Rethinking the Foundations of Resilience and System Change:
On the role of educators and systems in and around schools
in promoting social inclusion

Department of Language & Literacy Education,
University of British Columbia, Vancouver
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Dr Paul Downes
Director, Educational Disadvantage Centre
Senior Lecturer in Education (Psychology)
Member of the European Commission Network of Experts on the
Social Aspects of Education and Training (NESET I & II) (2011-2017)
Institute of Education
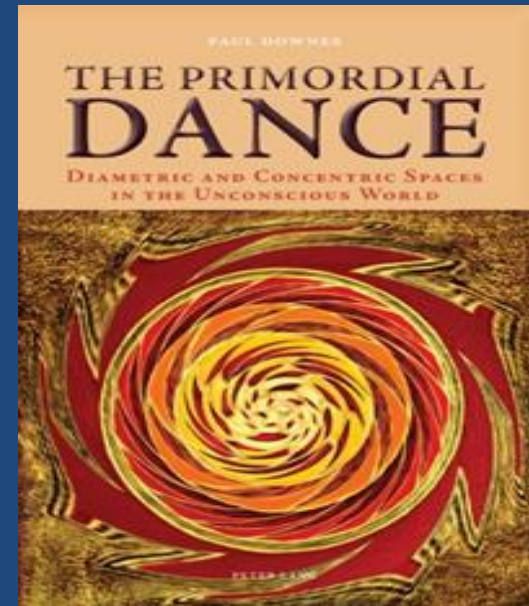Dublin City University, Ireland
paul.downes@dcu.ie
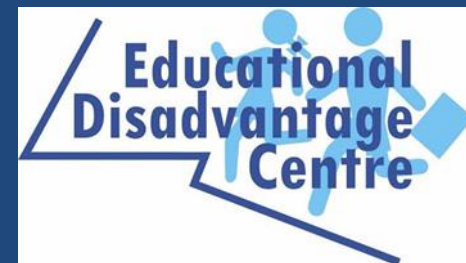
Foundations: A Quasi-Language of Space prior to Language !
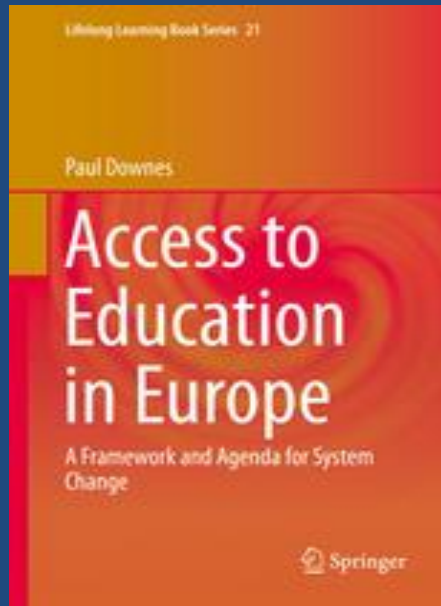
Downes, P (2014). *Access to Education In Europe: A framework and agenda for system change.* Dordrecht: Springer

Spatial-Relational Systems in Education

Downes, P. (2012). *The Primordial Dance: Diametric and Concentric Spaces in the Unconscious World*. Oxford/Bern: Peter Lang.

Spatial-Relational Systems as Projected Dynamic A Priori (Post-Kantian) Structures of Relation

Downes, P., Nairz-Wirth, E., Rusinaite, V. (2017). *Structural Indicators for Developing Inclusive Systems in and around Schools in Europe.*
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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

10 City PREVENT EU Urbact Project Reports (2014-15)

Beyond resilience in adversity (poverty, early school leaving, bullying, trauma) as superman or wonderwoman !

1.	Key Limitations to Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) ecological systems theory and to resilience theory

2.	Dynamic Concentric Space underpinning Resilience

3.	From Resilient Systems to Inclusive Systems as Concentric Relational Space Challenging Diametric Systems of Exclusion

4.	Inclusive Systems as Concentric Relational Spatial Systems: Common System Response to Traditionally Distinct Issues of Early School Leaving and Bullying Prevention
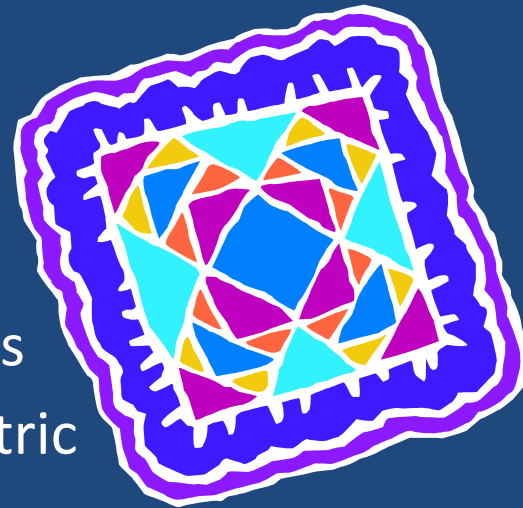
1.Key Limitations to Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) ecological systems theory and to resilience theory

- Macro-Micro-Meso-Exosystems plus Chronosystem

- Neglects system blockage, inertia and fragmentation (Downes 2014),

- Neglects resistance, displacement and power relations (Downes 2016),

- Static concentric space model (Downes 2014, 2016)

Cultural Cognitive Bias: Individual Foreground Perception Neglects Background System Conditions
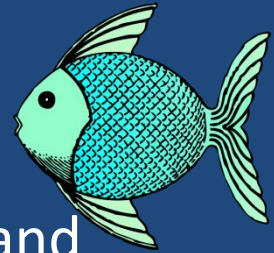
Masuda and Nisbett (2001) presented realistic animated scenes of fish and other underwater objects to Japanese and Americans and asked them to report what they had seen.

*The first statement by American participants usually referred to the focal fish ('there was what looked like a trout swimming to the right') whereas the first statement by Japanese participants usually referred to background elements ('there was a lake or pond').

*Japanese participants made about 70 percent more statements about background aspects of the environment.

Foreground – Child
Background system - School
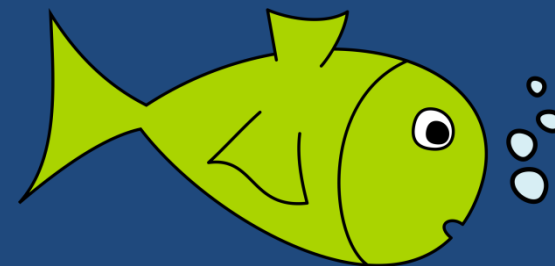
Beyond Foreground Cause/Intervention to Background Supporting System Conditions

Mill's (1843) challenge to a clearcut distinction between causal and non-causal states:

"It is seldom if ever between a consequent and a single antecedent that this invariable sequence subsists. It is usually between a consequent and the sum of several antecedents the concurrence of all of them being requisite to produce, that is, to be certain of being followed by the consequent "

Mill noted that very often one antecedent is termed the cause, the other antecedents being conditions.

Rutter (1985) argues that change to background supporting conditions have been frequently overlooked within developmental psychology:

"It is commonly but wrongly assumed that a significant main effect in a multivariate analysis means that that variable has an effect on its own. It does not. What it means is that there is a significant main effect for that variable, after other variables have been taken into account: that is not tantamount to an effect in the absence of all other variables"

Beyond resilience as foreground superman or wonderwoman !

- Propose an emerging paradigm of focus on *background supporting conditions* for causality:
- - spatial systems
- - structural indicators

- Ungar (2008) broadens Rutter's conception of resilience to a socio-ecological model of resilience:

  In the context of exposure to significant adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both the capacity of the individual to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways

- Resilience theory relies on Bronfenbrenner's systems theory and shares these limitations

- This broader environmental model does not include a focus on State systemic supports, as integrated services (Edwards & Downes 2013), in its role of developing inclusive systems of care.

- Ungar's (2012) socio-ecological broadening of Rutter's resilience needs to go further in its systemic concerns:
- -to include a systemic focus on outreach to marginalised families (Downes 2014a)
- - a relational space of assumed connection between individuals and system supports.

From Resilient Systems to Inclusive Systems

- A need to identify structural features of blockage in systems hindering resilience

- Develop structural features of inclusive systems for fostering resilience in the face of adversity and vulnerability

- Space is a key bridge between material, symbolic and interpersonal domains of relevance for resilien[ce] developmental and educational psychology.

- Focus on system supports

- **2. Dynamic Concentric Space underpinning Resilience**

- A spatial preunderstanding or metaphor built into conceptions of resilience as a regaining of shape, a bouncing back into shape (Ungar 2005, 2015).

- Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework assumes concentric structured spaces as nested systems of relation, with the 'ecological environment…topologically as a nested arrangement of concentric structures, each contained within the next'

- This concentric spatial understanding of Bronfenbrenner did not engage with cross-cultural understandings of concentric spatial structures and systems interrogated in more detail by structural anthropologist Lévi-Strauss (1962, 1963, 1973).

Fig. 1 Diametric Dualism

Fig. 2 Concentric Dualism

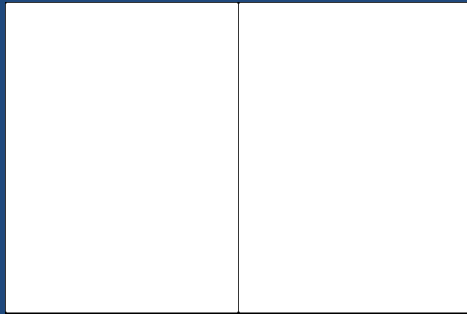A diametric spatial structure is one where a circle is split in half by a line which is its diameter or where a square or rectangle is similarly divided into two equal halves (see Fig. 1).

In a concentric spatial structure, one circle is inscribed in another larger circle (or square); in pure form, the circles share a common central point (see Fig. 2). **(**Lévi-Strauss 1962, 1963, 1973**;** Downes 2012)

Fig. 1 Diametric Dualism
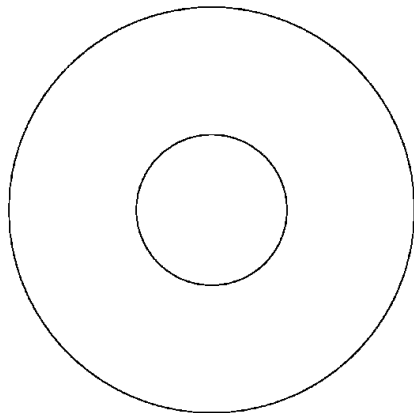
Fig. 2 Concentric Dualism
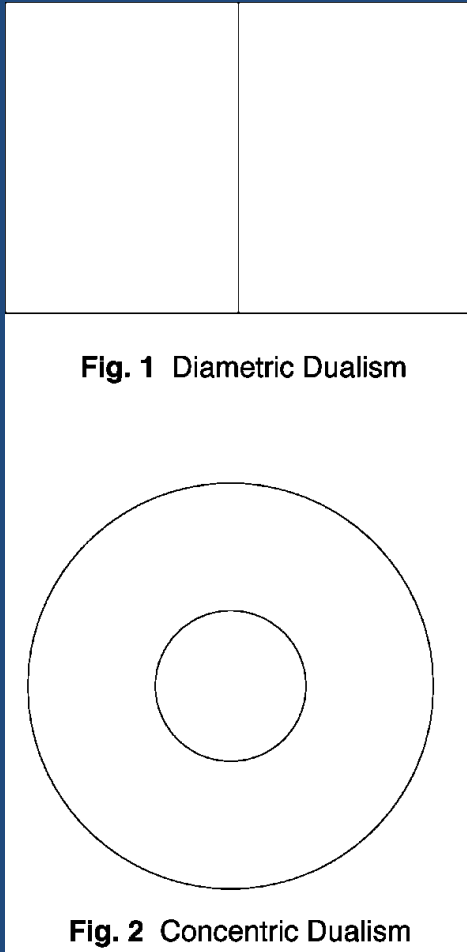
1) First entailment of the relative differences between concentric and diametric spaces: Assumed connection and assumed separation

2) Second entailment of the relative differences between concentric and diametric spatial relation: Symmetry as unity and mirror image inverted symmetry

3) Third entailment of the relative differences between concentric and diametric spaces: Foreground-background interaction versus non interaction   (Downes 2012)

System Change from Diametric Spaces of Exclusion, Closure and Mirror Image Opposites to Concentric Spaces of Inclusion, Openness to Background.

- Transition points in relational space, moving from diametric spaces of splitting to concentric spatial relations of assumed connection across different system levels.

- Shift from resilient systems to inclusive systems (as concentric spatial relations) with a particular focus on early school leaving and also school bullying prevention.

Concentric structures can be found also in Islamic, Japanese, Russian, Chinese, Jewish, Celtic, African, ancient Greek and Estonian contexts, while Jung locates the concentric mandala structure in Buddhist, Hindu and Christian traditions (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 1973; Downes 2012)

3. From Resilient Systems to Inclusive Systems as Concentric Relational Space Challenging Diametric Systems of Exclusion

A. Beyond Authoritarian Teaching and Discriminatory Bullying as Diametric Spatial Systems – Assumed Separation, Splitting and Mirror Image Hierarchies

B. Beyond Suspensions/Expulsion as Diametric Structure of Exclusion

C. Diametric Splits as System Blockage in Communication – Transitions, Whole School Approach to Bullying

D. Students Voices to Challenge Hierarchical Mirror Image Splits as System Blockages in Communication

E. Overcoming System Blockages as Fragmentation, Resistance and Exclusion– linking health and education

- Multidisciplinary teams
- Family support services and parental involvement

- F. Challenging Diametric Space as Closure: Opening School as AfterSchool Community Lifelong Learning Centre

- G. Concentric Space of Assumed Connection as Emotional Supports – Relational Space as a Neglected Key Mediating Variable

A. **Beyond Authoritarian Teaching and Discriminatory Bullying as Diametric Spatial Systems – Assumed Separation, Splitting and Mirror Image Us/Them Hierarchies**

Teacher discriminatory bullying of students in a sample of 1352 immigrant and Roma students as part of a wider sample of 8817 students across 10 European countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain) (Elamé 2013).

Classroom Climate and Discriminatory Bullying as Diametric Oppositional space

Elamé's (2013) 10 country European study regarding 'the fundamental importance' of teacher influence on discriminatory bullying
-Those immigrant and Roma students who think the teacher exhibits similar behaviour towards 'native' and immigrant and Roma children in the class are those bullied least in the last 3 months.

In contrast, 'those who declare that their teacher favours native children over immigrant/Roma students are more vulnerable to suffer some form of bullying.

Specifically less than half (48 %) of the 123 [immigrant/Roma] children [across the 10 countries] who sense bias in the teachers' attitudes towards native classmates declare to have never been subjected to violence' (Elamé, 2013).

- Greek study (Kapari and Stavrou, 2010) of 114 secondary school students (58 female, 56 male) drawn from three Greek public middle schools.

- In schools with high levels of bullying, students consider their treatment by adults to be unequal, the rules to be unfair, and student participation in decision-making to be very limited.

Authoritarian Teaching

WHO (2012) Modifications that appear to have merit include:

• establishing a caring atmosphere that promotes autonomy;

• providing positive feedback;

• not publicly humiliating students who perform poorly;

Cefai & Cooper (2010), Malta review of qualitative research: 'the autocratic and rigid behaviour management approach adopted by many teachers in their response to misbehaviour. Their blaming and punitive approach was seen in many cases as leading to an exacerbation of the problem...It looks...that perceived victimisation by teachers was more prevalent and had more impact than victimisation and bullying by peers'

Percentage of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students who Agree/Disagree with the Following Statements: School Belonging and Feeling Like an Outsider (PISA 2012) (OECD 2012)

	I feel like I belong at school, % Agree (S.E)		I feel like an outsider (or left out of things at school), % Disagree (S.E)	
CANADA	**82.9**	**(1.0)**	**72.7**	**(1.3)**
Chile	82.6	(1.6)	88.0	(1.2)
Sweden	**74.8 (1.9)**		**87.0 (1.3)**	
United Kingdom	74.9 (1.5)		86.9 (1.1)	
OECD Average	78.1 (0.3)		86.2 (0.2)	

Dublin, Ireland survey (Downes et al., 2006) of students in 4 primary (n=230) and 2 secondary schools (n=162):

*Approximately 74% of pupils at primary level (6th class) and 55% of students at secondary level (first year) stated that they are treated fairly by teachers in school.

*Approximately 15% of pupils at primary level (6th class) state that they are not treated fairly by teachers in school, whereas 25% of students at secondary level (first year) state that they are not treated fairly by teachers in school.

*These differences between 6th class primary and 1st year secondary are statistically significant.

No sunlight ! (Downes & Maunsell 2007)

"I can't wait to leave, I would leave tomorrow if I had the choice because I get picked on by a teacher"

"No some[teachers] think they own the school"

Downes' (2004) student centered research in Ballyfermot, Dublin, 12 focus groups and 173 questionnaire responses from secondary students:

"Have anger management courses for teachers" (female, focus group):

"The teachers shouting at you. That makes me really, really down" (Age 13, F)

"If the teachers didn't roar at you" (Age 13, F)

"Have an equal teaching system and sack ignorant snobby teachers…very harsh teachers usually make me stay out of school" (Age 16, M)
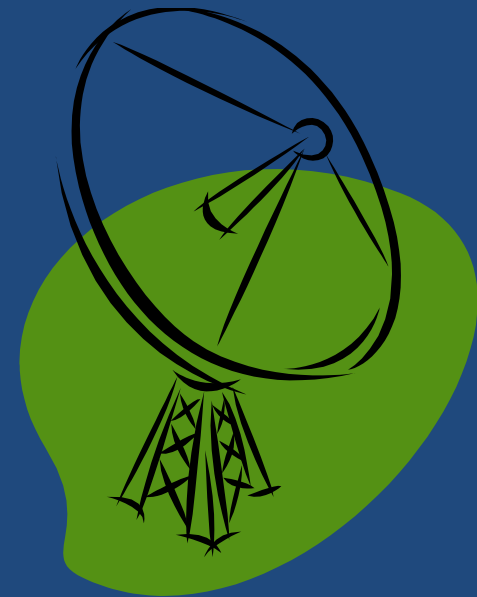
B. Alternatives to Suspension/Expulsion to Stop Diametric Relational Structures of Exclusion

The Irish post-primary figure of 5% for suspension, applied to the total population of 332,407 students equates to well over 16,000 students suspended from post-primary schools in 2005/6 (ERC/NEWB 2010).

An English study by Rennison *et al*., (2005) found that young people in the NEET [Not in Education, Employment or Training] group were over three times more likely previously to have been excluded from school than young people overall.

C. Diametric Splits as System Blockage in Communication – Transitions, Whole School Approach to Bullying

Hopwood et al. (2016) Australia: one-on-one interviews with primary (Year 6) and secondary (Year 7) teachers.

- The primary teachers revealed that their role in preparing students for secondary school was passive, based around accommodating requests from the secondary schools.

- The primary teachers also reported little or no input into the way students were prepared for transition, as one primary teacher explained: We talk about what they might experience at secondary school but I don't do anything specific to deal with teaching them about secondary school [Primary Teacher 4].

D. Students Voices to Challenge Hierarchical Diametric Mirror Image Splits as System Blockages in Communication

*In Iceland, Brigisdottir (2013) highlights a process of communication with those dropping out from school, whereby the students are interviewed individually by an education Ministry official to find out why they are leaving school early.

*Yet this dialogue with students arguably comes too late in the process and needs systematic expression at a range of earlier stages as part of a Europe-wide prevention focus (Downes 2013)

EU Commission Thematic Working Group on early school leaving report (2013):
"Ensure children and young people are at the centre of all policies aimed at reducing ESL. Ensure their voices are taken into account when developing and implementing such policies."

E. Overcoming System Blockages as Fragmentation, Resistance and Exclusion– linking health and education
- **Multidisciplinary teams**
- **Family support services and parental involvement**

The *Alliances for Inclusion* report (Edwards & Downes 2013) 16 examples cross-sectoral work from 10 European countries.
-A policy focus is needed to go beyond multiple agencies
 -Need to minimise fragmentation across diverse services 'passing on bits the child' and family (Edwards & Downes 2013)

Territories

- Local rivalries across municipalities and schools an obstacle to sharing of good practice
- Local rivalries across agencies especially in a recession – to claim resources and credit for gains

Multidisciplinary team 1 stop shop – Family Support Centres and Early Childhood Centres

Eurochild report (2011) Nordrhein-Westfalen state programme *Familienzentrum* has been launched by the government in order to develop up to 3,000 children's day-care facilities into family centres by the year 2012.

Between 2006 and 2012 approx. 3,000 of the total 9,000 child care centres in the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) are being developed into certified "Familienzentren" (family centres).

Family centres are designed to bundle services for families in the local community. (Eurochild 2011)

Eurochild (2011) argue for such family support centres to be universally available

Beyond Epstein – Integrating Health and Education = Joint Strategy for Family Support and Parental Involvement

Epstein's (2001) 'Framework of Parental Involvement' identifies six ways in which schools and parents can be involved
i.e. Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering,
Learning at home, Decision Making, Collaborating with the Community.

System Blockage as Resistance – Parental Involvement to address pseudopartnership

In a Swedish context, Bouakaz & Persson (2007) ask 'do the teachers' distrust parents ?'

the 'apparent' official organization and the 'below the surface' unofficial organisation (Scholtes 1998).

Resistance as it is perceived as peripheral to main job (Downes 2014) – put parental involvement in teachers' contracts and promotional posts (O'Reilly 2012)

- **F. Challenging Diametric Space as Closure: Opening School as AfterSchool Community Lifelong Learning Centre**

Country	On a scale of 1-3 where 3 means at least 80% of schools in your municipality open their doors after school hours for lifelong learning classes and 2 means at least 30% of schools do so and 1 means less than 30% of schools do so – which number best describes the situation in your municipality? (Downes 2014)
The Hague	3
Gijon	3
Tallinn	2
Stockholm	2
Antwerp	1
Usti	1
Munich	1
Nantes	1

- **G. Concentric Space of Assumed Connection as Emotional Supports – Relational Space as a Neglected Key Mediating Variable**

- Markussen et al.'s (2011) longitudinal study following a sample of 9,749 Norwegian students over a five-year period, out of compulsory education and through upper secondary education.

- Markussen et al. (2011) notably found that students with high scores on an index measuring seriously deviant behaviour were less likely to leave early than students with low scores on this index. This finding is explained by the extra resources, support and attention these students are provided with, making it less probable for them to leave.

- A systemic focus on the presence or absence of key supporting conditions to alter causal trajectories invites a spatial-relational focus on systems in education that provide concentric relational spaces of assumed connection to promote resilience in high risk students.

- The Finnish population based, longitudinal birth cohort study of 2551 boys from age 8 years to 16–20 years (Sourander et al., 2007) found that frequent perpetrators of bullying display high levels of psychiatric symptoms in childhood.

- Sourander et al.'s (2007) conclusion recognises the key role of such supports 'mental health services should be an integrated and active part of the school environment, as effective prevention requires the shortest possible delay between detection and intervention'

- Longitudinal bullying outcome studies seldom provide a focus on historical changes to support services (e.g., school counselling services) in systems that may be a mediating variable in outcomes.

- Likewise comparison studies for bullying in schools tend not to control for emotional support services' availability across groups

- Issues previously treated separately, such as early school leaving and bullying prevention, can be addressed through common system responses for inclusive systems.

Quiroga, Janosz and Bissett (2013) 493 high-risk French-speaking adolescents living in Montreal

*depression symptoms at the beginning of secondary school are related to higher dropout mainly by being associated with pessimistic views about the likelihood to reach desired school outcomes; student negative self-beliefs are in turn related to lower self-reported academic performance and predict a higher risk of dropping out.
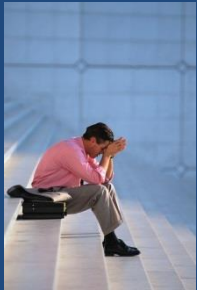
Quiroga et al. (2013) "interventions that target student mental health and negative self-perceptions are likely to improve dropout prevention".

Common system supports needed for bullying and early school leaving prevention (Downes & Cefai 2016)

School Climate, Teasing, Bullying
In a sample of 276 high schools, Cornell et al. (2013) found that risk of early school leaving increases if a student experiences an atmosphere of teasing and bullying even if s/he is not personally bullied.

Cornell et al. (2013) " Notably, the increased dropout count that was associated with Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying was quite similar to the increases that were associated with FRPM [i.e., poverty] and academic failure".

- Downes & Cefai (2016) report for European Commission:

  Direct and indirect effects of bullying on early school leaving

  relevant to perpetrators, victims and bully-victims, such as:

  - school absence,

  - negative interpersonal relations with peers and conflict with

    teachers,

  - low concentration in school,

  - decreased academic performance,

  - negative school climate influences, lower school belonging,

    satisfaction, and pedagogical well-being, with the effects of

    bullying exacerbated for those already at risk of early school

    leaving.

Key Governance Principles for Quality for Inclusive Systems

Inclusive Systems in and around Schools: Key Principles (Downes, Nairz-Wirth & Rusinaite 2017)

1. *System wide focus*
2. *Equality and Non-Discrimination*
3. *Children's Voices, Participation and Other Rights*
4. *Holistic approach*
5. *Parental Participation in School, including Marginalised Parents*
6. *Differentiated focus on different levels of need for prevention and early intervention*
7. *Building on strengths*
8. *Multidisciplinarity as a multifaceted response for students with complex needs*
9. *Representation and participation of marginalised groups*
10. *Lifelong learning*

Conclusion

Concentric and Diametric Spaces as Deep Structures of Space – Primordial Spatial Systems of Relation – Connection/Separation, Openness/Closure, Mirror Image Inversions
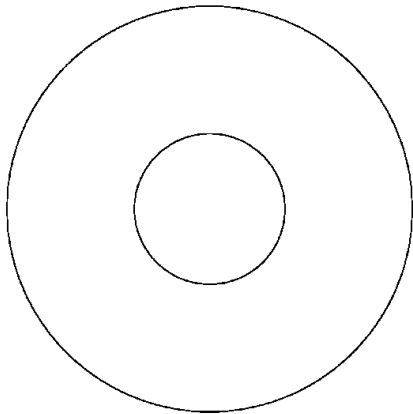
Relevant to System Change in Education – Embedded Possibility of Shift from Diametric to Concentric Spatial Systems

Contextually-Sensitive yet Universal Spatial Discourse for System Change

Key Background System Conditions Affecting Foreground Causal Interventions

Fig. 1 Diametric Dualism

Fig. 2 Concentric Dualism

Illustrative Structural Indicators (UN Rapporteur 2005, 2006) as Background Supporting Conditions for System Change (Downes et al. 2017)

Alternatives to expulsion in place (Yes/No)

Teacher Professional Development available for conflict resolution skills (Yes/No)

Teacher Professional Development mandatory for conflict resolution skills (Yes/No)

Teacher Preservice modules on conflict resolution skills compulsory (Yes/No)

Qualified emotional counselling support services available to students (Yes/No)

Parental involvement built into contracts of teachers (Yes/No)

Multidisciplinary teams linked with schools to engage with students with complex needs at high risk of early school leaving, including with their families (Yes/No)

Open-ended surveys of students of different ages on the experiences of school take place on a regular basis organised through an agency independent of the school (Yes/No)

Input from ethnically or culturally diverse students into bullying prevention resource materials is established at national or regional level

National Outreach strategy to individual families in their home for child-centred support at high levels of need (mental health issues, addiction, high nonattendance at school). Yes/No

National outreach strategy to establish multidisciplinary 'one stop shop' centres for family support with links to schools. YES/NO

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