

NAVIGATING FIGURED WORLDS

Preservice teachers' representations of disability and inclusion

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Background

Teachers' understanding of inclusion and disability shapes practice.

Research question: How do preservice teachers construct their understanding inclusion and disability through representations (drawings)?

Framework

Figured worlds: "Socially and culturally constructed realm[s] of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (Holland et al., 1998)

Representations: A tangible way to express, convey, and negotiate ideas. Representations hold power in conveying how people, objects, environments, and actions relate to each other (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021)

Activity

Representation Activity: Individual and collaborative drawings of inclusion in small groups

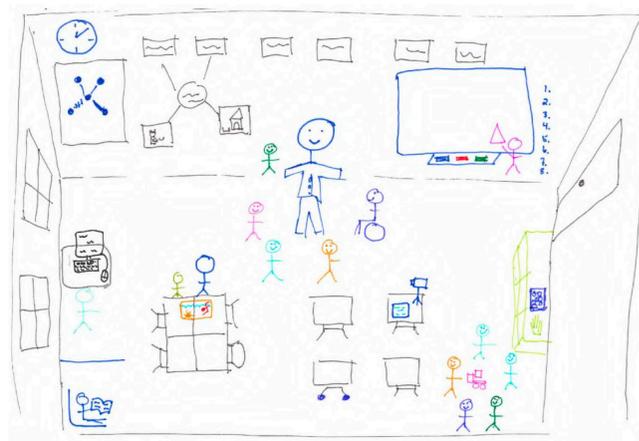
Methods

Data: Drawings, video recordings, interviews

Visual grammar analysis: Prominence, objects, activities, locations, behaviours, sizes, colours, people, relationships between elements, composition

Interaction analysis: Moment-to-moment processes of how preservice teachers used conceptual resources and discourse to negotiate and create representations.

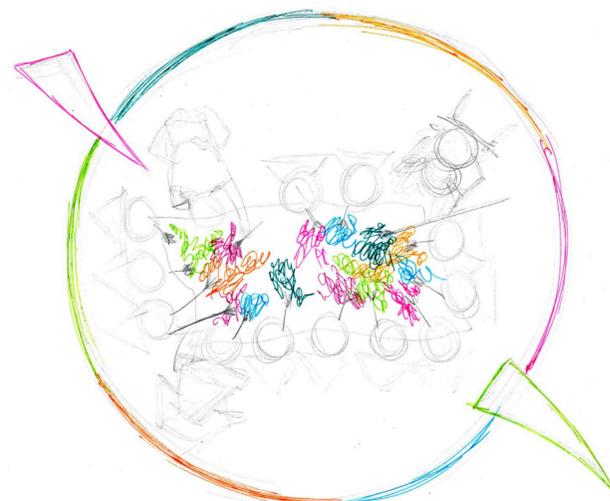
Size, placement, and detail of people and objects



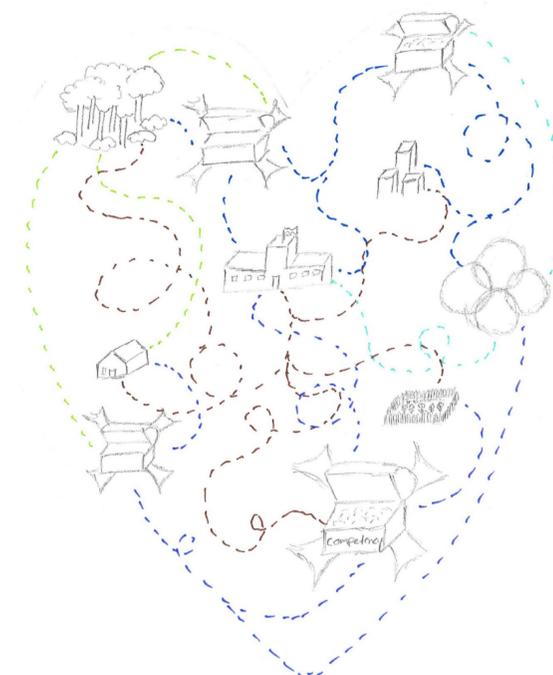
Space and spatial arrangements as social control



Focus on diverse ideas vs diverse attributes or characteristics of people



Intersecting figured worlds and sources



Findings

- The drawings communicate the expected narratives of worlds of inclusion and disability. The use of size, colour, and detail established hierarchies and relationships, such as in terms of power, expertise, or role. For example, people drawn as a larger student implied superiority.
- The spatial arrangement of objects and people within drawings characterized social practices, such as drawings with students spaced apart or looking away from each other or drawings associating spaces with emotions.
- When the participants collaborated on drawings, the findings showed how competing priorities figured worlds of schooling and social positioning influenced the figuring process. Decisions sometimes waffled between desires to appease the instructor, time constraints, and focusing on the topic of inclusion itself. There were also attempts to integrate ideas from authoritative sources, such as government curricular documents, but sometimes only at cursory levels.

Implications

- The messiness of how preservice teachers interpret what they are taught in their teacher education and engage in figuring as they stabilize their understanding of inclusion and disability. Navigating and managing competing demands, ranging from policies, support structures, school cultures, personal perspectives, and aspirations is complex.
- Representations offer a way to surface and examine how preservice teachers reconcile these forces to understand inclusion and disability to inform practice.
- The task supported generative discussions about understandings of disability and inclusion, and ways to foster more socially just futures. Continuing to understand preservice teachers' figuring processes and accounting for them in their teacher education is key to advancing scholarship and supporting preservice teachers in fostering a diverse and resilient education system.