

Article

# Practitioner Enquiry as Lifelong Teacher Education for Inclusion

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**Abstract:** This article focuses on the use of a practitioner enquiry (PE) course to develop teacher education for inclusion, particularly when referring to continuous professional development (CPD). The article aims to answer the following research questions: How does this PE course compared to other experiences of CPD? To what extent is this model of CPD a way of promoting teacher education for inclusion? The data presented in this article were generated by three student-practitioners and a course tutor who engaged in a practitioner enquiry course offered in a higher education institution in Scotland during the academic year 2022–2023. Data were generated through autoethnography, and all authors individually reflected on their experiences of CPD, namely this PE course. The data were then analysed through a thematic analysis process that combined individual and collaborative tasks, including the writing of this article. This article concludes that long-term CPD with a constructivist alignment allows student-practitioners to develop their agency as inclusive educators. Engagement with research, both by critically analysing ‘global’ academic research and by designing and implementing a ‘local’ PE, provides lifelong tools for teachers to identify and remove barriers to ensuring that all learners can access, participate, and succeed in education.

**Keywords:** practitioner enquiry; inclusive education; continuous professional development; teacher education



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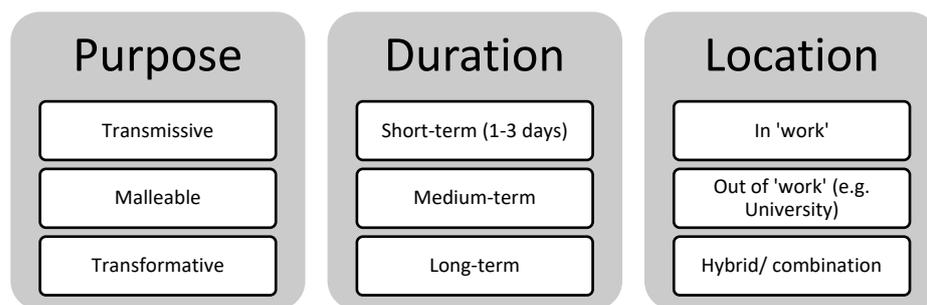
## 1. Introduction

Teacher education (TE) for inclusion has been developing as an area of interest [1–3]. This can be to some extent explained by the challenges experienced by teachers linked to student diversity and the international effort to develop education systems that include all learners [4,5]. According to Forlin, TE for inclusion is a way of ensuring that teachers are prepared to teach in classrooms with diverse students [6]. However, Livingston considers that the role and responsibility of TE ‘in developing inclusive education that enables every teacher to meet the needs of all our young people’ [7] still needs to be explored.

TE can be divided into two main phases: initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD). This article focuses on CPD offered to educators in Scotland as part of a postgraduate diploma/master’s degree in the form of a practitioner enquiry (PE) course. In the Scottish context, CPD for teachers is referred to as ‘career-long professional learning’ (CLPL); however, like Kennedy [8], we use continuing professional development (CPD) given its ‘common currency across the globe’.

The literature suggests that TE institutions are ‘still grappling with finding ways to shift from a transmission model of teaching to the application of more active involvement of teachers and their students in understanding and developing their own learning’ ([7], p. 2), and that those institutions ‘must become more innovative and ensure that theory and research are better linked to actual practice’ ([6], p. xxii). In this article, we propose practitioner enquiry (PE) as an innovative way to support educators to develop as inclusive practitioners. We also argue that PE is in itself an inclusive pedagogy for TE, in response to the diversity of educators involved in CPD.

Kennedy [8] proposes that the spectrum of CPD models ranges from transmissive to transformative, with collaborative professional inquiry models being given as an example of a transformative mode (represented as Purpose in Figure 1). In fact, collaborative learning for educators is increasingly used [3], e.g., through practitioner inquiry/enquiry, action research, and lesson studies [9]. In trying to dissect CPD, we propose that we must consider its purpose [8], duration [10], and location, as shown in Figure 1 below. Transformative models tend to be developed as long-term responses that take place in a combination of locations, fostering knowledge development and critical engagement with policy, research, and practice. This is the case for the PE course that we will analyse in this article.



**Figure 1.** Understanding CPD.

Over the years, several authors have proposed what an inclusive educator needs to 'be' and 'do'. Rouse considered a head, heart, and hands model [11]. This aligns with the European Agency's three areas of competence: knowledge, attitudes, and skills [12]. Rouse suggested that educators need to know (head) about policy, pedagogy, how children learn, and how to identify and respond to difficulties. Within his work, Rouse claimed that knowledge is necessary but not sufficient—as educators also need to believe (heart) that they are responsible for all students under their care and that all learners have the capacity to learn; finally, educators must have the ability (hands) to turn knowledge into action through action research and by collaborating with others. The ability to collaborate with others has also been identified by other authors as a key aspect of being an inclusive educator [6,12], with these 'others' including parents/families and a range of other educational professionals. Similarly, the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, in their Profile of Inclusive Teachers [12], present core values and areas of competence such as Valuing Learner Diversity, Supporting All Learners, and Personal Professional Development with Teachers as reflective practitioners. The concept of the teacher as a reflective practitioner is not a new one, with Schön's publication [13] dating back to the 1980s. This is still considered a key component that has been identified for inclusive educators [7].

Another crucial feature for successfully implementing CPD for inclusive teachers is to create a 'continuum of support for teachers' where multiple stakeholders (including those working in higher education institutions), structures, and professional development opportunities play important roles [12].

Scotland's educational policy and legislative framework assert a commitment to inclusive education, adopting a rights-based and learner-centred approach [14]. The Scottish Education system emphasises the rights of all learners, including those identified as requiring additional support for learning (ASL). Notably, the right of children to an education in a mainstream setting has been in legislation in Scotland since 2000, a policy move referred to as the 'presumption of mainstreaming' [15]. In Scotland, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) determines who can register as a teacher. Its professional standards [16] regulate the expectations of teachers in Scotland. These standards show a clear commitment to both inclusion and to teacher education, 'Being a Teacher in Scotland' involves aligning with the following Professional Values (1.1): social justice, trust and respect, and integrity. A Professional Commitment to learning and learners that is compatible with the aspiration

of achieving a sustainable and equitable world (1.2) embodies what it is to be a teacher in Scotland. This means teachers commit to the professional values and to engaging in lifelong learning, reflection, enquiry, leadership of learning, and collaborative practice as key aspects of their professionalism. The Scottish standards also require teachers to develop Professional Knowledge and Understanding (2), namely to 'Have a depth of knowledge and understanding of Research and Engagement in Practitioner Enquiry' (2.1.2) and to engage in Professional Learning (3.3), namely by engaging critically with the literature, research, and policy (3.3.1). These can be challenging goals for teachers, particularly as they experience being time-poor as part of standardised approaches to education that favour short-term measurement and performance outcomes over teaching as a relational activity [17].

This article argues that CPD focusing on teacher education for inclusion should be based on supported long-term engagement with research, and university–school partnerships based on 'continuous improvement methods' [18]. Donaldson, in his review of teacher education in Scotland, reinforced the 'need to bring teachers and university staff closer together to focus on improving children's learning' ([19], p. 58). Continuous improvement methods are a 'family of approaches' that use different terms, such as collaborative inquiry, practitioner action research, action learning, and lesson study ([20], p. 283). These are based on reflective and experiential learning [21], and are supported through learning journals, diaries, logs, portfolios, action learning sets, human inquiry groups, action research, personal development planning, peer and self-assessment, and problem-based learning [21].

Through an autoethnographic and embodied inquiry approach, the authors of this article aimed to answer the following questions: How does this PE course compare to other experiences of CPD? To what extent is this model of CPD a way of promoting teacher education for inclusion?

While collaborative approaches to teacher education for inclusion have been presented as an important aspect of teacher CPD for inclusion [22], it is sometimes challenging to promote true collaborative approaches in higher education contexts where the assessment of qualifications often continues to value individual work. This was the case for the assessment of the PE course in which this article was generated—to successfully complete the course (part of a postgraduate diploma or master's in education). Each student-practitioner was expected to design a research project, obtain ethical approval from relevant ethics entities, gather and analyse data, and write up their project as an 8000-word report. This course required students to identify an issue relevant to their context and practice related to inclusive education (i.e., improving access, participation, and the success of learners in education) as that was the topic of the overall diploma/master's qualification.

## 2. Materials and Methods

Data for this article were generated by 3 student-practitioners and the course tutor in a higher education institution in the UK attending a practitioner enquiry course. All students in the course were invited to join the writing team for this article, and those with interest and availability were asked to reflect individually on their experiences of CPD in general, and on the PE course specifically, as well as how the different forms of CPD supported them in developing as inclusive practitioners. Three student-practitioners accepted the invitation and joined the writing team for this article: Annie, Jeff, and Victoria (See Table 1).

Using an embodied enquiry approach [23], student-practitioners agreed to reflect and generate data by selecting a method (writing/taking a photo/drawing/creating a map to illustrate their views) and reflect on their experiences of CPD.

Data generation was based on an autoethnography approach, a genre of qualitative, reflexive, autobiographical writing and research that uses the researcher as the subject ([24], p. 135). 'Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno) as a method, autoethnography is both process and product'

([25], p. 273). The choice of autoethnography as a method was made due to its aim ‘to disrupt the binary of science and art. Autoethnographers believe research can be rigorous, theoretical and analytical and emotional, therapeutic and inclusive of personal and social phenomenon’ ([25], p. 8). Participatory action research and autoethnography are presented as decolonising methods of data generation as they allow local communities to theorise their own lives and expect the ‘established research community’ to recognise these theories as valid academic knowledge ([26], p. 3). In this case, the course tutor, Ines, and the students-practitioners, Annie, Jeff, and Victoria, reflected on their own experiences of being involved in the practitioner enquiry course and collaborated to write this article. This can be considered a ‘decolonising approach to research is twofold: (a) the deconstruction of existing methodologies and methods that (re)produce the coloniality of knowledge; and (b) a reconstruction/or reinvention of research practice’ ([26], p. 3). Rather than the tutor collecting data ‘on’ the experiences of student-practitioners, the decision was to collaborate and jointly reflect on the individual and shared experiences of CPD and the PE course.

**Table 1.** Students-practitioners involved in writing this article.

Student-Practitioner	Context of Work	Years Working in Education	Focus of The PE (Topic)	Methodology and Participants
Annie	Secondary specialist unit (provision) attached to mainstream school in Scotland	7 years in education	Factors impacting subject choice amongst pupils in the provision	Qualitative—individual interviews with pupils in the provision
Jeff	Private tutor in England	9 years in education	Private tutors’ knowledge of autism and working with autistic students	Qualitative—individual interviews with private tutors
Victoria	Language and communication resource (LCR) within a primary mainstream school in Scotland	19 years in education 4 years as a principal teacher of LCR	Parental engagement in LCR	Qualitative—Focus groups with parents of pupils in LCR

The reflection prompt was to consider the differences and similarities between experiences in this practitioner Enquiry course and previous experiences of continuous professional development/career-long professional learning. All participants decided to write. The tutor read all three student-practitioners’ writing and reflected on their own experiences of delivering teacher education for inclusion, CPD, and the specific PE course.

The research materials generated by the student-practitioners were then shared and added to a joint folder, and all participants read someone else’s writing and identified points (codes); these were discussed in a series of online meetings looking at commonalities and differences in the views and experiences of all the project researchers. Through thematic analysis [27], we identified five main themes related to experiences of practitioner enquiry and its contribution to the development of practitioners and their work contexts toward becoming more inclusive: (1) PE as a constructivist approach, (2) PE as a surprising experience, (3) process in terms of dynamic versus fixed/pre-planned, (4) engagement with research (methods) to reflect on own practice and inclusive practice, and (5) context-specific and context-relevant.

### 3. Results

In this section, we will present the five themes identified. The first theme considered differences in terms of theories of learning supporting different types of CPD; while traditional CPD tends to be top-down and authoritarian, with the tutor in the position of power and as the provider of knowledge, the present PE course was based on a constructivist approach where students were supported through exposure to knowledge about how and why they should conduct practitioner enquiry, how to access readings relevant to the individual areas of research, how to critically engage with an academic article, how to

create good research questions, how to select methods of data collection, the importance of integrity in research, how to apply for ethical approval, and finally how to analyse and report on the data gathered.

The second theme reflected the sense of surprise that student-practitioners experienced when conducting their PE—being surprised both by the process and the findings.

The third theme reflected PE as a dynamic form of CPD, in which learning, teaching, and research processes were responsive to the challenges felt during the course—this was very different to the pre-planned and fixed CPD previously experienced in which usually tutors/trainers came with pre-defined contents and materials.

The fourth theme focused on engagement with research and research methods, which allowed student-practitioners to reflect on their own contexts, practice, and specifically, aspects related to inclusive practice. Taking part in a course that provided them with tools to look at their own practice and see it with new eyes' through the collection of data from relevant participants (students, parents, and peers), and being asked to take time to make sense of the data, to read about others who engaged with similar data, student-practitioners were able to see, reflect, and critically engage with an issue that was meaningful to them and their practice in depth.

Finally, the fifth theme centred on the aspect of PE being context-specific and context-relevant, whereas many other forms of CPD tend to reach student-participants with 'ready-made' solutions, training packages, or approaches that may not be relevant to the variety of contexts 'represented' and that can lead to a tendency to 'uncritically' import these, creating other challenges.

We will now present each of the five themes, with examples provided by the different authors.

### *3.1. PE as a Constructivist Approach*

The first theme we identified from our collected data was the concept of practitioner enquiry (PE) as a constructivist approach to developing as educators. The constructivist approach was expressed clearly by Ines, who described practitioner enquiry as 'designing a study' where the enquirer leads the enquiry supported by the course tutor. The tutor's role is to create scaffolding situations and materials to allow the student-practitioners to 'construct' their own knowledge, which starts from supporting them in identifying a meaningful topic or context-specific challenge, prompting them to engage with relevant theory and research, to use appropriate methods of data gathering, and to spend time making sense of the data gathered and their implications to practice.

For Victoria, a student on the course, this makes practitioner enquiry 'personal' and 'specific' to her and her question. For Annie, practitioner enquiry prompted her to 'think about how knowledge is constructed'. The course leader's job was 'not too dissimilar from supervising dissertation students', in the sense that practitioners were guided by their own research, not to an external authority, and the results would be meaningful to the student-practitioners more than to anybody else.

Annie described typical CPD as 'top-down learning', where there is already a 'consensus among leaders on best practice' for pupils, which is then relayed to staff, to apply to their classrooms—in other words, those receiving CPD would be 'learning practices from experts'. This was also described by Victoria as someone 'imparting their knowledge', a 'scholar-academic' [28] approach (this will be further developed in the discussion section). Jeff described his past experience with CPD as a mandatory 'part of the interview process' when working with tutoring agencies, which highlights that CPD may be a requirement of employment: 'if you don't do what the experts say, you don't get a job'. In Jeff's case, PE, by contrast, replaces the traditional CPD model of 'top-down learning' with a constructivist approach, and is conducted voluntarily by the practitioners, without any threat to their job security. The PE course aims to develop in student-practitioners an inquiring stance [29] that will remain long after the course and that constantly develops in response to the emerging findings, the responses of participants, and the direction of the enquiry itself.

Typically, individual constructivism/cognitivism (Piaget) refers to learning by creating meaning from experience, with social constructivism (Vygotsky) emphasising the importance of the social context of learning and the need for a more knowledgeable other to scaffold learning [30], or anchoring learning in meaningful contexts [31]. This theme was present in all of the authors' writing, as we all highlighted how PE was noticeably different from typical continuous professional development (CPD). We identified that typical CPD tends to employ a more 'authoritarian' or 'scholar-academic' approach to learning [28], unlike the constructivist approach of practitioner enquiry.

### 3.2. PE as a Surprising Experience

The second theme that was identified in our collected writings was that all student-practitioners described practitioner enquiry as surprising. Throughout practitioner enquiry, all the student-practitioners reported being surprised more than once, at numerous different points, including the literature review; data collection; discussion; and conclusions.

This was, perhaps, most clearly expressed by Victoria, who found that 'many [of the participants'] answers were ones I did not expect'. Victoria also described herself as 'intrigued and surprised' by what she learned during her research for the literature review. Likewise, Jeff reported being surprised by the process of analysing the interviews from his participants, saying, 'I was amazed to see themes emerge that I don't think I could have predicted'. In addition, Annie found herself surprised 'by the depth of answers participants gave'. In a slightly different way, Jeff was 'struck by how much it made me think about the wider issues'. From beginning to end, all student-practitioners reported feeling surprised by practitioner enquiry, in different ways.

Student-practitioners also highlighted the surprising aspect of practitioner enquiry by describing 'traditional' CPD as unsurprising. Annie described traditional CPD as predictable, because you know what the end result is going to be before you start: the objectives of traditional CPD 'should be met: by delivering the content to practitioners, in the time allocated'. By contrast, PE did not necessarily begin with pre-prescribed content or conclusions, and there was no way of predicting what the contents would be, or the effect the PE would have on the practitioners.

However, the course leader did not describe practitioner enquiry as surprising. This is because, for her, running the practitioner enquiry course was 'not too dissimilar from supervising dissertation students', something she already had experience with and where as a tutor she saw her role in creating the necessary scaffolding for her student-practitioners to design and implement their studies, to cope with the 'messiness' of the process of 'doing research', and to allow themselves to be surprised by the process and the data generated.

### 3.3. Process—Dynamic Versus Fixed/Pre-Planned

Another theme that was identified also related to the learning process. We all referred to the 'dynamic' nature of learning throughout practitioner enquiry, which allowed us the flexibility to change direction throughout. Victoria mentioned that with traditional CPD, there is 'often little choice in the learning and development', particularly in relation to the wider plan of the school, and Annie said, 'while the information may be received and applied in different ways, the content doesn't usually change depending on the audience' and could be described as 'static'. Annie and Victoria both mentioned that with traditional CPD, 'wisdom is imparted', and while this is often stimulating and thought-provoking, there is often little depth to learning, in contrast to our experience of PE.

Conversely, we all noted that the PE course was dynamic in nature, described by Annie as 'constantly changing in response to the participants'. Annie also mentioned that she felt comparing other forms of CPD to PE was the 'difference between listening to a monologue and having a conversation'. Ines stated that PE 'involved students engaging in depth with their work contexts, considering challenges, reading research about their areas of interest', and everyone mentioned ways in which they became deeply engaged in their own enquiry. Jeff said his work became 'much more meaningful', while Victoria said the

participants' responses 'made me consider my question again'. Describing the PE course, Ines stated that it 'requires a prolonged engagement with the topic of the research'. Jeff highlighted the depth of learning as a result of the dynamic nature of the learning process made him 'think of the bigger issues', and Victoria agreed that 'discussions contributed to my thinking and depth of knowledge'.

### *3.4. Engagement with Research (Methods) to Reflect on Own Practice*

A fourth theme that emerged was the ways in which engagement with individual research was reflected in individual teaching practice and, specifically, inclusive practice. Victoria noted that while traditional CPD can be 'interesting and thought provoking', there is also a notion that this type of learning and development is sometimes 'difficult to 'take forward' in one's establishment' because the learning involves, as highlighted by Annie, 'learning practices from experts' and 'can feel detached from the specific contexts in which we teach and from the learners themselves'. Considerably more detached is learning and development within the context of private tutoring, where Jeff highlighted that following the tutoring interview for joining a tutoring agency, 'no further emphasis on any kind of professional development or learning' was offered. Through the PE course, Jeff had a chance to not be involved in 'just a case of developing my own abilities as a practitioner' but also to 'think about the wider issues of private tutoring', such as a lack of CPD requirement within the private tutoring sector, a sector which is 'inescapably exclusionary towards minorities'.

Annie said that PE had a 'significant impact on my practice', and Victoria wrote that it 'influenced my work remit and vice-versa'. Ines stated that through embarking on a PE, educators are offered opportunities 'to develop themselves as inclusive educators', and all three practitioners reported positive engagement with their research, with Annie stating that PE 'allowed me to benefit from an in-depth reflection'. Victoria noted that 'this made me really consider my question again and how I could implement my subject in my school in real terms', while Annie reflected upon the dynamic nature of PE and how 'learning from the pupils' was an 'exciting experience'. Annie said that through engaging with her study, there was an emphasis on the 'importance of amplifying learners' choice and critical voice in education'. Victoria said the 'PE course has given me a passion for my subject', while Jeff stated that he had 'prodded at some loose seams in the fabric of society that need stitching' when considering private tutoring.

### *3.5. Context Specific and Context Relevant*

Finally, we examined how specific and relevant the learning was to our individual contexts. Many examples of this have been presented in the previous four themes—the fact that the PE course started from issues that were relevant and timely for each of the students made it context-specific and context-relevant. Annie noted that often there is a 'consensus among leaders' who determine the best practice for pupils, and therefore the focus of CPD can feel 'detached from the specific contexts in which we teach and from the learners themselves'. As Victoria states, much of this CPD is 'related to school improvement plan'; therefore, it is not always specific to the inclusive nature of the work we carry out.

In contrast, the PE course, as Ines noted, is 'related to inclusion in education, and allows students to develop an awareness that is required' of their contexts and the barriers to inclusion experienced by students, families and/or staff. The project enabled Jeff to 'investigate about effective learning strategies for autistic students', which will have a 'positive effect on my future tutoring'. Victoria agreed that PE was 'specific to me', and Annie noted that it 'prompted me to engage with questions of agency and inclusion', raising questions about how we can address inclusion if we approach the teaching and learning process in a similar way to how we approach CPD, which is pre-determined, fixed, and not necessarily context-specific or meaningful to all learners. Annie goes on to say 'How we can create learning environments and practices that encourage different interpretations and understandings and build on experience of all learners?'

## 4. Discussion

This research aimed to understand the experience of undertaking a practitioner enquiry course (PE) with a focus on developing inclusive practice, and how this form of action research [32,33] can be used to support teacher education for inclusion. Fundamental to this is an understanding of what inclusive education means and what its practitioners would look like. Guiding our work were two main research questions: (1) How does this PE course compare to other experiences of CPD? (2) To what extent is this model of CPD a way of promoting teacher education for inclusion?

The lessons that can be discerned in the findings demonstrate that practitioner enquiry can support the development of inclusive teachers precisely because it adopts the approach to knowledge and teacher education, which is fundamental to the inclusive pedagogies we seek to adopt for our pupils. Key pillars of inclusive pedagogies [34,35], collaboration [22,36], a constructivist approach to learning [37,38], seeking emancipatory and powerful knowledge, and a learner-centred approach in which student voice [39] is essential were all visible in the findings of this study.

### 4.1. A Constructivist Approach to CPD Fosters the Development of Inclusive Practitioners

Messiou and Ainscow [40] suggest that developing inclusive educators and cultures comes not from a set of fixed practices, but from a process of deconstructing and reconstructing. While the practitioners in this study suggested that traditional forms of CPD tended to adopt a transmission model, whereby knowledge of certain strategies is imparted onto practitioners, they suggested that PE allowed them to collaborate, and to reflect on their own experiences and how they interpret the perceptions and beliefs of their participants. This is in-keeping with research in teacher education, which emphasises the development of reflective teachers, and learning as a collaborative process [7]. This collaboration is central to inclusion as it empowers student-practitioners and recognises their agency and stake in decisions about their learning. Where the transmission model assumes a passive idea of the individual practitioner or learner, PE encourages a view of both practitioner and learner as autonomous individuals who should be empowered. As the antithesis of the transmission model, PE recognises importance of different stakeholders and their right to perceive and address systemic and cultural barriers. This is an important aspect of the concept of inclusive education, in its role of removing barriers to access, to participation, and to success for all [5,41,42], in the 'struggle' to develop more inclusive education [43].

In contrast to a behaviourist view, which sees knowledge as something that can be mapped onto the learner [30], often the basis of more 'traditional' CPD, constructivist approaches see the learner as someone playing a key role in the learning process—this was at the basis of the PE course studied in this article. The student-practitioners' selection of a meaningful focus, relevant participants, and forms of data collection as well as the time they spent engaging with a topic and data meaningful to each student-practitioner put them at the core and allowed them to drive the learning and teaching process. They will not only develop knowledge of a specific topic within the realm of inclusion that is challenging to them and in the context they work in at the time of carrying out the PE course, but they will also develop the skills and knowledge on how to tackle other challenges that they will face in the future when trying to respond to student diversity in inclusive ways.

The constructivist nature of the research process undertaken by student-practitioners in this study relied on collaboration with both learners and other practitioners. This engagement with different voices, their varied interpretations, and diverse perspectives can allow for what Ainscow and Miles describe as 'interruptions' [38]. These interruptions can disrupt entrenched practices that may constitute barriers to inclusion. They allow practitioners to challenge existing beliefs and cultures that may be unproblematically presented as received wisdom in traditional CPD. They allow practitioners to reflect on their assumptions and identify opportunities for improving inclusive practices. The exploratory nature of practitioner enquiry can provide opportunities for the truly continuous development of inclusive practices by adopting approaches that do not predetermine what will be

learnt. It has the potential to reveal unexpected strengths or barriers in the practices and cultures of a context. By identifying and understanding these unexpected findings through continuous exploration, PE has truly transformative potential for educators seeking to become more inclusive.

#### *4.2. Engagement with Research Provides Lifelong Tools to Identify and Remove 'Local' Barriers to Inclusive Education*

Student-practitioners in this study noted the benefits from the opportunity to engage with educational research and the methodologies, ethics, and paradigms involved, as presented in the findings section. This is consistent with the arguments presented in the literature, e.g., that inclusive research can be conceived as an educative practice [44]. The assertion by one practitioner that undertaking PE encouraged her to think about the power dynamics within her classroom and how participatory the environment was points to the way in which PE has the potential to adopt truly participatory research methods, whereby the researcher must reflect on their own position, voice, and how they react to and interpret others. Veck and Hall argue that inclusive educational research privileges the dialogue between the researcher and participant for an educative purpose (2020). In this way, research can be conducted with those that we seek to include and empower, and this may have implications for how practitioners approach inclusive practice. Again, the notion of agency as a central tenet of inclusion is key. Truly participatory research can empower both practitioners and learners. In his discussion of curricular choices, Stenhouse argued that teachers cannot necessarily claim objectivity or authority, and learning goals cannot be predetermined [45]. The direction of an enquiry must be flexible so that learners can bring their own experiences and interpret the classroom experience in their own way [46]. This approach adopts a constructivist view of learning and knowledge, and recognises that all teachers and learners will construct meaning in distinct ways. While this refers to how practitioners design and teach curricula, engagement with inclusive research methods can deepen practitioners' understanding of their own position relative to that of the learners in the classroom. It can help to redefine the relationship between teacher and learner as one of collaboration and dialogue, rather than one of transmission and passive reception.

All practitioners involved in this study noted the way that practitioner enquiry as a method of professional development can be particularly educative because it is specific to a practitioner, their context, and the learners that they teach. The design of the research question and methodology is geared towards a problem you can observe before you, or an area you feel can be improved. Other forms of school-based CPD tend to be planned around extrinsic goals and either local or national policy drives. These can feel detached from practitioners' everyday experiences and from the challenges they observe their pupils facing. Inclusive practice requires that we recognise each learner as an individual operating within their specific context. Practitioner enquiry, arising from reflections on existing practices, allows practitioners to adapt their own practices of teacher education to the contexts and learners that they teach. This model of CPD aligns with the needs to consider TE for inclusion as needing to encourage teachers to develop and use 'critical-thinking and problem-solving skills' and not expecting 'over-night change' ([8], p. 731).

Using the purpose, duration, and location categories proposed earlier in this article, the PE course critically analysed in this article aimed to move away from transmissive models of CPD, tending towards a malleable approach insofar as it was responsive to the topics and needs of the student-practitioners, and insofar as it was transformative as it aimed to promote changes in the way student-practitioners engaged with challenges related to inclusion. By engaging with research and working with others to identify and progressively remove barriers to developing more inclusive education contexts, student-practitioners can develop as inclusive practitioners. The PE course took place over one academic year, making it cover a long-term duration, which allowed students to explore a challenge in depth, through multiple perspectives, by engaging with relevant stakeholders (pupils, parents, and peers) to make sense of the challenge and explore ways that had been used to tackle

similar challenges (through engagement with the academic literature). The location of this PE course can be described as hybrid as the student-practitioners came together regularly (roughly once a month) and discussed their progress and difficulties, then went back to their usual work context to collect data. This allowed student-practitioners to develop their PE in a manner supported both by the course tutor and the peers going through similar processes in different contexts. Engagement with research, both by critically analysing ‘global’ academic research and by designing and implementing a ‘local’ PE, provides lifelong tools for teachers to identify and remove barriers to ensuring that all learners can access, participate, and succeed in education. Given the high percentage of teachers (25%) in 48 education systems reporting a high need for professional development [47], in the future, it would be important to explore, cross-nationally, models supporting the implementation of practitioner enquiry as a form of continuous professional development for educators, this way promoting lifelong teacher education for inclusion and support educators in identifying and removing local barriers to education for all.

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