing need to "affirm the desirability of inclusive education practices and the role of education in fostering social inclusion more generally" (Australian Government, 2015, p.viii). The resultant resource, however, was broadly criticised by disability groups and inclusion advocates for providing an inaccurate interpretation of inclusive practice (All Means All, 2017a). An open letter was tabled in the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee (All Means All, 2017b), with key questions asked of the Federal Minister of Education regarding significant concerns. ASEPA's own key goals state their position to advocate for, "the full range of educational services for students with disabilities and special educational needs" (2018, p.1). Such a position does not align with the UNCRPD (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016) which clearly positions inclusive schooling as a shared, not segregated experience.

As implied from the outset of this current thesis, tensions and disparate views are not uncommon in inclusive education discourse. In funding inclusive reforms governments should consider the inclusive orientation of those at the helm. Given that special school leaders and principals (ASEPA, 2018) actively campaign for the retention of restrictive and segregating schooling options (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016), it is unsurprising that their views and practices support the retention of the mainstream/special setting binary (Figure 1). This binary maintains certain positions of power within education (such as principalship of both settings) and certain ways of being (normal/abnormal). Bauman's work saw a conceptual 'othering' (or as Soja (1996) posits: 'thirding'), such as that positioned by this current research, as both a threat to the status quo (Marotta, 2002) and the essence of ethical responsibility (Mineva, 2007). The placement and movement of students with disabilities into special schooling has been framed by special education leaders within this current research as inclusion, not exclusion. In doing so, this practice of categorising, or ordering, and 'othering', is less likely to be thought of as an infringement on human rights (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). Bauman, again, saw retention of certain social structures, such as schooling, as enabled by both oppression and exclusion (Marotta, 2007). By enabling special school leaders to shape inclusive practices as they see fit, schools are permitted to maintain the status quo and to reproduce segregation. Special education itself appears "to manage the smooth working" of the school system (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2011), through its marking and sifting of students.

The new designs for special schools suggested a desire to spatially shield and visually remove students, and to increase spaces which, at best, facilitate student opportunities for sensory regulation (Gaines, Bourne, Pearson & Kleibrink, 2016, p.119), but, at worst, seclude. This is of concern given that seclusion is ineffective and students with disabilities are twenty times as likely to be secluded than students without disabilities (Gagnon, Mattingly & Connelly, 2017). Seclusion, as a restrictive practice, has historically been used, not as a last option, but in response to relatively minor behavioural 'infringements', such as students being out of their seats or non-responsive to instruction (Gagnon, Mattingly & Connelly, 2017). As a researcher and pre-service teacher supervisor, the author has also witnessed seclusion of students for minor behavioural issues including the sucking of a coloured pen. A concern with regular classrooms being paired with restrictive spaces, such as withdrawal rooms, is that they ultimately may be used by educators to shape who does or doesn't belong in the classroom (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2015). Traditional power relations can be expressed, with educators empowered to determine a basis for inclusion. Therefore, even within special schools, 'normal' ways of being and behaving appear to be both framed and valued. Students can become further segregated and marginalised should teachers determine so, becoming "both present and absent" within learning spaces (Goodley & Runswick-

Cole, 2015, p.55). Such positioning has both psychological and subjective consequences as: "Space and psychology are intimately connected" (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2015, p.54).

7.9 Recommendations for future inclusive reforms

Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou (2011) have argued that inclusion requires both political will and a contextual definition of inclusion. Politicians should therefore ensure that educational policy and reform align with Australia's commitment to the UNCRPD. At a policy levels this means the provision of clear language and intent, as shown by the Queensland Government Department of Education (2018). Special school leaders oversee the education of many of the most complex students with disabilities. As such, they should be included in the shaping of inclusive education policy and reform. Caution should be given, however, as to their legitimacy as inclusive education experts and leaders (Slee, 2011), considering that they work in the most restrictive environments and advocate for the retention of such options (ASEPA, 2018). The leadership of both educational policy and reform would be better undertaken by individuals and associations whose views on inclusion aligned with the UNCRPD.

As captured in the introduction to this current thesis, Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2011) outlined various reasons for inclusion's success or failure at school level. One reason was the school's 'rationale', their developed conception of what inclusion means. If key leaders identify inclusion as a utopia (Forbes, 2007) or education delivered in segregated locations (Forbes, 2007; ASEPA, 2018), then it is unlikely their rationale will become a catalyst for more inclusive schooling. Other reasons for inclusion's success or failure, which could be influenced by the leaders' conception of inclusion, include 'key staff', 'commitment' and 'leadership' (Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey, 2011). This current research identified that the Cook Centre leader indicated they were engaging in all elements of inclusive practices although their students appeared to be segregated from the mainstream students at all times. This perplexing understanding of inclusion and inclusive practices would strongly suggest school leaders (both special and mainstream) be provided with clear information regarding what inclusion is and is not (Queensland Government Department of Education, 2018), and strategies for initiating and implementing a more inclusive pedagogy. In addition, an ongoing evaluation at the school level of movement towards more inclusive practices should be part of a school's accountability and reporting to systems and the wider community.

Barton and Oliver (1992) viewed Special Education as being historically complicit in the reproduction of educational exclusion (as cited in Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2011). When considering the Social Model of Disability and the findings from this current research, the special/mainstream binary appears itself to be a disabling factor for students with disabilities – the

"way society is organised" (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2011, p.30). Successful inclusion, therefore, requires a re-imagining of schooling and the role special education plays within educational provision and support. For the collusion (Graham & Slee, 2006) and co-dependency (Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011) between special education and general education to end, it is recommended that special education policy and reform occur through the lens of inclusive education, challenging historical practices which seek to label, to order, to 'other', to separate, and to muddy both the goals of inclusion (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016) and the rights of students with disabilities (CRPD).

7.10 Thesis findings

How have the Education Works reforms changed the manner in which schools respond to the inclusive education agenda?

Although school leaders remarked on the advantage of proximity, and were able to illustrate emerging integration practices, there was insufficient evidence to suggest co-location would 'close the inclusion gap' and result in more inclusive schooling in South Australia.

How have attitudes towards inclusive education changed because of the reforms?

Attitudes towards co-location varied from great excitement to tentative caution. Some of the mainstream students who were involved in the integration programs expressed a greater understanding of diversity and appeared largely positive towards new opportunities afforded by the co-location. Special school leaders, however, identified inclusion as problematic, unsuitable for some students, and a possible risk to their own enrolments and sustainability. They largely considered segregated schools to be inclusive, and the co-location did not appear to impact or influence that belief.

What opportunities for inclusive education have been sought because of the reforms?

Most of the emerging opportunities appeared to be examples of buddy/peer mentor programs, integration or reverse-integration. Some sharing of spaces was occurring, had been planned for, and opportunities had been explored for students from the special schools to be supported and included in mainstream classes.

What barriers continue to inhibit the realisation of Inclusive Education?

The main barrier appeared to be the adoption, by special school leaders, of a definition of inclusion which permitted and advocated for the reproduction of the special school/mainstream school binary. Barriers mentioned by the leaders themselves included spatial contestation, the timeliness

of funding, tensions with neighbouring schools, and the need to maintain student dignity and safety, sometimes at the expense of a more open schooling design.

Is the reform, overall, a successful approach to increasing inclusive education?

The co-location reform, initiated by *Education Works*, provided proximity and ease of access between mainstream and special schools (Schriever, 2014). Additionally, an opportunity existed for "students with disabilities to develop and build strong links with their peers" (Schriever, 2014, p.1). This current research, however, showed that co-location appeared limiting as a facilitator of inclusion. The barriers mentioned remained and prevented a meaningful increase in inclusive practice.

New purpose-built special schools provided spaces which educators believed were better designed for educational and therapeutic practices. The new schools appeared more restrictive, however, with a considerable increase in withdrawal spaces. The addition of visual buffers and screens, to prevent students from being seen, and long school-length corridors, to enable the surveillance of students, appear guided by a desire to spatially control more than to educate. Schools must be safe, and it is understanding that educators want to work in environments which reduce any likelihood of injury. Nevertheless, the increased safety measures resulted in a privileging of gates and fences, over spatial connections between schools.

Education Works heralded the largest investment in infrastructure in South Australian schools in three decades (Government of South Australia, 2006a). The bricks and mortar of schools, however, remain for over a hundred years (Fisher, 2010). Through co-location special schools appeared to gain safer working environments. However, as an approach to increasing inclusion the South Australian government may have recommitted to the status quo: a segregation which many students with complex disabilities have experienced over the 50 years immediately prior to the date of this current study. The Government of South Australia appears to have made a considerable investment in special education, but limited commitment towards inclusive education. Co-location does not equate to inclusion. This current research provides little evidence that this significant reform has done anything towards closing the inclusion gap.

7.11 Recommendations for future research

More research is needed, both on South Australia's co-located schools and comparable models elsewhere. It would be beneficial to track both the relationships between co-located schools and the evolution of shared pedagogical practices and beliefs of teachers, students and parents regarding inclusion. Research on ways schools successfully capture the voices of students with disabilities during co-location planning could lead to the increased valuing of education's main stakeholder –

the student. Student voice may be more difficult to capture when working with students living with complex disabilities. The educators within special schools would, however, be well placed to facilitate such communications, enabling students to express opinions regarding the architecture of their new school.

There would be benefits in future research identifying the way space is designed in schools to support students with disabilities and to keep them safe without increasing physical divisions or spaces for seclusion. Spatial research with a focus on special and inclusive education is uncommon. There is therefore a need to know more about innovative learning environments, and their impact on both academic results and social connections between students. This current research has furthered discussions in this area, but more is required.

As stated in Chapter 3, this current research was limited by necessary decisions regarding time and scope. There are voices which have been more strongly represented (special school principals) than others (students, leaders from the mainstream, parents, classroom teachers). These limitations are acknowledged. Future research on these co-locations will hopefully ameliorate their omission here.

7.12 A final word: uneasy bedfellows

As a passionate advocate of both inclusive *and* special education – a tension-riddled and perhaps contradictory position – this current research has enabled the researcher to closely examine the complex and uncomfortable intersection of inclusive *and* special education. Contemporary special education has inherited the baggage from its historically "reproducing the exclusion and oppression of disabled people" (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2011, p.30). Nevertheless, this current researcher sees value in high-leverage special education practices when delivered alongside an understanding of inclusion as both a right and a benefit for all students.

Inclusion is by itself a reform. It is a difficult one: historically evident through both exclusion's ubiquity and antiquity (Slee, 2013b). Such resistance and resilience against inclusion became evident throughout this current research, with efforts to maintain the status quo observed. The mainstream/special binary remained protected and unchallenged by special education leaders.

The inclusion gap exists and is unlikely to be closed without a critical unpicking of the nature of the problem presented. *Education Works* positioned this problem as being about place, and it is, but not just. Attempting to tackle segregation through proximity alone ignores why we choose to segregate, why we choose to label, and why we choose to value certain bodies, minds, and ways of being over others.

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Appendix 1 – Questions for Interviews (Chapter 6)

Describe… (Name of co-located school).

   Probing question: Can you describe the culture?

What do you share with your neighbouring schools?

What don't you share with your neighbouring schools?

How are you different to your neighbouring schools?

How would you describe your relationship with your neighbouring schools?

Can you tell me about any new inclusive practices which are occurring?

   Probing question: How do your plans, programs and/or policies document this?

Can you tell me about any inclusive practices which are not occurring?

   Probing question: What are the barriers preventing these practices from occurring?

What new opportunities for integration or inclusion now present themselves to you?

How has moving from an isolated site to a Super School model made interaction between students across schools easier?

In what ways do your teachers interact with the teachers from your neighbouring schools?

In what ways do your parents interact with the parents from neighbouring schools?

Can you tell me about the process you went through in deciding how you wanted your site to look? For example: what were the features most needed by your staff?

   Probing question: Why did they want those features?

   Probing question #2: Which features did they not want? Why not?

When designing your new school, what were the barriers or limitations that you encountered?

What choice did you have in the positioning of your school within the Super School site?

   Probing question: Can you tell me about this?

How did students and/or their families inform the planning of their new school?

How do you foresee this developing relationship with your neighbouring schools?

   Probing question: Who determines how these relationships are shaped?

What are your beliefs about the importance of inclusion in educational settings?

   Probing question: What's formed those beliefs?

In what way has the relocation contributed towards your school becoming more or less marginalised?

   Probing question: How do you feel about this?

   Probing question #2: Are there advantages/disadvantages to this shift?

Appendix 2 –

Document Type and Number (Chapter 4)

Document data received and sourced from Eyre incorporate the following:

Title/Type	Voices captured	Audiences perceived	Pages in document
School Opening Speech 2011	Principal	School community, hierarchy	2
School Opening Speech 2011	Parent	School community	1
Annual School Report 2012	Leaders	School community, broader community	14
School Context Statement 2012	Principal	School community, broader community	13
Site Improvement Plan 2012	Principal/Leaders	Broader Community	5
3 x Newsletters from 2013	Principal/Leaders	School community	14 (total)
Annual School Report 2013	Principal/Leaders and Teachers/Parents	School community, broader community	14
6 x Staff Minutes 2013	Leaders/Teachers/Student from mainstream school	Teachers	13 (total)
Site Improvement Plan 2013	Leaders	Broader community	4
2 x Newsletters from 2014	Principal/Leaders and Teachers	School community	4 (total)
PowerPoint Slides from Conference Presentation	Leader	Conference delegates	18 slides
Information pamphlet	Principal	Prospective Parents	2
20 docs			86 pages and 18 slides

Neighbouring Mainstream School:

Title/Type	Voices captured	Audiences perceived	Pages in document
School Context Statement 2012	Principal	Broader community	12
3 x 2013 Newsletters	Principal/Leaders/Teachers/Student	School community	19
7 x 2014 Newsletters	Counsellor/Leaders	School community	83 (total)
AGM Speech	Parent on Governing Council	Teachers/Parents	1
12 docs			115 pages

Document data received and sourced from Flinders incorporate the following:

Title/Type	Voices captured	Audiences perceived	Pages in document
National Partnership Outline	Leaders	School communities, hierarchy	2
National Partnership Strategic Plan 2012-2013	Leaders	Teachers, school community	3
Feasibility Study – Project Brief	Project Coordinator	Leaders, Hierarchy	4 pages from a 72 page document supplied
Annual School Report 2012	Principal, parent from governing council	School community	6
School Context Statement 2013	Principal	School community, broader community	9
Document outlining colocation plans	Leader	Researcher	1
22 docs			25 pages

Neighbouring Mainstream School:

Title/Type	Voices captured	Audiences perceived	Pages in document
2014 'Our Plan'	Leaders and teachers	School community, prospective parents	2
Annual Report 2012	Principal, parent from governing council	School community, broader community	4
Annual Report 2013	Principal, parent from governing council	School community, broader community	4
Information page on 'Inclusion' from school website	Leaders	Prospective parents, broader community, school community	1
2013 Newsletters x 2	Principal, leaders	School community	14
Curriculum Folder	Principal	School community, prospective parents	3
Information Sheet to public regarding relocation of Special School next door	Principal	School community	1
Context Statement 2013	Principal	Broader community, School community	9
Site Map	Leaders	School community	1
10 docs			39 pages

Document data received and sourced from Cook incorporate the following:

Title/Type	Voices captured	Audiences perceived	Pages in document
2013 Site Improvement Plan	Leadership	Broad community	2
Newsletter excerpts	Leaders/teachers	School community	2
Map of new school	Leaders/architects	School community	1
Survey	Leaders/teachers/families	School community	5
Minutes from Project Control Group Meeting	Leaders (both schools) and architects/builders.	School community?	4
Newsletters (4)	Leaders/teachers	School community	40
9 docs			55 pages

Neighbouring Mainstream School:

Title/Type	Voices captured	Audiences perceived	Pages in document
School information on website	Leaders/teachers	Broad community	5
School Context Statement	Leaders	Broad community	14
Site Improvement Plan	Leaders	Broad community	3
Newsletter	Leaders/teachers	School community	14
4 docs			36 pages

Document data received and sourced from Sturt incorporate the following:

Title/Type	Voices captured	Audiences perceived	Pages in document
Peer Mentor Program	Leadership + Department hierarchy	School communities	30
2 x Site Improvement Plan	Leaders	Broad community	5
School Context Statement	Leaders	Broad community	11
8 x Principal Reports	Principal	School community	16
6 x Minutes from School Council Meetings	Leaders/teachers/parents	School community	6
Minutes from AGM	Leaders/teachers/parents	School community	2
Good teaching description document	Leaders/teachers	School community	2
Annual Report excerpts	Leaders	Broad community	3
22 docs			75 pages

Neighbouring Mainstream School:

Title/Type	Voices captured	Audiences perceived	Pages in document
Newsletter 2013	Students + teacher and principal from Sturt Centre	School community	10
Newsletter 2014	Principal's	School community	7
2 docs			17 pages