



What influences teachers' support for children's reasoning about social inclusion in primary school education classrooms?

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Abstract

Reasoning about social inclusion is at the very heart of what it means for children to engage in active citizenship. In this paper, we focus on collaborative argumentation as a core approach to reasoning about social inclusion for active citizenship. We engaged a group of Australian primary school teachers in a social lab conversation, informed by reflexivity theory, to explore their ideas about, and experiences with, supporting children to reason about social inclusion. Teachers overwhelmingly identified a range of personal and cultural emergent conditions that enabled children's reasoning for social inclusion. Across these enabling emergent properties, an evaluativist view of the nature of knowledge and ways of knowing emerged with respect to teaching social reasoning. These findings suggest that it may be important to pay attention to teachers' reflexive deliberations about epistemic stances and their view of what enables and constrains such reasoning.

Keywords Epistemic cognition · Enablements · Constraints · Reasoning for social inclusion · Argumentation · Pedagogy for inquiry

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Introduction

The primary school years have long been recognised as important for promoting children's learning and development, in particular with respect to the development of citizenship for a cohesive society. There are three broad ways of understanding citizenship which are helpful for thinking about how children might reason and engage with social inclusion in primary school contexts. These include active citizenship as being “personally responsible, participatory and justice oriented” in nature (Westheimer and Kahne 2004, p. 238). There are many examples of children being supported to become *personally responsible* for social inclusion in primary school settings, for example, children taking an active role in promoting anti-bullying programs by developing posters for display around the school or classroom. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argued that this approach underpins character education which has a focus on moral values such as honesty, responsibility, following the rules et cetera. The *participatory* citizen requires that children become active and take on leadership roles as they support their peers to be included in classroom and playground contexts. For example, teachers can support children to lead programs to prevent bullying by acting as playground buddies for children who have experienced social exclusion. Finally, according to Westheimer and Kahne (2004), when children critically reflect on, and enact, issues of social justice they are engaging in *justice-oriented* citizenship. Such issues of social justice relate directly to social inclusion and exclusion because “there is a need to acknowledge those privileges that enable some children to fully engage as citizens and others not to be able to. We need to teach about why some participate and others do not” (Lunn Brownlee et al. 2017, p. 7). This involves children going beyond simply contributing to and/or leading an initiative, to engaging in critical thinking about the reasons for such social exclusion/inclusion and how it might be addressed locally and more broadly in other contexts. While there is a broad understanding of the significance of engaging children in reasoning for social inclusion, we still need to know more about how children learn about active citizenship in primary school contexts (Lunn Brownlee et al. 2017). We know very little about how teachers understand and engage in pedagogical decision making for supporting children to reason for social justice in classroom contexts. To address this gap, we use reflexivity theory to explore teachers' views about, and experiences with, teaching children to reason about social inclusion in Australian primary school contexts. We are interested in both teachers' views of the process of children's reasoning for social inclusion and also the reflexive conditions that enable or constrain teachers to support reasoning for social inclusion in classrooms.

Evaluative reasoning for social inclusion

We take the view that reasoning about social inclusion requires children to engage with all three dimensions of active citizenship to ultimately reflect justice-oriented citizenship. Children can act within their immediate school communities (take personal responsibility) and take leadership roles (participatory) in their local contexts. However, like Westheimer and Kahne (2004), we argue that citizenship goes beyond a simple process of reasoning about what is right and

wrong and being actively engaged. Sigauke (2011) argued that “a genuine citizenship education enables learners to engage in critical discussions of issues, using evidence; exploring alternatives and developing dispositions and skills that allow them to act on other possibilities. It goes beyond just developing a citizen but also one who is justice-oriented and who critically analyses and addresses social injustices,” (p.71). Such evaluative reasoning can support children to think about the inclusion of others by taking into account diverse perspectives and characteristics of others rather than making judgements that are based on limited stereotypical thinking about diverse others (see Aboud, 2010 cited in Lunn Brownlee et al. 2017). Scholes et al. (2017, p. 507) noted that “little is understood about how to reduce prejudicial reasoning and behaviours in young children”. With respect to deliberative democracy, some perspectives can be determined to be more reasonable than others through collaborative dialogue (Moshman 2015). Moshman argued that deliberative democracy enables individuals to identify and justify their own perspectives in the context of others having divergent ideas. The goal is to reach justified group consensus without censorship. So divergent perspectives are valued but not all are “equally justified” (Moshman 2015, p. 133).

In addition to achieving the end goal of consensus, the reasoning process needs to be evaluative in nature—one in which competing claims are evaluated and adjudicated upon. The aim of education is to enable citizens to engage in reasoning that involves the weighing up of competing views to arrive at informed perspectives (Barzilai and Chinn 2018). Such evaluativist reasoning is evident when “knowledge is necessarily uncertain and needs to be justified as there could be alternative explanations” (Weinstock 2016, p. 220). Absolutist views and approaches to reasoning, on the other hand, reflect that knowledge is taken as self-evident (Weinstock 2016). Reasoning processes are, therefore, key to engaging in argumentation (Chinn et al. 2018), and we argue, in children’s reasoning about social inclusion in primary school contexts.

Collaborative argumentation and teaching for inquiry

Argumentation is an approach to reasoning which can support both justice-oriented citizenship (Westheimer and Kahne 2004) and deliberative democracy (Moshman 2015). In particular, collaborative argumentation is a form of argumentation which enables students to collectively identify and argue for different viewpoints, leading to informed consensus (Chinn and Clark 2013).

One means of promoting collaborative argumentation in the classroom is through a focus on inquiry. During inquiry, groups work together to consider different perspectives and positions that relate to a particular inquiry problem or question. The process then involves sorting the various forms of evidence to establish conclusions in a way that is rigorous, logical, and verifiable (Walton 1998). Reznitskaya and Wilkinson (2017) developed the Argumentation Rating Tool (ART) based on research with upper elementary school teachers which provides a useful scaffold for teachers and children to engage in argumentation reasoning during inquiry. They identified four criteria (p. 196) to support argumentation in the inquiry-oriented classroom, which included diversity of perspectives, clarity, acceptability of reasons and evidence, and logical validity as follows:

1. Diversity of perspectives includes practices such as focussing on “contestable questions, sharing responsibilities, and discussing alternatives”.
2. Clarity includes practices such as “clarifying meaning, connecting ideas, labelling reasoning processes and parts of an argument and tracking the line of inquiry”.
3. Acceptability of reasons and evidence involves “evaluating facts and evaluating values”.
4. Logical validity relates to “articulating reasons and evaluating inferences”. (Reznitskaya and Wilkinson 2017, p. 196).

To support reasoning for justice-oriented citizenship and deliberative democracy, we argue that teachers need to engage children in collaborative argumentation using inquiry approaches that work with big questions around promoting social inclusion. We know from previous research that argumentation can promote elementary children’s reasoning in the context of science learning (Ryu and Sandoval 2012) and in philosophy for children (Walker et al. 2013). It is likely that such reasoning processes are also important in learning about social inclusion for primary school children.

Teachers’ pedagogical deliberations about supporting collaborative argumentation are important in helping children to reason about social inclusion. In this research, we utilised reflexivity theory (Archer 2012) to examine the deliberations that teachers undertook about supporting children’s reasoning in relation to social inclusion. Specifically, we were interested in the emergent conditions of schooling that influenced how and why deliberations were made by these teachers (see also Willis et al. 2017). Archer (2012) suggested that the ability to deliberate on what is before us, weigh up the cultural and structural contingencies of the context (objective conditions), our values, beliefs, knowledge and level of investment (subjective/personal conditions), and reflexively choose a way forward, is imperative (Ryan and Carmichael 2015). These conditions are always emerging and can be experienced as either enabling and/or constraining. Cultural emergent properties within a primary school context can include things like norms, school/classroom climate, and broader perspectives of knowledge and knowing that emerge in classrooms (Ryan et al. 2019). Structural emergent properties may include national assessment and curriculum practices as well as localised practices and resources related to, for example, school philosophies, behaviour guidance protocols, and timetabling (Ryan et al. 2019). Finally, personal emergent properties are related to individuals’ motivations, views about knowledge and knowing, teaching practices and so on (Ryan et al. 2019). Using this framework of reflexivity, we engaged a group of Australian teachers in a social lab conversation to explore their deliberations about supporting children’s reasoning for social inclusion. We were interested in the emergent conditions of schooling that influenced how and why decisions were made by these teachers with respect to supporting children to reason about social inclusion.

Methodology

This study used social lab methodology to explore the following research question: What are primary school teachers' understandings of, deliberations about, and experiences with, teaching children to reason about social inclusion? According to Hassan (2014), social labs have three core characteristics. First, they are social; this means diverse participation is encouraged. To fulfil this criterion, we brought together a cast of different stakeholders to “collaboratively explore, frame and co-create solutions” (McKenzie 2015, p.3) to such a complex issue. Participants' conversations in social labs, place an emphasis on dialogue, active listening, and exchange of ideas. Second, social labs are experimental. As such, in contrast to focus groups, they have an orientation to action, involving prototypes. In this study, participants were sent a theoretical paper prior to the social lab as we wanted to test how we could frame ways of thinking about social exclusion. Social labs have been previously criticised for lacking a research focus. Including a research paper allowed us to add a layer of theory, building to existing social lab methodology (Timmermans et al. 2020). Third, social labs are systemic. This means trying to come up with solutions that address the root of the cause of why things are not working. For this, it was important to recruit participants who were committed and had an interest in the topic.

Social lab participants

After obtaining ethics approval from the university where the study took place, we recruited six Australian primary schoolteachers via email using our professional networks. All participants were female and had experience working with the full age range of primary students. Participants who gave informed consent consisted of three highly experienced teachers, two middle career teachers and an early career teacher. Half of the participants had been involved previously in Philosophy and Reasoning classes in their educational settings whereas the other half had limited experiences within this area. Two were accomplished researchers holding PhDs linked to the subject being examined, and one had been a principal of a school which taught Philosophy for Children (P4C) and was now an education consultant. Specific data were not collected on the teachers' direct experiences with social inclusion/exclusion but the contexts where participants worked ranged from having an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) between 942 and 1178. This index shows the socio-economic characteristics of schools, whether they are regional or remote and percentage of Indigenous population. A median ICSEA score is 1000, with 500 extremely disadvantaged and 1300 advantaged. Four participants came from schools just above the median, with the other two participants below this midpoint.

Social lab conversations

Prior to the social lab, the participants were emailed a short theoretical paper which identified the research focus on children's reasoning about social inclusion using epistemic cognition as the research lens. Hassan (2014), who has written extensively about social labs, argued that theory must inform our actions if we are to produce effective responses to complex social challenges. At the start of the social lab, the research team gave a short presentation introducing the research and the format of the social lab. Following this, the social lab participants completed four of the five social lab steps as outlined by McKenzie (2015): (1) mapping the system; (2) questioning knowledge stances and understandings; (3) identifying points for intervention; (4) producing a hypothesis about an intervention (5) translating a hypothesis into actionable goals that was not completed because of time constraints. During each step, participants were asked questions or had to complete certain activities as outlined in Table 1.

Analysing the social lab conversations

As the social lab proceeded through the steps named above, all conversations were recorded, and written data were collected and photographed. Both sets of data were transcribed before being distributed to the research team for analysis. Two of the team members inductively coded the transcripts, allowing the codes to emerge from the data. The whole research team then scrutinised these codes in a second iteration of analysis. This scrutiny involved both checking the validity of this initial coding and then engaging in a process of deductive analysis to reorganise the codes into the broader categories of enablements (personal & cultural) and constraints (structural & cultural). The findings, which revealed a range of enablements and constraints with respect to teachers promoting children's reasoning for social inclusion in primary school, are now discussed.

Findings Part 1: enabling children's reasoning for social inclusion

Throughout the social labs, teachers most commonly described enablements of children's reasoning for social inclusion, rather than constraints. We explored such enablements with respect to personal and cultural emergent properties. Of these emergent properties, the most commonly reported were related to personal emergent properties. It should be noted that these properties are not mutually exclusive but rather are often closely entwined; therefore, some data include overlaps of these emergent properties.

Enabling personal emergent properties (PEPs)

The teachers emphasised the need to understand what is meant by social inclusion and reasoning about social inclusion, and they referred to a range of teaching strategies that they used to support such reasoning.

Table 1 Social lab questions and activities

Step	Question asked	Activity
1. Mapping the system	What are your ideas about what is meant by the concept of children reasoning about social inclusion/exclusion?	Participants wrote definitions on post-it notes followed by recorded open discussion
2. Questioning knowledge stances and understanding	What effective classroom approaches exist to support such reasoning? What are the epistemic aims & reliable processes that might be important in such reasoning?	Recorded open discussion
3. Identifying points for intervention	What are the situations in which it would be appropriate to include epistemic cognition into reasoning about social inclusion?	Recorded open discussion
4. Producing a hypothesis about an intervention	I think collaborative reasoning for social inclusion can be supported if we ... Children would feel more prepared to engage in collaborative argumentation for social inclusion if they were encouraged to...	Participants finished the proposed statements by writing on post-it notes followed by recorded open discussion

Understanding social inclusion (exclusion) and reasoning for social inclusion

The teachers were clear that it was important to understand what is meant by the term “inclusion” and “exclusion”, for example:

Speaker 2: But that understanding of what is exclusion. What do we mean by exclusion is really the ontological view of what we mean by exclusion? First up, before they can start to think about their beliefs. If you're in a friend group, is it okay to just be friends with these people as long as you are inclusive in some way. I mean, all those questions the kids need to discuss.

There was also a perceived need for a deep understanding of what social inclusion/exclusion is and that reasoning requires deep knowledge, not simply making surface decisions:

Speaker 10: It becomes part of the daily ways of working in the classroom to think about exclusion but not just to think about it in a very surface-y way but to really understand what we mean by inclusion and exclusion- [crosstalk 00:55:08]. Not to make it a tokenist approach.

The group also discussed different characterisations of reasoning about social inclusion. The first perspective was related to the epistemic basis of reasoning about social inclusion as being non-absolutist in nature. The group talked about when it was acceptable to exclude someone and how such reasoning was complex and uncertain. The following snippet of this conversation revealed that there was no one right answer when it comes to social reasoning.

Speaker 4: Yeah, well What I was just thinking was that you would get teachers who would be thinking that we're always wanting kids to include each other so they wouldn't even go to the step of saying, “When is it okay to include people and when is it not okay? When is it okay to exclude people and when is it not okay?”.

The second way in which reasoning was characterised was related to context specificity. Speaker 7 acknowledged that children need to be collaborative and inclusive in class, but in the playground, it may be acceptable for children not to be friends with everyone. In some ways, this view finds parallels with the earlier non-absolutist view of reasoning – there is no one right way to reason about social inclusion.

I'm thinking that there's a difference between how you would use reasoning in the classroom compared to out in the playground. They would need to learn that you can apply that reasoning differently. In the classroom you need to be a lot more inclusive of each other- that's not the right term, but it's okay.

Finally, continuing with the idea that reasoning was not absolutist in nature, the group reflected on how reasoning for social inclusion was subjectivist in nature. This means reasoning involved the consideration of many points of view and understanding how someone might think differently from you. However, in this instance, they

did not focus on evaluating perspectives to reach consensus, although there is evidence with Speaker 2 that some reasons may be more appropriate than others—suggesting an evaluation of ideas:

Speaker 2: It's also getting them to open their minds up as to... there are reasons why we do certain things and some reasons would be more appropriate than others so it's beginning to think about the reasons behind the intentions..

Taken together, the group discussed the meaning and characterisation of reasoning for social inclusion with respect to deep understanding. Reasoning was characterised as non-absolutist (no one right answer), contextual and subjectivist (understanding other points of view—with some reasons better than others) in nature. In the next section, we describe enabling PEPs related to effective teaching strategies for promoting such reasoning for social inclusion.

Teaching strategies to promote reasoning for social inclusion

Teachers identified a range of ways in which they believed they could support children's reasoning in classrooms. They described strategies to promote reasoning using different forms of evidence, by setting up classroom cultures of communication, explicitly teaching reasoning skills and finally by promoting language skills specifically for reasoning for social inclusion. The first group of strategies involved promoting reasoning using different forms of evidence, for example:

Speaker 7: Get children to question viewpoints and to think about evidence that supports the viewpoints. Even the anti-vaxxers. So, a lot of that was built on the fact that children, what they believe [inaudible 00:44:12] and that's been proven scientifically to be wrong now so what evidence do they have now? Children can think like this. They do think like this if you give them the opportunity and questions and the model.

One speaker suggested that reasoning relies on children being supported by teachers to engage in reflection on their reasoning, which is a type of epistemic meta reflection:

Speaker 4: I think you also need to get them to reflect as well. To reflect on—it's important, to them, to think about—and this is your epistemic cognition is to say why we believe that and how did you come to that belief, how did you acquire that particular belief?

Suggested teaching strategies also involved teachers deliberately setting up classroom cultures to support reasoning (note: while this also links to CEPs, it is reported here as it refers to individual teaching approaches):

Speaker 3: It's the cultural environment. So, you have to really set up that culture, that sort of thing—because I was just sort of thinking, your kids, they're coming from, you know, from what you're saying, trauma or whatever, they might be learning a completely different way of communicating, at home.

Teachers identified rules to support classroom management as part of setting up the classroom culture, for example “get the kids to talk about what the rules mean so they all have an understanding of the rules so you can practice that. What it looks like, what it doesn’t look like” (Speaker 2). The consistent use of reasoning (practice), with listening as an important skill, also reflected classroom culture, for example:

Speaker 7: But it also has to be done every single week, all the time. And then what happens next is they start to behave in this manner when they’re not sitting in a philosophy circle or when they’re outside in the yard or something and they really are listening to one another.

Another teaching strategy that reflected enabling PEPs involved the explicit teaching of reasoning skills:

Speaker 7: If you say to people “whereabouts do we explicitly teach kids to think?” And everybody thinks somebody else does it. Actually, nobody does it, unless you’re doing something deliberately like philosophy, because that is more than doing, it’s teaching them to think. That’s your job. Everybody makes an assumption that kids know how to make an assumption or recognise when an assumption has been made. But nobody has said to them, “this is how you recognise an assumption. Is it a warranted assumption or is it not?”.

In addition to the idea of teaching reasoning in an explicit way, the mention of a warranted assumption suggested that there is a need to consider viewpoints which are informed (evaluated) rather than being based on simply a personal (subjective) opinion. Here, we see a focus on ways of knowing that are evaluativist in nature.

Finally, a number of conversations showed the importance of explicitly teaching and role modelling the vocabulary of reasoning and thinking, for example:

Speaker 5: I think the first thing you wrote up there, that they need to be taught to reason first and they need to be given that language about their reasoning and about their emotions.

In summary, the enabling PEPs related to teaching strategies pointed to a strong focus on teachers supporting children to reason using different forms of evidence, setting up classroom cultures of communication, explicitly teaching reasoning skills and promoting language skills specifically for reasoning for social inclusion. These responses related to teaching strategies reveal an evaluativist epistemic stance which are reflected in some of the argumentation criteria outlined by Reznitskaya and Wilkinson (2017), particularly the acceptability of reasons and evidence and a focus on logical validity.

Enabling cultural emergent properties (CEPs)

The teachers identified three broad enabling CEPs which included views about the nature of knowledge, commitment to supporting children’s reasoning about social inclusion and children’s personal identities. These are cultural in nature because they

refer to the beliefs, values and commitment of the broader school community rather than individuals per se.

Views about the nature of knowledge

A CEP that enabled children's reasoning was related to the nature of knowledge identified by teachers. This was made explicit through a focus on shared understanding, the use of evidence, putting yourself in someone else's position and identifying the difference between opinions and judgements. In the following excerpt, the group argued about the use of the term 'consensus' versus 'shared understanding' with respect to the nature of knowledge when children are engaged in reasoning:

Speaker 2: [inaudible] she actually does talk about consensus but she means it in the broadest sense where you're talking about these are the criteria we've come up with today- to be what we mean about exclusion. Do we all agree with that today? It might change tomorrow if we start talking about it again-

Speaker 5: Because knowledge is commutable.

Speaker 2: Yeah. But she talks about consensus in that way, but we understand it to be a shared understanding. It sounds like when we say consensus it sounds like you're coming up with your [unclear] you're going to agree with [cross-talk]...

Speaker 5: Because the meaning of the word consensus can come back from absolutist type people [crosstalk].

Speaker 3: And also the sense of some people may feel overruled in this context and you try to avoid that.

Speaker 5: Then you're negating their experience and their contributions.

This rich and extended conversation explored the idea that shared understanding allows for all children's views to be heard, whereas the teachers suggested that consensus reflects an absolutist epistemic stance which is not so desirable for children's reasoning. This view is somewhat at odds with the notion of arguing for different viewpoints leading to informed consensus (Chinn and Clark 2013). It seemed that the teachers were not seeing the value of evaluating different ideas to arrive at group consensus. Focussing on listening to children's views reflects Reznitskaya and Wilkinson's (2017) first criterion about diversity of practices. This criterion focusses on, among other things, the need to explore different points of view or alternatives. The points of view shared in this conversation point to a non-absolutist rather than an evaluative view about children's reasoning and provide insights into their views about the nature of knowledge in the context of supporting children to reason about social inclusion.

Another view of knowledge with respect to children's reasoning involved a focus on evidence and deep understanding:

Speaker 5: A bit like faith-based stuff. People will be able to question their faith and they might still come up with the same answers but they will probably have more evidence for it and a deeper understanding of it by the time they've gone through that process.

This deep understanding is also evident when Speaker 3 suggested that knowledge is based on putting oneself into “someone else’s decision”, which has important links for listening skills. Many of Reznitskaya and Wilkinson’s (2017) criteria for argumentation reasoning involve a focus on evaluating different points of view and evidence and providing justifications, in particular with respect to the criteria of diversity of practices, acceptability of reasons and evidence and logical validity.

Finally, a view of knowledge that identified the difference between opinions and judgements with justifications was evident along with helping children to become comfortable with epistemic doubt:

Speaker 7: Absolutely, and also an opinion is very different from a judgment. Go through that process. Start with an opinion and go through that process and end up being a judgment that you can justify.

Speaker 2: That will stand up to the questioning and scrutiny so I think getting children comfortable with epistemic doubts is really important but if we don’t doubt things we don’t really have an inquiry.

These quotes suggested in order to reason effectively and to engage in inquiry, and children need to feel that it is acceptable to have doubts or uncertainties. This approach is at odds with a view of teaching in which one right, irrefutable answer is required in learning tasks.

Overall, the CEPs related to views about knowledge suggested that teachers advocated for an evaluativist epistemic stance in which knowledge is uncertain, evidence based (not opinion based) reflecting the argumentation criteria of acceptability of reasons and evidence and logical validity (Reznitskaya and Wilkinson 2017). However, the conversation about shared understandings versus consensus suggested a subjectivist view of knowledge where shared understanding rather than adjudicating on such opinions to reach consensus seemed to be valued.

Commitment to supporting children’s reasoning

The second enabling CEP explored by the teachers was related to the need to commit to supporting children’s reasoning for social inclusion from the perspectives of three stakeholders – school leaders, teachers and children. First, school leadership needed to ensure commitment (and teach reasoning regardless of the topic/discipline area):

Speaker 1: The rule was you did not give up maths and you did not give up philosophy. I’m not saying the other stuff wasn’t important but those were the things that were absolutely critical, and we just did it. What do I not do in order to find an hour for philosophy and I said, “I don’t care what you don’t do because this is going to make a difference to everything. [crosstalk].

Leading on from the focus on commitment to teaching reasoning through good leadership, teachers talked about teachers’ commitment and professional development as crucial in supporting children’s reasoning:

Speaker 1: There just really has to be a commitment to do it properly. I'm just sort of imagining this thing that comes where you have a professional development, it's a staff meeting, that sort of thing. And you go, "Oh look this is our latest social skills program. What's this program about? What does it look like?" And then people go, "Well we've got to show teachers what it looks like."... There's one example of one teacher doing something that worked in their one class and someone's videoed it and then that video gets played six times to the staff and that's what this looks like... It's kind of like the meaning goes from the theory and all the deep stuff and by the time it gets to us it's just buzzwords. So, it's really important, that.-

In addition to teachers' commitment to teaching reasoning, it seemed that children also needed to demonstrate similar commitment through valuing community to support reasoning for social inclusion:

Speaker 7: If you can build that community in the classroom. The students don't want that community destroyed. You actually see, when a new child comes from another school and they don't have the same feel of that community and the kids very quickly teach them to become part of that community. It's very interesting to see that happen. They don't want it to be derailed. You know, they really feel strongly about that.

Taken together, commitment that reflected school leadership, teachers' personal commitment and children's valuing of community highlighted an important CEP which complemented the earlier CEP related to predominantly evaluativist views of knowledge. That is, it seems that in order to promote children's evaluative reasoning in school settings, it was important for these teachers to have both a focus on evaluativist ways of knowing and a commitment by adults and children to support a school wide, ongoing focus on reasoning for social inclusion.

Children's positive identity

The final enabling CEP identified by the teachers was related to children's positive identity. The teachers talked about how reasoning for social inclusion required children to have a positive identity:

Speaker 3: And I think that sort of confidence to have your own identity too, because if you really like somebody and they think differently to you and you're a little kid, you might be likely to go, "Oh, they think that so therefore I might start thinking that too because I want to be like my friends. I want to be part of that group."

Speaker 2: What you want children to do though, rather than just—have a reason that they—give a reason that matches what the friends think, is to really be able to justify the reason while listening to others and making decisions about what—taking the evidence rather than just, "She's my best friend so she must know." You want them to question that further. It's okay to think differently, but.-

In this conversation, positive identity was considered to be an enabling CEP because teachers believed that it helped children to feel it was acceptable to have their own opinion and to evaluate knowledge claims (provide evidence to back up their opinions).

Findings Part 2: constraining reasoning for social inclusion

While teachers discussed at length the various personal and cultural enablers of children's reasoning for social inclusion, less was reported with respect to constraining emergent properties. Teachers mostly described SEPs as constraints on children's reasoning, with only a small amount of commentary related to constraining CEPs.

Constraining structural emergent properties (SEPs)

Teachers identified broader teaching and curriculum pressures and children's literacy levels as key constraints which were structural in nature.

Broader teaching and curriculum pressures

Speaker 3 argued that a focus on template teaching or teaching using exemplars could cause children to be afraid to express an opinion:

Speaker 3: Because I think, Speaker 10, you'd probably agree. Often at the beginning of the year you'll have a big brainstorming session with the principal and whatever... And it usually comes out as they're [the students are] not very resilient, that sort of thing. And I think that, probably links with that, is being afraid to have an opinion because I mean, there's so much teaching now that's based on this is the exemplar, follow the exemplar. I do, we do, you do. All that sort of stuff. I mean that's what you see. That's why I'm not there anymore. You know, so, that's what's going on in schools.

Another teaching pressure identified involved the need for teachers to show evidence of effectiveness in their teaching:

Speaker 3: Even when I started teaching here this year, the students were doing some stuff with robots and I was like, "quick get the camera. I need some evidence." You know, you're just constantly wanting to grab evidence to stick in some portfolio to prove something to someone later on and I think maybe it's hard to gather evidence on thinking skills or reasoning if it's not an assessable thing. It's hard to quantify. [crosstalk].

In this quote, we see that the pressure of needing to demonstrate effective teaching using evidence does not always fit well with teaching that supports children's reasoning. Further, broader curriculum and national testing regimes were also discerned to constrain children's reasoning, as seen in this quote:

Speaker 1: And I think that brings us back to the question. I think that's one of the challenges of all the other things you have to do, and C2C and all these, NAPLAN,¹ whatever, so that those basics actually go out the window.

Overall, teachers believed that externally mandated teaching and curricula agendas constrained the teaching of reasoning for social inclusion. The teachers went on to identify children's literacy levels and emotional challenges as another set of structural constraints, which are now discussed.

Children's literacy and emotional challenges

Children's literacy and emotional challenges were also described as potentially problematic and constraining with respect to supporting reasoning about social inclusion, as identified here by Speaker 6:

Speaker 6: I'm just thinking. I teach prep in a school in _____, so there's a lot of layers. Twenty two kids in my school; 18 are ESL; and the other five or six have very, very low literacy so they come to school not knowing how you hold a book, where the front cover is. From day dot ...you've got a challenge because the kids' oral language is not what a standard 5-year-old is capable of doing. So, on top of teaching English, you've got to teach emotions, what emotions look like, how to identify if someone's angry, how to identify if someone's sad. So then, I'm just thinking, to teach them how to reason on top of that layer, a lot of these kids have trauma so for them, identifying how other people feel is not something that they can do, naturally. So, I'm just taking everything in and trying to apply it to where I am, now. And I think a lot of what we do, though, is—we do teach a lot of emotions and we do a lot of social stories and how to identify how people are feeling and how we include people.

Despite few in number, teachers identified that SEPs constrained children's reasoning. The most challenging seemed to be curriculum and teaching pressures, although children's literacy and emotional levels were also of concern for this group of teachers.

Constraining cultural emergent properties (CEPs)

Only one conversation centred around a constraining CEP in which the teachers identified how some adults viewed children as lacking competence with respect to reasoning:

Facilitator: Do think some teachers think kids are capable of doing this stuff?

Speaker 2: I know that a lot of teachers think they're not.

¹ C2C—*Curriculum into the Classroom* (Education Queensland curriculum documents); NAPLAN—Australia's National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy.

Speaker 3: People would come in and watch what you... watch at School B (a Philosophy for Kids school), and they say, “Well, no, my kids couldn’t do that”.

Speaker 5: And we’ve had people come to video us at School B, and we’ve had the people behind the camera say to us, “so how long did that take to practise the script?”.

Speaker 5: Wow, do you really think I could script that, you know?

Speaker 5: So, what you’re getting is a lot of teachers who are developing an awareness of their own epistemic cognition. They don’t actually have that to start with, the teachers. And kids will make them aware of that because you get that response “oh my God. I’m so gob smacked. I can’t believe what these kids just said”. And it challenges the teachers’ beliefs about the kids and about whatever the kids are talking about, which might be race or love or whatever.

Here, we can see how teachers believed that some adults may think that children are not competent with respect to engaging in reasoning. What is interesting is that Speaker 5 suggested that once teachers grasp that children are indeed competent, there can be a shift in teachers’ own epistemic stances regarding children’s reasoning.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings showed that teachers overwhelmingly reported a range of personal and cultural emergent properties that they believed *enabled* children to engage in reasoning for social inclusion. Teachers reported PEPs which reflected reasoning as non-absolutist (no one right answer), contextual and subjectivist (understanding other points of view) in nature. Evaluativist views of knowledge were more clearly evident when teachers described PEPs related to teaching strategies in which teachers supported children to reason using different forms of evidence, setting up classroom cultures of communication, explicitly teaching reasoning skills and promoting language skills specifically for reasoning for social inclusion. The explanations about teaching strategies overall suggested an evaluativist view of knowledge and knowing, in which knowledge is uncertain, evolving and constructed based on weighing up competing points of view to arrive at an informed perspective (Weinstock 2016). Reznitskaya and Wilkinson (2017) identified a range of criteria for supporting children’s reasoning (argumentation) in the inquiry-oriented classroom which were evaluativist in nature. These criteria included reasoning which involved “diversity of perspectives, clarity, acceptability of reasons and evidence, and logical validity” (p. 196). Each of these criteria point to a view of knowledge that involves identification, evaluation and adjudication with respect to competing perspectives.

Broader cultural views about the nature of knowledge (enabling CEPs) also described knowledge and knowing as uncertain, evidence based (not opinion based), with a focus on shared understanding rather than consensus. Although on the whole these enabling CEPs pointed to a view of social reasoning as evaluative in nature, the idea that shared understandings rather than consensus was preferred

by the teachers suggested a subjectivist view of knowledge rather than adjudicating on such opinions (evaluativism). Teachers also acknowledged a CEP related to the need for commitment to children's reasoning through leadership, teachers' commitment and professional development, and children's valuing of community. Further, children's positive identities supported children to feel it is acceptable to have their own opinion and to evaluate knowledge claims (provide evidence to back up their opinions). Our findings showed that while teachers do not report one specific way of engaging children in reasoning (teaching strategies – PEP), it is clear an evaluative epistemic stance is an important underlying CEP that connects these approaches. These evaluativist (and subjectivist) CEPs align with the PEPs related to teaching strategies in which knowledge was also considered to be uncertain, evolving and constructed based on weighing up competing points of view.

Relative to the identified enablers of children's reasoning, teachers reported fewer *constraints* with respect to reasoning in primary school. They noticed that broader teaching and curriculum pressures and children's literacy and emotional challenges (SEPs) as well as adults' views about children's reasoning capacities (CEP) could be problematic when it comes to supporting children to reason about social inclusion. It is possible that the overall focus on enablements rather than constraints emerged because a number of teachers in the social lab had research/teaching experience in philosophy for children and children's reasoning that is part of this approach to learning. They seemed to be very clear about how to promote such reasoning, namely taking an evaluative view of knowledge, having commitment from school leadership, staff and children themselves in order to support reasoning for social inclusion, and children feeling positive about presenting their own justified opinions.

Our findings point to rich and nuanced teacher understandings of what it means and what it takes to help children to engage in reasoning about social inclusion in primary classrooms. Following Barzilai and Chinn (2018), we posit the goal of all primary school education needs to be about enabling children as justice-oriented citizens to engage in evaluativist reasoning where competing views are analysed and adjudicated upon (consensus not just shared understandings) to arrive at informed perspectives and actions. When thinking about active citizenship, evaluativist reasoning should, therefore, engage children in *justice-oriented* citizenship (Westheimer and Kahne 2004), whereby children are able to think critically about social exclusion and how it might be addressed.

Our conversation with this group of teachers suggests that, in order to promote children's reasoning for social inclusion, it is important to pay attention to teachers' underlying epistemic stances and their views about what enables and constrains such reasoning (reflexivity). If our goal as educators is to help children to develop as justice-oriented citizens for the future, then we need to use pedagogies which require children to reason about moral values in a way which Sigauke (2011) refers to as critical thinking for active citizenship. In other words, we need to focus on reasoning for social inclusion which leads to deliberative democracy.

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