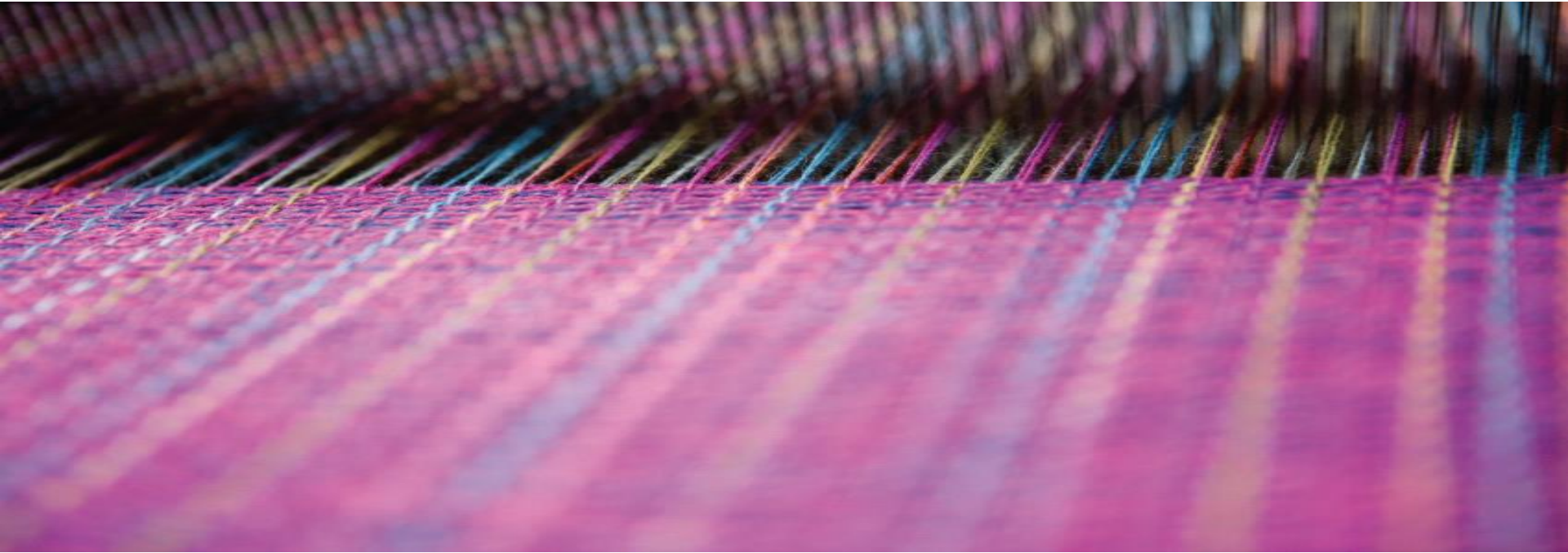


Leadership for Inclusive Education



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Overview

- Leadership and inclusion: the parameters of the topic
- Questions/ comments
- In schools – a focus on working with difference and diversity
- Comments
- Implications for school leadership
- Questions and comments

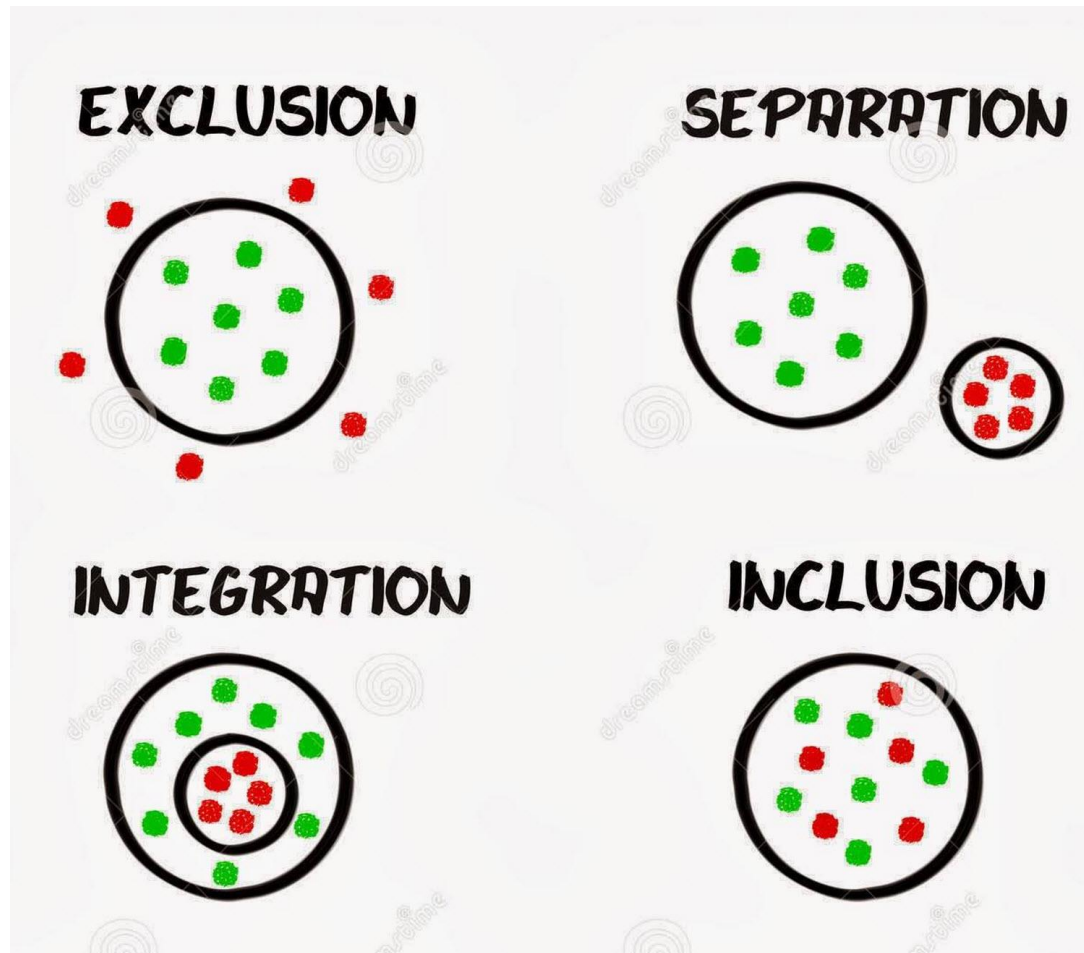
The Language of Leadership

- Inclusive Leadership
- Leadership for Inclusion
- Connected but not always the same
- Inclusion a contested idea in education and more broadly
- Seek discursive strategies to open up dialogue
- Conclusive answers/ positions not always to hand

Task of leadership ...so far

- To enable/ create the conditions for an **alignment of minds, hearts and purpose towards a more inclusive type of school experience** for all. Having got some way towards achieving this there is a need to ensure that this culture is nurtured by an open reflexive, pedagogy-focused school culture.

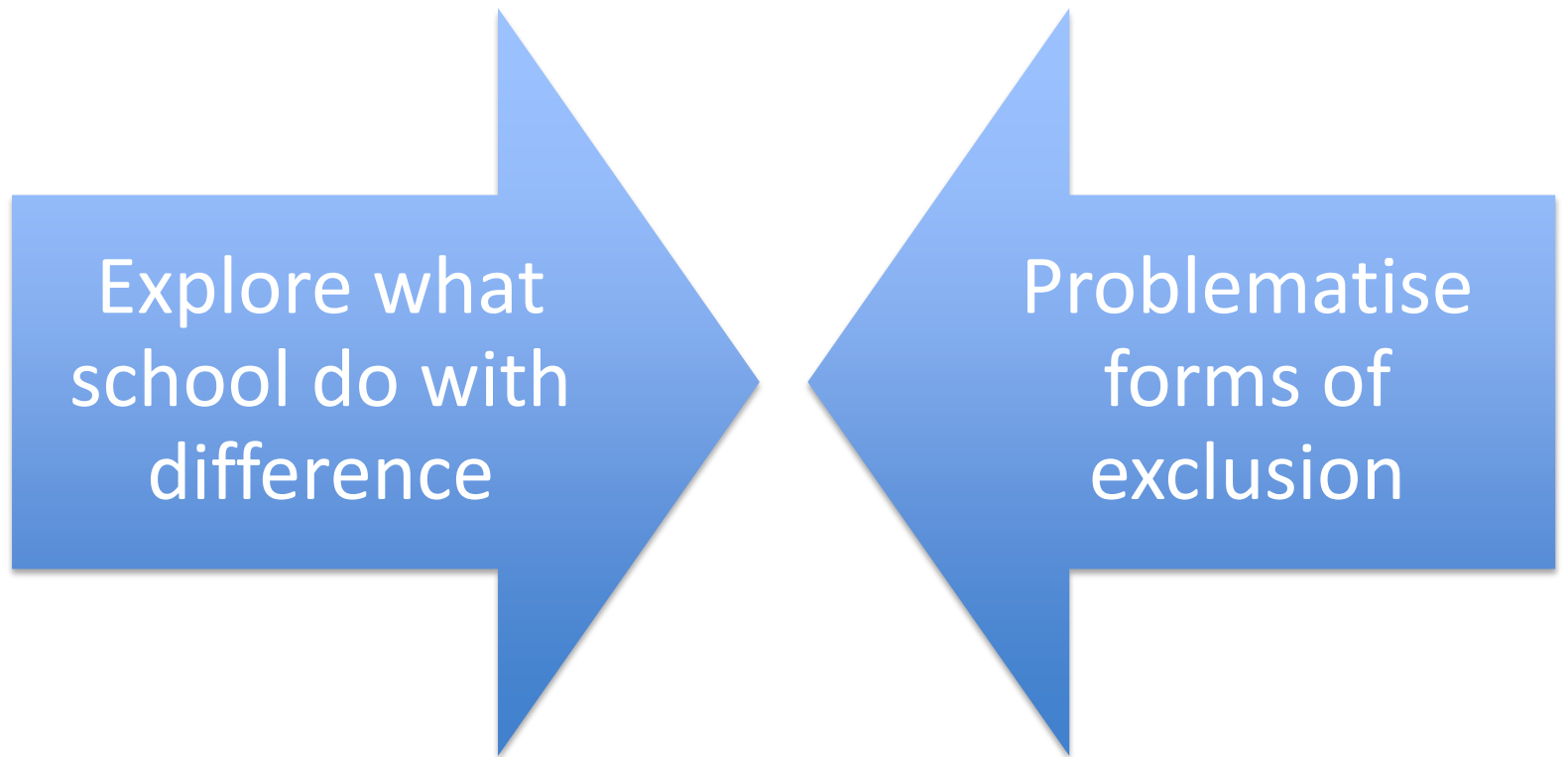
A pathway of progress?



Challenging

- Inclusive schooling is concerned with the educational experiences and outcomes for all children. Since present forms of schooling routinely deny human rights and exclude students on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, class – **inclusive education is a project of reconceptualization and radical reconstruction** (Slee, 2010)

A way forward ?



Difference

- Working with and valuing difference - **recognition and respect**
- Taking **a critical approach to difference** of all sorts: ethnic, gender, disability, sexuality, indigenous culture etc. both in terms of representation in texts and curricula but also in terms of how included in all aspects of schools

Exclusion

- **Exclusion** embedded in the system – **in the rituals, practices and outcomes** that frame, to different extents, all our education systems

Key Practices:

- Individualising failure
- Deficit thinking
- Sometimes essentialising people – their lives, potential, hopes and possibilities

Comments on this ...

- Exclusion and segregation are key elements in protecting an education system which does not sufficiently cater for individual differences'

(Evans and Lunt 2005, p. 52)

Poll

- From your own experience in education do we work well with difference in schools?

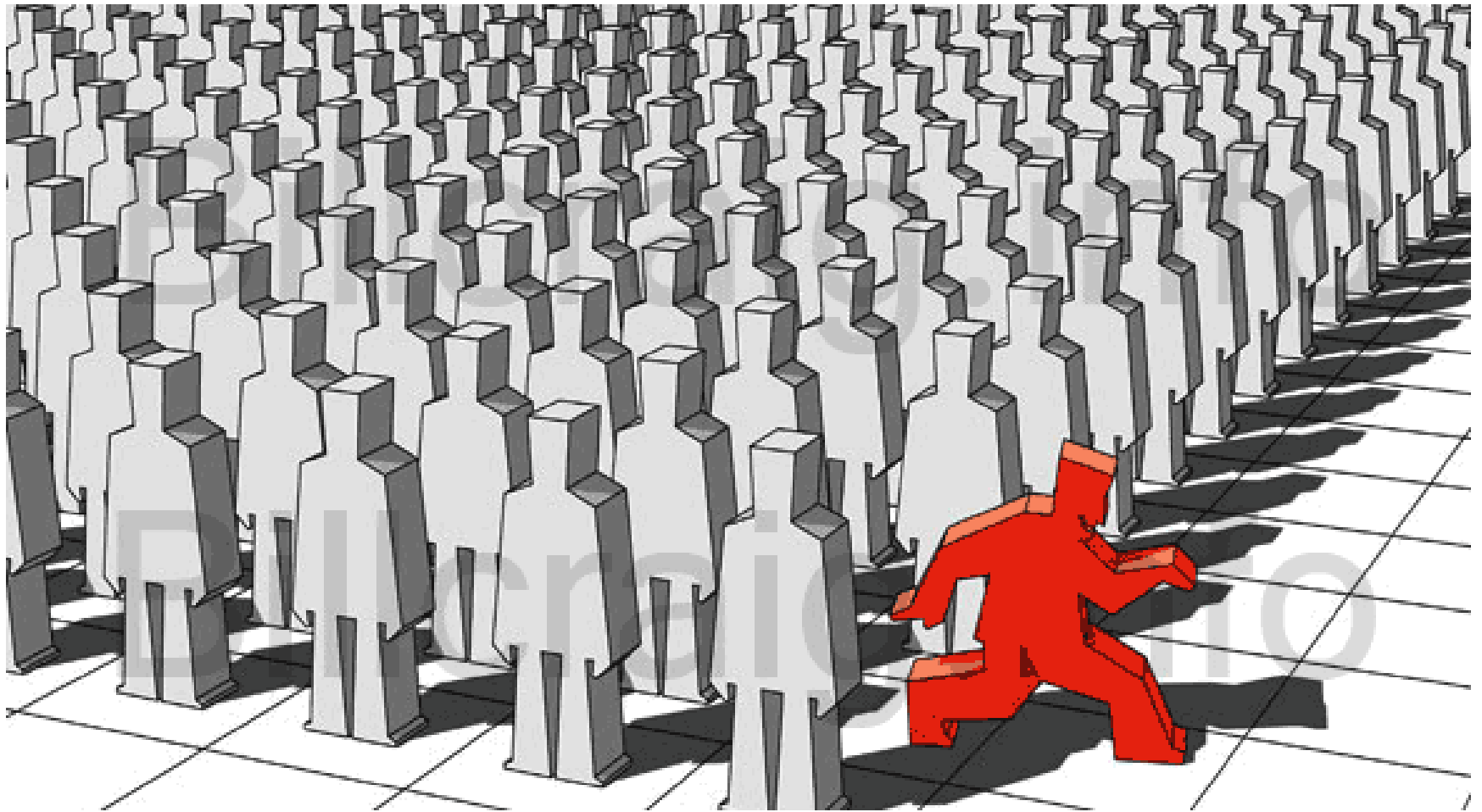
Now would be a good time



A word of caution

- A view here that schools can do it alone - if we think this we fail to take account of the extent to which **schools are part of an overall state apparatus that functions to reproduce patterns of privilege in society.**

A note about the norm



A note about the norm

- Schools good at defining, delimiting and reproducing the norm
- A more critical analysis needed on what these norms are, where they come from, whose interests do they serve and who they marginalise
- A key task of schooling has focused on the normalising of difference by stabilising the 'other' in an environment that provides a buffer to enable schools to remain the same

The privileging of the centre/norm

- The imperative for maintaining the centre is derived from this view that **the natural order needs a centre**, that it needs a cohesive system.
- However the reality is that this cohesive **'centre' has privileged and continues to privilege particular social groups**



Comments

PLEASE

Exploring Difference



Gender

Gender still segregates and, despite widespread developments in the field, **some fundamental traditional views in relation to gender and patterns of participation in education prevail** either tacitly in terms of teachers' assumptions or explicitly in terms of particular forms of practice that continue to exist in schools

(Smyth et al 2011; Lodge and Lynch, 2003)

Sexuality

- Still the silent one
- Hegemonic heterosexism
- Disturbing studies indicate significant exclusionary practices with respect to students who present as LGBT
- **Much greater risk of self harm, suicide, underachievement, serious mental health issues, early school leaving, bullying (all modes)**

(Bryan et al 2009- Irish study, 2012 ShoutOut, LGBT Ireland 2016)

Special Educational Needs

- All too often **special means exclusionary** (Mittler, 2008) and **needs signals dependency** (Corbett, 1996).
- SEN now ‘cosmetic amendments to practices ...deploying old assumptions about disability based upon quasi-medical pathologies of defectiveness’ (Slee 2001 p. 167-168)
- Focus in SEN sometimes on **fixing the child**, - diagnosis and remediation – making defective kids fit the system

Religion, Race and ethnicity

- In Ireland some interesting models of practice in relation to race and ethnicity
 - Often the *4 f model* of inclusion **family, food, fashion and festival** does little to address the fundamental exclusionary thrust of issues such as school curricula, cultural norms and expectations
 - **Models of governance in schools - Intersection of religion, race and ethnicity, class (sometimes)**

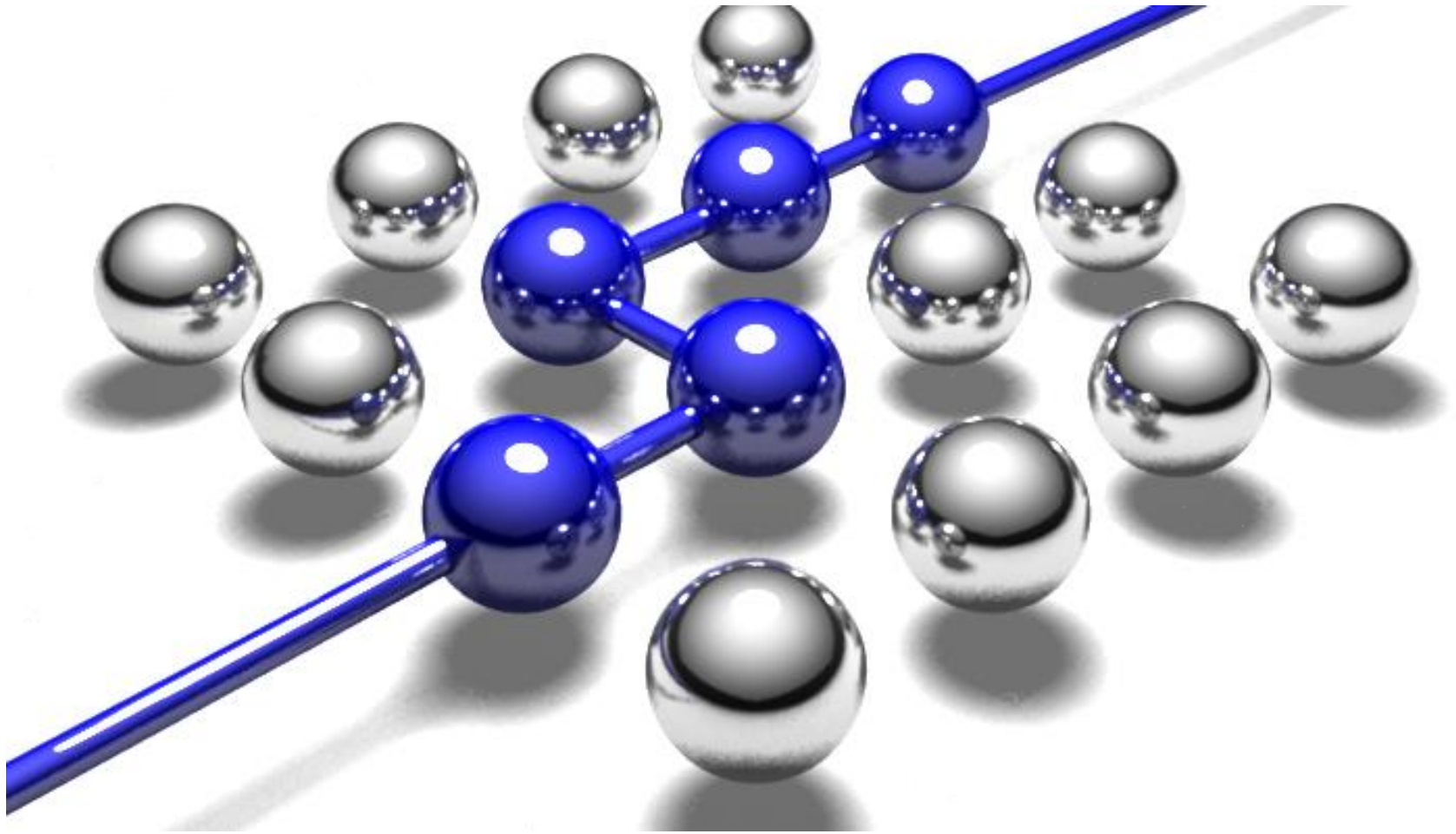
Intersectionality

- The idea of multiple areas of difference or the intersectionality of gender, race, class, ethnicity etc. (Anthias, 2008) remain under explored to say the least.
- **Marginalisation is multiplicative**
- Often a single axis framework (Crenshaw 1994) operates in schools especially in relation to SEN

Now would be a good time



A way through the maze



Teachers are key – every single one

- This is where inclusive education is formed-**at the soul of the teacher is where the battle for inclusive education will be won.**
- The task of leadership to get to the soul of the teacher / the heart of the matter

Poll

- Teachers and leaders role as professionals should be more proactive in working towards more inclusive schools ?

Some new questions

- Change the questions we are asking
- Creating **a space for** the greater integration of a range of very **powerful but deeply transformative perspectives** e.g. socio cultural approaches, critical race theory, critical literacy, feminist pedagogies into educational discourse

Leadership

- Deal with **education as a political process** – especially about cultural politics – allows it into the space where **teachers as cultural workers** can be problematised
- A focus on **teaching and learning . More inclusive schooling – more inclusive pedagogies**
- **A space for social justice** – Fraser (1997) and politics of redistribution and recognition –

- Creates **additional imperatives for more democratic forms of leadership**, schools structures and systems, models of governances etc.
- Embrace the role of school in **identity negotiation/ construction** side of education and pedagogy
- A globalized world **read from a politics of difference not fear and mistrust**

Challenges

- Trying to hold **cohesiveness and difference**
- **Neo liberal reforms**, high stakes accountability and performance culture
 - Resurgence of -streaming banding setting etc.
 - End justifies the means
 - The standards agenda

- The **existing structure of the system** – inclusion within a highly stratified/ segregated system- very exclusionary norms

And finally and maybe most importantly ...

- **The benignly perceived but powerfully exclusionary notion of ‘tradition’. Often at the core of the job description.**

Go raibh maith agaibh

