Call for articles for Special Issue of *Research in Education*

Breaking up with “Leadership for Inclusion”. Conceptual and methodological entry points to matters of concern and matters of care

Edited by Dorthe Staunæs, Helene Ratner & Camilla Nørgaard

"Inclusion”, as an idea and series of interventions, has for some years been the key solution to the equity and well-being of ‘all students’ in higher education as well as in primary and secondary school (Ahmed, 2012; Hunter, 2015; Swan, 2010). Following this, a large number of governing stakeholders, researchers and media in general claim that educational leadership plays a pivotal role in ensuring and promoting inclusion and well-being in education. Given this hopeful mandate, educational leadership for inclusion is engaged in tasks and objectives often causing tensions and conflicts, since the issue of inclusion at the same time often pertains to ‘wicked problems’ (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Wicked problems are difficult and even impossible to solve, challenged with incomplete, ambiguous, contradictory, conflictual and complex interdependent aims, conditions and technologies. This underscores that the hope for leadership to ‘promote’ inclusion is optimistic at best, whilst often leaving educational leaders (and students) wrestling in aporias or stuck places (Lather, 2007, 2018). Solving one part of the inclusion complex may reveal or create new problematics and tensions. Just to mention a few, however of vital importance; epistemologies of ignorance, institutional double binds, deferral of complexity, problematic practices of categorization, and racism.

This special issue is dedicated to discussions of research concepts and methodologies that may allow us grasp the wicked matters of inclusion approached from an educational leadership perspective. The aim is to break up with ‘the cruel optimism’ (Berlant, 2011) imposing on leadership for inclusion, manifest in policy papers and public debates, and instead interrogate how leadership for inclusion actually happens. Doing so will entail both new insight into how leadership becomes prone to conflict and tension while working with inclusion as well as better understanding of the dilemmas and conditions for practicing inclusion as it becomes present and singularized in the everyday practices of educational organisations, and how this ties in with political initiatives and organizational circumstances. In eliciting the layered complexities of ‘leadership for inclusion’, we are especially interested in reflections on how (novel) conceptual and methodological interventions help ‘break-up’ these imaginaries of leadership (O’Doherty & Ratner, 2017).

Following these ambitions, we invite in transdisciplinary norm-critical approaches (STS studies, decolonial studies, disability studies, crip studies, queer studies, race studies, feminist studies, black studies e.g.) to the study of educational leadership on inclusion, however, we also ask to avoid critique as “genre flailing” (Berlant, 2018) that just ‘critizes as always’ without analyzing, wondering or reframing the questions to be asked. Rather, we ask: How may we make a critique beyond criticism that may provision discussions of how things could be different, caring and liveable? How may research contribute conceptually and methodologically to facilitate leadership for viable futures and students of many kinds? In this sense, our empirical-conceptual engagements with issues of inclusive leadership is always-already an intervention in dear need of not only matters of concern but also matters of care (Bellacasa, 2017).

In responding to this call, papers may (but should not necessarily) address some of the following questions:
Subsequent to the demand for ‘more and better inclusion’ how and where does conflict and tension arise? What are the sources hereof?

What are the effects of considering educational leadership part and parcel of promoting inclusion and ultimately promoting student improvement/development?

How are new technologies involving professional communities and data, played out as they are utilized for purposes of documentation and measurement of this?

How do technologies and policy in general effect managerial participation in cross-contextual collaboration?

How do managers themselves engage in conceptualization while attempting to navigate the complexities of inclusion?

How may leadership be conceptualized, even potentialized, in debates on inclusion as well as in actual inclusion initiatives in education/educational organizations?

How do data, transparency, formalities, procedures and standards become the managerial answer to inclusion efforts?

Which logics about diversity, justice, and ethics as well as evidence and leadership are evoked in the wake hereof?

How do ethical and normative aspects, social issues and practical problems and heated atmospheres, linked to (social) inclusion, become part of educational leadership practices?

Format and timelines

Initial abstracts should be submitted to the Guest Editors: Dorthe Staunæs (dost@edu.au.dk); Helene Gad Ratner (helr@edu.au.dk) and Camilla Nørgaard (cn@edu.au.dk)

When submitting a manuscript, authors should select the ‘Breaking up with “Leadership for Inclusion”’ special issue article option from the drop-down menu on the Research in Education submission system.

Please review the journal’s submission guidelines before submitting: https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/research-in-education/journal202524#submission-guidelines

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Decision on abstracts (January 15th 2019)
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References


