
Empowering Teachers to Promote Inclusive Education

Literature Review



EUROPEAN AGENCY
for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

EMPOWERING TEACHERS TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Literature Review

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CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	5
COUNTRY CODES.....	6
GLOSSARY.....	7
1. PREAMBLE.....	10
2. INTRODUCTION.....	11
3. METHODOLOGY.....	13
4. INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN POLICY DEVELOPMENTS.....	15
4.1 Developments at international level	15
4.2 Developments at European level	16
4.3 Summary points.....	18
5. INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION.....	19
5.1 Structure of initial teacher education	19
5.2 Content of initial teacher education	20
5.2.1 <i>Development of competences</i>	22
5.2.2 <i>Assessment</i>	24
5.3 School practice.....	25
5.4 Inclusive teaching approaches	26
5.5 Diversity in the teacher workforce.....	28
5.6 Evaluation and quality assurance	29
5.7 Summary points.....	30
6. TEACHER EDUCATORS.....	31
6.1 Recruitment.....	32
6.2 Induction	32
6.3 Competences	33
6.4 On-going professional development	35
6.5 Summary points.....	36
7. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT.....	37
7.1 A continuum approach to teacher education.....	37
7.2 Induction	38



7.3 In-service professional development.....	39
7.4 Evaluation and quality assurance	42
7.5 Summary points.....	42
8. CONCLUDING COMMENTS.....	43
8.1 Policy developments	43
8.2 Initial teacher education	43
8.3 Teacher educators.....	44
8.4 Continuing professional development and support.....	44
9. REFERENCES	46



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full version
Agency:	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
CPD:	Continuing professional development
CRELL:	Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning
EDiTE:	European Doctorate in Teacher Education
EU:	European Union
HEIs:	Higher education institutions
IBE:	International Bureau of Education
ICT:	Information and communication technology
ISCED:	International Standard Classification of Education
ITE:	Initial teacher education
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
REAP:	Rights, Education, and Protection
TE:	Teacher education
TE4I:	Teacher Education for Inclusion
UNCRPD:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund



COUNTRY CODES

Code	Country
AT:	Austria
BE Fl:	Belgium – Flemish Community
BE Fr:	Belgium – French Community
BG:	Bulgaria
CY:	Cyprus
CZ:	Czech Republic
DE:	Germany
DK:	Denmark
EE:	Estonia
EL:	Greece
ES:	Spain
FI:	Finland
FR:	France
HR:	Croatia
HU:	Hungary
IE:	Ireland
IS:	Iceland
IT:	Italy
LT:	Lithuania
LU:	Luxembourg
LV:	Latvia
MT:	Malta
NL:	Netherlands
NO:	Norway
PL:	Poland
PT:	Portugal
RO:	Romania
SE:	Sweden
SI:	Slovenia
SK:	Slovakia
UK:	United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)
UK En:	United Kingdom (England)



GLOSSARY

This section provides short explanations of the key terms used in the Empowering Teachers work.

- **Diversity**

A multi-faceted concept that can contain many elements and levels of distinction, e.g. age, ethnicity, socio-economic background, gender, physical abilities, race, sexual orientation, religious status, educational background, geographical location, income, marital status, parental status and work experiences. OECD defines diversity as:

characteristics that can affect the specific ways in which developmental potential and learning are realised, including cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious and socio-economic differences (European Agency, 2010a).

- **Empowering Teachers**

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘empower’ means ‘to make (someone) stronger and more confident’ (undated). In this work, it means increasing teacher confidence to include all learners in their classes. ‘Empower’ can also mean to ‘give (someone) the authority or power to do something’ (ibid.). This could, in some situations, mean that teachers are empowered to exclude – to decide which learners have or do not have access to learning opportunities. It is important, therefore, to note that all parts of this work reflect on what teachers do to ensure that all learners participate and achieve and how they can use their influence to promote learner autonomy.

- **Higher education institutions (HEIs)**


In this review, ‘higher education institutions’ and ‘universities’ will both be used as generic terms to refer to establishments that provide higher education.

- **Inclusive education**

One key issue in the discourse around inclusion and education for diversity is that of the terminology that countries currently use. The TE4I report notes that ‘As countries move towards the broader definition of inclusion, it is clear that, in some cases only the language has changed with little impact on practice’ (European Agency, 2011a, p. 66).

This literature review adopts the broad definition of inclusive education developed by UNESCO-IBE in 2008:

Inclusive education is an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities,



characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination (p. 3).

Since then, the Agency has developed a position, with a focus on education systems, that further supports this broader view of inclusion and focuses on children's rights to and within education. It says:

The ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers (European Agency, 2015, p. 1).

The Agency therefore provides a vision (not a definition) that aims to inform and support its work and that of its member countries. This also underpins the current literature review.

- **Initial teacher education**

Pre-service training provided to student teachers before they have undertaken any teaching, eventually leading to a teaching qualification. It usually takes place in higher education institutions.

- **Quality assurance**

'A programme for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the various aspects of a project, service or facility to ensure that standards of quality are being met' (European Agency, 2010a).

- **Quality education for all learners**

Quality education is a dynamic concept that changes and evolves with time and changes in the social, economic, and environmental contexts of place. Because quality education must be locally relevant and culturally appropriate, quality education will take many forms around the world (UNESCO, 2005).

Quality education is an effective means to fight poverty, build democracies and foster peaceful societies... [It] empowers individuals, gives them voice, unlocks their potential, opens pathways to self-actualization and broadens perspectives to open minds to a pluralist world (European Agency, 2010a).

According to UNESCO-IBE:

- *Quality education, from an inclusive perspective, implies a balance between excellence and equity. This means that it is not possible to talk about quality education if just a few students learn what is required to participate in society and develop their life projects... Ensuring that all students can learn reaching levels of excellence requires adapting teaching practices and pedagogical support to the needs and characteristics of every student (2009, pp. 16–17).*



- **Student teachers**

The term 'student teacher' is used throughout the review to refer to students studying in a higher education institution (or in other teacher education providers) for a professional teaching qualification/degree.



1. PREAMBLE

Experts attending the UNESCO-IBE meeting in Paris in 2014 agreed that inclusive education is a human right and also a strategy to prepare all learners for a 21st-century globalised society.

To facilitate the development of inclusive education systems, UNESCO called for targeted case studies from different regions and countries to create a global knowledge base that will:

- provide opportunities for knowledge sharing and learning;
- strengthen the practice-policy-research connections;
- inform teacher education institutions to rethink the way teachers are trained;
- inform policy dialogue in the light of post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

The case study that the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency) prepared for UNESCO will contribute to addressing the ‘knowledge gap’, with a focus on empowering teachers through training and support to address the diversity of learners. The Empowering Teachers project has two main outputs:

1. a suite of case study materials comprising:
 - a literature review and
 - a case study
2. the Inclusive Education in Action: Empowering Teachers: Empowering Learners website (<http://www.inclusive-education-in-action.org>), based on the original Inclusive Education in Action site jointly developed by UNESCO and the Agency in 2009/2010.

Finally, an accompanying methodology paper describes the approach taken to the development of all the materials, outlines the conceptual framework and clarifies the links between the different outputs. It also makes some suggestions about how the materials might be used to develop approaches to training and support for inclusive teaching practice.

This literature review discusses policy and practice in initial teacher education (ITE), continuing professional development (CPD) and on-going support for teachers and also considers teacher educators’ development. It supports the case study analysis of country policy and practice for teacher education (TE) and identifies key challenges. The literature review includes worldwide examples and ensures that the issues addressed by the case study (which draws on European examples) also have global application.



2. INTRODUCTION


This review builds on the Agency's Teacher Education for Inclusion project (TE4I, 2009–2012) and uses its conclusions and recommendations as a basis for gathering information. More specifically, it builds on the project literature review, published in 2010 (European Agency, 2010b; please refer to: <http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/Teacher-Education-for-Inclusion>) and reinforces some key messages from the TE4I project final report, such as that education systems need to move on from knowledge transmission and preparation for employment towards developing active citizens, personal development and lifelong learning. It also reinforces the view that inclusive systems support greater social justice and community cohesion. The TE4I report suggests that 'preparing teachers to respond to diversity may be the policy most likely to impact on the development of more inclusive communities' (European Agency, 2011a, p. 78).

This work focuses on recent developments in ITE – models and routes into teaching, course structure and content – that move towards greater empowerment of teachers and their capacity to meet more diverse learner needs. Taking account of the TE4I *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012), it also considers the attitudes, values and beliefs of teachers and the need to attend to children's rights and to enable the full participation of all learners.

The development of inclusive practice in both ITE and in-service professional development is considered, together with policies on evaluation and quality assurance that enable teachers to further develop relevant skills, knowledge and understanding. Finally, recent research on the development of teacher educators, including school leaders, is reviewed – the knowledge, experience, professional development and on-going support needed to enable them, in turn, to support and empower teachers to be more inclusive in their practice.

This review takes into account the rapidly changing context for TE. Some key changes are summarised in the following points raised in a recent symposium, co-organised by OECD and the Department of Education and Training of the Flemish Ministry:

- *Increasing cultural diversity of students challenges teachers to check their own biases and prejudices.*
- *Education attainment levels of the population are higher than in the previous generations. This situation also redefines the role of teachers, who are not the only experts any more but rather guides and facilitators in learning. It also opens new opportunities and challenges in involving parents into the learning process of their children.*

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- *The rapidly evolving knowledge society reinforces the need for teachers to regularly update their knowledge and competences and to get involved in lifelong learning. Initial teacher education programmes cannot anticipate all possible changes which will occur in the next decades.*
 - *Subject-content is changing rapidly and in professional contexts outside school boundaries; the lines between disciplines are blurring. This poses challenges for redesigning the school curricula and for teachers and students to engage in interdisciplinary work rather than to stick to strict subject demarcation [...]*
 - *Labour market changes imply that students should be prepared for broader employability across the different jobs they will take up in the course of their careers. This calls for more attention to transversal skills and deeper (meta-) learning. This evolution has also consequences on the way students will be assessed.*
 - *Information society. In a context of an exploding offer of (unstructured) information, teachers play a key role in guiding students to develop a critical attitude towards disparate information sources and develop their critical thinking skills. This also implies that teachers should enhance ICT and digital media skills and their ability to use new forms of communication, such as e.g. social media.*
 - *Growing impact of international assessments of student performance, which puts OECD countries in competition with education systems in upcoming economies with high performances in cognitive skills and with less attention to critical thinking and skills for democratic participation (OECD, 2014a, pp. 23–24).*

Ball and Tyson (2011) stress that promoting inclusivity through and within TE programmes remains a persistent challenge and a necessary imperative for the 21st century. This review considers the kind of information and approaches that can best support teachers and teacher educators to effectively prepare for the increasing diversity of today's classrooms. Finally, it highlights the main challenges and issues to be further considered by country practice examples in the case study, thereby strengthening the connections between research and policy.



3. METHODOLOGY

This literature review's purpose is to provide background information from research and, in particular, from recent European level work, that will support the analysis of country policy and practice in the accompanying case study. This review incorporates the main findings from the European Agency TE4I project (2009–2012), in particular the literature review (European Agency, 2010b; please refer to: <http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/Teacher-Education-for-Inclusion>). It takes into account recent international documents, reports and projects compiled by Agency staff at the start of this project. This includes material from the European Commission, European Parliament, Council of the European Union, UNESCO, UNICEF, Council of Europe and OECD.

This literature review addresses the following questions:

- What are the key features of initial teacher education?
- What are the key features of continuing professional development?
- What are the key features of the teacher educator profession?

The methodology used for this literature review was to systematically search internet resources, abstracts and databases, including ERIC, British Library Direct, Academic Search Elite, Libris, Questia and High Beam, and journal sources, such as Emerald, Sage, ScienceDirect, Intute and OpenDOAR. General search engines (Google Scholar, etc.) were used to find 'grey' materials. Searches were also made of relevant websites, online reports and dissertations from Europe and worldwide.

The search strategy attempted to locate materials which focused on the review's main areas of interest (ITE, teacher educators, CPD, inclusive pedagogy). The descriptors used include: initial / pre-service teacher education / training / programmes / in-service / on-going / continuing professional development / teachers' capacity for diverse learners OR diversity / inclusive pedagogy / evaluation / quality assessment of ITE / teacher educators. In order to respond to the review's questions, the initial search strategy was to locate papers that focused on the main areas of interest. The search process was based on pre-established eligibility criteria. The criteria for including and excluding studies provide a clear guideline as to the research standards that will be used (Meline, 2006).

Table 1 outlines the inclusion/exclusion criteria used to identify relevant literature for this study.



Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria used to select literature

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Since 2010	Before 2010
English language	Language other than English
International studies	N/A
Initial teacher education	Primary or secondary education
CPD of teacher educators/in-service teachers	CPD of other professionals
Systematic reviews, meta-analyses	Opinion, anecdote, narrative reviews

These general searches were followed up with more specific citation searches. Material was organised into the themes indicated in the chapter headings. Findings and research from 2010 onwards have been taken into account, with a few exceptions where research was considered to be of particular significance. Most evidence is from peer-reviewed journals. The focus was on ITE and CPD for the empowerment of teachers in order to address the diverse needs of all learners.



4. INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 Developments at international level

In the last decade, a number of major international statements have appeared that affirm the principle of inclusive education in the global educational policy agenda. Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) states that inclusive education offers the best educational opportunities for learners with disabilities (United Nations, 2006).

Together, the UNCRPD and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) provide a framework for a rights-based approach for all children. The UNCRPD calls for staff training to incorporate disability awareness, the use of augmentative and alternative communication and education techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities. However, as Rouse and Florian point out:

the specialist support demanded by inclusive education requires that it be provided without perpetuating the segregating practices that have been associated with traditional approaches to special education (2012, p. 9).

More recently, the *Incheon Declaration* states that inclusion is both a principle and a process whereby:

Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda ... No education target should be considered met unless met by all (World Education Forum, 2015, p. 2).

The *Declaration* also states the requirement that:

teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems (ibid.).

The United Nations post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, agreed in September 2015, also include education as a key pillar. Goal number 4 is to: 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. By 2030, target 4.5 aims to:

eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations (United Nations, 2015).

For many countries and regions, however, the shortage of human resources with the right competencies (and the ability to apply them) is a critical constraint to further development.



Marope (2015) stresses that the ambition to ensure that no-one is left behind by 2030 not only requires that all children are in school, but also that they are learning. In striving for quality for all learners, policy-makers and other stakeholders should recognise that, as recent research has shown (e.g. European Commission, 2011a; 2013a; OECD, 2013), high-performing education systems are also the most equitable. Underachievement and school failure incur long-term costs for countries, communities and individuals.

4.2 Developments at European level

At European level, there is growing recognition of the need for inclusive education as a means to combat racism and discrimination and to promote citizenship and acceptance of different opinions, convictions, beliefs and lifestyles. An informal meeting of Education Ministers, held on 17 March 2015, highlighted the need to combat:

... geographical, social and educational inequalities, as well as other factors which can lead to despair and create a fertile ground for extremism, by providing all children and young people with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to build their own professional futures and pathways to success in society, and by encouraging measures to reduce early school leaving and to improve the social and professional integration of all young people (European Commission, 2015a, p. 4).

TE in particular has been increasingly influenced by developments such as the Bologna Process, which aimed to create an integrated European Higher Education Area by 2010 so as to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent higher education systems in Europe. The European Higher Education Area aims to:

- facilitate the mobility of students, graduates and higher education staff;
- prepare students for their future careers and for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and support their personal development;
- offer broad access to high-quality higher education, based on democratic principles and academic freedom (Bologna Declaration, 1999).

Co-operation within the Bologna Process continues to support and monitor the achievement of the Bologna Declaration's initial objectives. In future, Bologna Process co-operation will pay particular attention to the structure of higher education, qualifications frameworks, quality assurance and recognition. There is also a stronger focus on the social dimension, employability, lifelong learning, mobility and the global dimension of the Bologna Process (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, 2009).



More recently, the Strategic Framework for Education and Training (ET 2020), agreed by the Council of the European Union, identified the quality of education and training as one of four strategic objectives, stating that:

there is a need to ensure high quality teaching, to provide adequate initial teacher education, continuous professional development for teachers and trainers, and to make teaching an attractive career-choice (Council of the European Union 2009, p. 4)

This ensures that investment in human resources is a key factor in success.

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice further highlight the need for action in order to:

make Initial Teacher Education (ITE) more effective while reinforcing the role of induction and mentoring; and to drive professional development towards more flexible, individualised, collaborative forms, and link it to teachers' career prospects and school development plans (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a, p. 15).

To this end, the European Commission's communication *Rethinking Education* identifies three key actions:

1. *reviewing the effectiveness as well as the academic and pedagogical quality of initial teacher education,*
2. *introducing coherent and adequately resourced systems for recruitment, selection, induction and professional development of teaching staff based on clearly defined competences needed at each stage of a teaching career, and*
3. *increasing teacher digital competence* (European Commission, 2012a, p. 15).

Most recently, the Draft 2015 *Joint Report* of the Council and the Commission on *New priorities for European cooperation in education and training* states that:

... education and training have an important role in fostering inclusion and equality, cultivating mutual respect and embedding fundamental values in an open and democratic society. By reaching out – in particular to the most disadvantaged – education and training are crucial to prevent and tackle poverty and social exclusion and discrimination, and to build a foundation on which active citizenship rests (European Commission, 2015b, p. 2).

The *Joint Report* proposes as one of its six priorities for education: strong support for educators as well as inclusive education, equality, non-discrimination and promotion of civic competences.



4.3 Summary points

Clearly, at international and European policy level there is an increasing focus on human rights and equity. Inclusion is as now seen as a strategy to promote social cohesion, citizenship and a more equitable society. A key policy priority for all countries working towards this vision should therefore be to plan for more effective TE programmes and on-going support systems that focus on empowering teachers to engage in inclusive practice in order to provide high-quality education for all learners.

The following section will highlight some key features of TE and provide some analysis of the structure and content of ITE programmes, together with the competences required for inclusive practice.



5. INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

5.1 Structure of initial teacher education

ITE courses and programmes vary widely with regard to duration and content (European Agency, 2011a). Recent information from country reports shows that ITE programmes in Europe are usually between four and six years (European Commission, 2014; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a).

In 15 European countries, the minimum level for ITE programmes is that of a Bachelor's (BA) qualification, whereas 17 countries require at least a Master's (MA) degree (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a), usually for upper-secondary teachers (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013). The recent CRELL report highlights the trend across Europe towards requiring higher levels of qualifications (MA/BA) for ITE (European Commission, 2015c).

The *Trends 2015* report highlights the universities' strong commitment to the European Higher Education Area. National qualification frameworks have been self-certified in 19 countries. However, the report suggests that this commitment is still fragile and 'needs to be nurtured and that a number of gaps between policy making and institutional priorities should be addressed' (Sursock, 2015, p. 35).

TE qualifications can be gained through alternative routes, other than at HEIs with university status and these usually involve small-scale providers for specific school levels or subjects (European Agency, 2011a; European Commission, 2014).

Alternative routes into teaching through 'fast-track programmes' or employment-based training can be found in only eight countries (DE, LU, LV, NL, NO, PL, SE, UK En), so are not widespread in Europe (European Commission, 2014).

ITE programmes are organised in various ways in member states and usually include a general and a professional component (Finnish Institute for Educational Research, 2009). Two main models are predominant in ITE:

1. 'concurrent', in which both school subjects and the knowledge and skills needed to teach them are studied at the same time, and
2. 'consecutive', in which education in subject-specific courses is followed by separate courses involving teaching components (pedagogy, didactics, classroom practice, etc.) (European Agency, 2011a; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a).

The consecutive model is mostly offered to upper-secondary teachers, usually after a subject-specific undergraduate degree. In lower-secondary education, both models may be used. The professional components in the ITE programme are generally higher for lower level teachers, ranging from an average of 20% (ISCED 2–



3) to one third or a quarter of the whole programme (ISCED 0–1) (European Commission, 2014).

5.2 Content of initial teacher education

In most European countries, ITE higher education providers, rather than strict national guidelines, determine ITE content (European Commission, 2014). Eurydice specifically notes that in 13 European countries/regions, higher education institutions are completely autonomous in determining the content of their TE programmes (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015b). Therefore, variations in TE content can be found not only among, but also within, countries (European Commission, 2014). The Finnish Institute for Educational Research (2009) notes that there is no country where TE curricula are defined centrally at national level. However, general guidelines exist which usually outline TE programme aims, content and outcomes, reflecting education policy priorities and links with school curricula (European Commission, 2014).

According to the recent European Commission review (2014), key features of the ITE curriculum include:

- Teaching literacy and numeracy
- ICT for teaching and learning
- Assessment and diversity
- The role of research.

The vast majority of the teachers around Europe who have received ITE (80%) say that their studies included the three essential elements of content, pedagogy and practice (European Commission, 2015d).

Effective ITE generally includes the three following integrated core curriculum areas:

- subject area aspects/methodologies;
- transversal/pedagogical aspects (linking knowledge of pupil learning, school curricula and strategies to deal with diversity in the classroom);
- teaching practice and supervision (European Commission, 2014, pp. 6–7).

The majority of European countries that provide central level regulations, recommendations and/or guidelines for ITE programmes state that student teachers should learn how to address different learner needs during their training, but without specifying particular subjects (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015b). UNICEF (2013) mentions that there is still a need for information on the nature and content of courses offered to teachers at the pre-service, in-service and



advanced levels, as many general teaching courses do not cover content relevant to inclusive education.

Courses on inclusion are not always integrated throughout ITE programmes, but may be listed as optional or run by special education institutes or training organisations (UNICEF, 2013). More specifically, inclusive education training can be provided through: 'discrete' courses or separate programmes, 'integrated' courses developed through collaboration between general and special education faculties and staff, and 'merged' courses, in which the student teachers are equipped with skills, knowledge and attitudes to take responsibility for and meet the needs of all learners (European Agency, 2011a).

Evidence suggests that a special education course paired with field experience of working with learners with disabilities can significantly influence pre-service teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Swain et al., 2012). However, it has been reported that discrete courses can have a negative impact on student teachers, as they can reinforce the 'difference' of learners and limit teachers' knowledge and skills on inclusive practice (European Agency, 2011a). Echeita (2014) notes that adding some courses on inclusion to the general curriculum of ITE institutions is insufficient and inadequate and that wider reforms are needed in the whole ITE structure in order to prepare inclusive teachers.

UNICEF further supports this notion and stresses that:

programs that lack a solid understanding of inclusion and are based on concepts of segregation or special education, as their conceptual core can often be incongruent with inclusive education (2013, p. 1).

It also recommends that inclusion competences should be redefined as 'broad-based good teaching competencies rather than "special"' (ibid., p. 5).

Stegemann and Stevens (2015) list six characteristics which can provide a foundation upon which TE programmes can design programme goals and objectives towards the vision of an inclusive community. Such programmes should be:

1. integrative, co-operative and interactive;
2. invested – for the social and economic health and well-being of all members;
3. diverse – in all structures, processes and functions of daily community life;
4. equitable – so that everyone has the opportunity to develop capacities and participate actively in community life;
5. accessible, sensitive and safe;
6. participatory – so that all members may be involved in planning and decision-making.



An innovative example comes from recent work by Hollenweger et al. (2015) who have produced a tool that aims to support the process of improving TE programmes for inclusive education.

Although the organisation of ITE may vary, some components are critical if teachers are to be fully equipped to do their job effectively. In the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), the following three components are considered:

- **Content:** it is essential that prospective teachers have sufficient academic knowledge of the subject(s) they will teach.
- **Theory of teaching (pedagogy):** trainee teachers need to be theoretically prepared to teach their subject, support pupils in learning, and manage classes.
- **Practice:** it is important for trainee teachers to gain concrete experience in real classes as soon as possible, including learning how to handle real issues inherent in teaching and class management in a variety of situations. Practical experience may involve observation of classroom activity, as well as sole or shared responsibility for the conduct of some lessons under the guidance of an experienced teacher (OECD, 2014b).

UNESCO (2013) notes that inclusive education is often given greater attention at the level of in-service rather than pre-service TE and stresses the benefits of incorporating inclusive education into pre-service teacher programmes more comprehensively.

The Agency TE4I project synthesis report concludes that:

Research should be undertaken on the effectiveness of different routes into teaching and the course organisation, content and pedagogy to best develop the competence of teachers to meet the diverse needs of all learners (2011a, p. 72).

5.2.1 Development of competences

The discourse about teaching and TE has led to clear definitions of teachers' competences (Biesta, 2012). The emergence of a European level consensus on the definition of teacher competences could have a major impact on teacher policies in member countries (EDiTE, 2014). As such, the identification of key competences for teachers is regarded as very important, as they can serve as indicators to monitor and evaluate not only TE policy, but also practice (European Agency, 2011a).

International documents, such as the European Commission's reports (2011b; 2013a) adopt Deakin Crick's definition of competence as:



a complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes and desire which lead to effective, embodied human action in the world, in a particular domain (Crick, 2008, p. 313).

The European Commission *Supporting teacher competence development* report characterises the acquisition and development of competences as ‘a career-long endeavour that requires a reflexive, purposeful practice and high quality feedback’ (2013a, p. 43).

It is helpful to distinguish between teaching competences and teacher competences: teaching competences are associated with the ‘craft of teaching’ and are focused on the role of the teacher in the classroom (European Commission, 2013a, p. 10). On the other hand, teacher competences ‘imply a wider, systemic view of teacher professionalism, on multiple levels’ (the individual, the school, the local community and professional networks) (ibid.).

The European Commission overview of ITE policy issues (2014) highlights the differences between the understanding of competences and the teacher competence frameworks across European countries. In most countries, competence requirements for ITE are outlined at national level, but TE institutions adapt or further define them at a lower level (European Commission, 2012b). Competence frameworks may be embedded in aims and outcomes set out in guidelines for ITE and in some countries they are delivered as professional standards (European Commission, 2014).

At this point, it is necessary to clarify exactly what is meant by ‘standards’ and ‘competences’. The TE4I report (European Agency, 2011a) makes a clear distinction between these terms and notes that standards involve the summative outcomes of an ITE programme, whereas competences:

are seen as developing over time with ITE students and teachers demonstrating progressive mastery in a range of settings and situations. As such, they form both the foundation for ITE and the basis for continuing professional development (European Agency, 2011a, p. 46).

The European Commission *Initial teacher education in Europe* report identifies a general agreement across countries on some core competence requirements for all teachers. These include:

- *sound knowledge frameworks (e.g. about school curricula, education theories, assessment), supported by effective knowledge management strategies;*
- *a deep knowledge of how to teach specific subjects, connected with digital competences and students’ learning;*
- *classroom teaching and management skills and strategies;*

- *interpersonal, reflective and research skills, for cooperative work in schools as professional communities of practice;*
- *critical attitudes towards their own professional actions, based on sources of different kinds – students’ outcomes, theory and professional dialogue – to engage in innovation;*
- *positive attitudes to continuous professional development, collaboration, diversity and inclusion;*
- *the capability of adapting plans and practices to contexts and students’ needs* (2014, pp. 2–3).

A recent OECD symposium defined teachers as ‘learning specialists’, who are knowledgeable about and can use research-based principles of effective teaching. Professional responsibility was also mentioned as an important characteristic for all teachers. This is comprised of a sense of obligation and a commitment and willingness to hold oneself accountable (OECD, 2014a).

Biesta (2012) embraces a holistic approach to teacher competences and puts forward the concept of educational wisdom and ‘virtuosity’ as another parameter. She emphasises the crucial role of educational judgement, which needs to be multidimensional and purposeful, and suggests a focus on the formation of the whole person.

It becomes clear that teachers should be prepared for multiple roles in order to respond to increasing diversity in the classroom. Another important aspect for strengthening the professional profile of teaching candidates – and one that is gaining ground – is their level of digital competence (European Commission, 2012a). A recent literature review identified eight different approaches that promote student teachers’ digital competence and educate them in using ICT in secondary education classrooms. These are: collaboration, metacognition, blending, modelling, authentic learning, student active learning, assessment, and bridging the theory/practice gap (Røkenes and Krumsvik, 2014).

Finally, it is worth noting that the most critical areas of teacher competence are associated with the values related to teaching and learning. These are identified in the Agency TE4I project and will be discussed further in section 5.4.

5.2.2 Assessment

It is important that assessment processes and procedures in ITE are coherent, using a variety of assessment modes, for formative as well as summative purposes (Teaching Council, 2011a). The European Commission (2014) notes that prospective teachers are often assessed using portfolios, which might prepare them to use this type of assessment in their teaching.



The Agency's TE4I report noted the need for assessment in ITE to change in line with more active teaching methods. It stressed that across both academic assignments and school practice there is a need for:

'assessment for learning' approaches that encourage student teachers to reflect on their own work and performance and [...] formulate their own targets for improvement (European Agency, 2011a, p. 23).

It also noted the importance of guided reflection and teacher educators developing knowledge of students' understanding to provide appropriate challenges together with good models of inclusive assessment practice.

Echeita (2014) mentions that at a national or regional level, it is also necessary to set out clear standards for graduating student teachers, allowing them to monitor whether they have correctly learned the competences related to inclusive education.

5.3 School practice

Learning through working with practising teachers and other professional staff in schools is a dominant feature of ITE. McIntyre argues that 'whatever is achieved in the university, the teaching practices and attitudes that student teachers usually learn to adopt are those currently dominant in the schools' (2009, p. 602).


The nature of the partnerships between TE providers and partners in schools varies widely (McMahon et al., 2015). The new evidence compiled by Eurydice and CRELL reveals a trend towards increasing the amount of practical training, including school-based practice, within ITE programmes (European Commission, 2015d).

The TE4I project (European Agency, 2011a) notes that school placements vary across countries: a few member states follow a centralised route (the ITE provider determines the student teachers' placements), while in others the student teachers choose their own placements. However, placement in a real working environment typically lasts no more than a few weeks and involves supervision by a teacher-mentor, with periodic assessment by teacher educators from the training institution (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a).

Key elements of school practice include specific coursework, supervision and reflection activities. Other important elements for an effective school placement include professional dialogue, joint planning and responsibility, strong leadership and adequate teaching resources (European Commission, 2014).

Echeita stresses that:

Traditionally, the ITE partnership with 'practice schools' tends to be rather superficial, with a clear difference in the knowledge status within the



discourse in schools and universities. [...] Therefore, the challenge is to build meaningful joint work among universities and schools (particularly through school leaders), in addition to a clear conceptual framework to link theoretical and practical knowledge (2014, p. 64).

Recent research stresses the importance of a close and positive partnership between schools and HEIs to support student teachers. Such a relationship can benefit not only the student teachers, but also the schools involved with ITE. Allen et al. (2014) report benefits including: the provision of fresh teaching ideas, CPD opportunities, extra capacity, financial benefit, and recruitment (the possibility of employing the trainee upon qualification).

5.4 Inclusive teaching approaches

The development of inclusive practice is an essential feature of professional learning for all teachers and teacher educators. It has been described as an apprenticeship of the head (knowledge), hand (skill or doing) and heart (attitudes and values) (Shulman, 2005; European Agency, 2011a).

The values of the wider culture, as well as those of individual teachers, impact on pedagogy (European Agency, 2010b). To be effective, pedagogy must be inclusive and consider the diverse needs of all learners, as well as matters of student equity (Husbands and Pearce, 2012).

Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) emphasise the need for a shift in pedagogical thinking from an approach that works for most learners, towards one that involves everyone. Shifting the gaze from ‘most’ and ‘some’ learners to ‘everybody’ (Florian, 2012) requires collective learning experiences to be taken into account, so that teachers are encouraged to develop approaches that are appropriate for all children (Allan, 2010; Black-Hawkins, 2012).

Spratt and Florian (2014) provide a useful framework for gathering evidence about the inclusive practice of beginning teachers, which they have named the ‘Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action’ framework. This work is an attempt to capture the process of inclusive pedagogy, based on a set of theoretical principles that can support teachers, teacher educators and researchers to make informed judgements about pedagogy in each unique setting (Florian, 2014; Spratt and Florian, 2014).

Rytivaara and Kershner point out that teaching heterogeneous groups ‘is not just a matter of understanding individual children’s capabilities and educational needs in order to integrate them with more “typical” others of the same age’ (2012, p. 1000). What is crucial is the construction of educational difference in different contexts, at different points in time (Ainscow et al., 2010). This requires ‘fundamental changes in



thinking about children, curriculum, pedagogy and school organisation’ (Slee, 2011, p. 110).

Alexiadou and Essex, while noting the importance of TE in achieving inclusion in the classroom, state that:

it is naïve to think that it can work against a policy framework that promotes a limited pedagogical understanding of inclusion, where pedagogy and inclusion are incorporated into a policy discourse characterised by deficit assumptions for different categories of learners (2015, p. 12).

To implement inclusive practice, teachers should be equipped not only with competences, but also with appropriate values and beliefs, to meet diverse learners’ needs and develop more equitable education systems (European Agency, 2012; Engelbrecht, 2013).

The TE4I project identified three elements of teacher competence: attitudes, knowledge and skills. ‘A certain attitude or belief demands certain knowledge or level of understanding and then skills in order to implement this knowledge in a practical situation’ (European Agency, 2012, p. 7). Based on this framework, the project produced a *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* to be used as guide for designing and implementing ITE programmes. It identified four core values relating to teaching and learning as the basis for the work of all teachers, which are associated with specific areas of teacher competences:

Valuing Learner Diversity – *learner difference is considered as a resource and an asset to education. The areas of competence within this core value relate to:*


- *Conceptions of inclusive education;*
- *The teacher’s view of learner difference.*

Supporting All Learners – *teachers have high expectations for all learners’ achievements. The areas of competence within this core value relate to:*

- *Promoting the academic, social and emotional learning of all learners;*
- *Effective teaching approaches in heterogeneous classes.*

Working With Others – *collaboration and teamwork are essential approaches for all teachers. The areas of competence within this core value relate to:*

- *Working with parents and families;*
- *Working with a range of other educational professionals.*



Personal Professional Development – teaching is a learning activity and teachers take responsibility for their lifelong learning. The areas of competence within this core value relate to:

- *Teachers as reflective practitioners;*
- *Initial teacher education as a foundation for ongoing professional learning and development* (European Agency, 2012, p. 7).

Finally, the need for a more inclusive orientation within TE is highlighted in UNESCO's *Advocacy Guide*, which clearly states:

Educating teachers for inclusive education means reconceptualising the roles, attitudes and competencies of student teachers to prepare them to diversify their teaching methods, to redefine the relationship between teachers and students and to empower teachers as co-developers of the curriculum (2013, pp. 5–6).

5.5 Diversity in the teacher workforce

The European Commission (2015c) notes that attracting more appropriately qualified staff into teaching is a growing priority in Europe – and this also holds true for developing countries, where the need is arguably more acute. A high percentage of the workforce is approaching retirement age and many younger teachers are leaving the profession after a relatively short period of service. An ageing teaching workforce around Europe, in combination with low retention rates and the declining number of applicants for TE, could lead to teacher shortages. This situation calls for greater efforts to attract new and qualified entrants into the teaching profession (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013).

In order to make teaching more attractive to a wider pool of candidates, teachers' working conditions and career opportunities need to be improved. In-school factors, collaborative school culture and good teacher-student relations correlate positively with higher job satisfaction. Evaluation, particularly when it relates to professional development, is a further contributory factor (European Commission, 2015d).

In the context of increasing ethnic diversity in classrooms, OECD asks: 'how do we make the composition of the teaching staff reflect the student population?' (2010a, p. 138). There is also an urgent need to address the profession's gender imbalance.

In light of recent international and EU conventions and communications, countries need to consider the diversity of the teacher workforce in order to provide appropriate role models and ensure that staff with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences are in place to connect with learners in schools and with families in local communities.



5.6 Evaluation and quality assurance

The quality assurance processes for ITE, which are applied widely across the European area, have converged due to the widely accepted European standards and guidelines for quality assurance being translated into national legislation and procedures (Vidović and Domović, 2013).

In most countries, evaluation of ITE is compulsory or recommended (European Agency, 2011a; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013; European Commission, 2014). Only a few countries apply specific regulations (DE, FR, UK, IE, PT, PL), while in the other European countries only general regulations for quality assurance are extended to TE (Vidović and Domović, 2013, based on Eurydice data, 2006).

Quality assurance can be internal or external. In many countries (e.g. BE Fr., BG, EL, ES, HU, IS, LT, NL, PL, PT), internal evaluation follows specific guidelines for ITE providers and involves course approval and validation, self-evaluation and quality improvement processes, whereas in several cases (AT, CZ, DK, FI, LU, SE, SI, UK En) there are no regulations about internal evaluation criteria (European Commission, 2014).

External quality assurance generally refers to ‘the evaluation undertaken by bodies or individuals, not directly involved in the activities of a particular programme’ (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013, p. 38). Mechanisms for external evaluation are often provided by independent quality assurance agencies and by external involvement in assessment and examinations. External evaluation criteria are based on qualification standards, but sometimes consider all stakeholders’ opinions, including learners and employers.

Even though evaluation and quality assurance have become an important part of higher education since the start of the Bologna Process (Bologna Declaration, 1999), it seems that considerable progress is needed in order to meet the common objectives established under the ET 2020 programme.

The *2015 Joint Report* clearly states that ‘the policy focus needs to be re-calibrated to include [...] the role of education in promoting equity and inclusion’ (European Commission, 2015e, p. 26). Therefore, it is crucial that inclusive principles are given key prominence in evaluation and quality assurance processes. Indicators of effective ITE require further development to ensure that quality assurance is aligned with developing areas of competence for inclusive teachers.

Specifically regarding ITE and teacher quality, Halász and Michel (2011) stress that reforms are more likely to be successfully implemented where the national accountability system supports local/school level innovation, backed by strong



leadership and where the aims and goals in different education subsystems are aligned and in synergy.

5.7 Summary points

This chapter has outlined key features of TE and provided some analysis on the structure and content of ITE programmes. It has particularly stressed that national qualification frameworks should be a priority for HEIs and ITE providers. It has also highlighted the tendency towards common core content in TE and notes the importance of an increased focus on the development of inclusive values and approaches. In preparing student teachers, high-quality school practice is critical and requires a close and positive partnership between schools and TE providers. There is also a need to increase diversity in the teacher workforce in order to tackle the issue of representation and gender imbalances in the teaching profession. The development of broader competence frameworks for teachers is a further priority, as these can serve as indicators to monitor TE policy and practice. Finally, evaluation and quality assurance frameworks for TE programmes require further development.



6. TEACHER EDUCATORS

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in the work of teacher educators. As they make a major contribution to the quality of teaching, they are a crucial factor in predicting the quality of the teacher workforce (European Commission, 2013b; Hudson et al., 2010).

Adopting the definition of teacher educators which was developed during a European level peer learning activity, teacher educators are now considered to be 'all those who actively facilitate the (formal) learning of student teachers and teachers' (European Commission, 2010, p. 3).

Teacher educators include:

Higher Education academic staff with a responsibility for Teacher Education, research or subject studies and didactics, as well as teaching practice supervisors, school mentors, induction tutors and networks of induction supporters (Caena, 2012, p. 2).

McMahon et al. (2015) adopt a broader perspective, claiming that all teachers and school leaders should be acknowledged as teacher educators. They recognise that experienced practitioners provide an important resource to draw upon.

European countries increasingly acknowledge the need to clearly define the teacher educator profession (European Commission, 2013b), although this is, in most cases, still in its early stages of development (European Commission, 2012b). Most of the EU member states' policies on the professionalism of teacher educators are part of general policies for higher education teachers, and the initiative for development lies with governments and TE institutes (Snoek et al., 2011).

In addition to an agreed definition, the European Commission stresses the need for more data about this key profession within member states and for a clearer definition of the competences required to be allowed to work as a teacher educator. It notes that 'in most Member States there is little explicit policy provision either to define what quality means in the work of a teacher educator' or what the necessary recruitment and selection requirements are (European Commission, 2012b, p. 52).

In many OECD countries, it is difficult to obtain comprehensive system-wide information, particularly assessment and evaluation data, as universities are autonomous in developing TE programmes (OECD, 2010b).

Becoming a teacher educator requires critical changes in professional practice and identity (Boyd et al., 2011). Teacher educators, unlike members of other professions, have multiple professional identities. As Swennen et al. (2010) note, they may think of themselves primarily as school teachers, as teachers in higher education, as researchers, or as teachers of teachers. It is also likely that many of



them may identify with several of these roles simultaneously, or they might not consider themselves to be teacher educators at all (European Commission, 2012a).

6.1 Recruitment

In most member states, policy on professional entry requirements for teacher educators is underdeveloped or even non-existent. Available data shows that most countries seem to require that all teacher educators have at least a teaching qualification and basic pedagogical skills, having completed a full programme of ITE and teaching practice (Caena, 2012). In 21 countries, teacher educators in higher education must have the same qualification requirements as other teaching staff in higher education (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013; European Commission, 2014) and in half of European countries, teacher educators must have a teaching qualification themselves (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013).

It is also worth noting that no single body is responsible for professional quality frameworks or the recruitment and selection of teacher educators in Europe (Caena, 2012). The recent European Commission report *Education and Training Monitor 2013* illustrates this fragmented institutional landscape in terms of academic degrees and teaching experience, and stresses the need for criteria regarding entrance qualifications for teacher educators, on a national or institutional basis (European Commission, 2013c).

6.2 Induction

The induction of teacher educators covers the first three years of their appointment to a higher education academic role. The three-year period constitutes an adequate time to 'establish identities and roles and to develop a firm basis for future professional development' (Boyd et al., 2011, p. 7).

The themes of identity and transition from teacher to teacher educator are prominent in the study of beginning teacher educators, as they impact on the quality of their performance and, consequently, on the quality of teaching candidates' education.

Although many teacher educators have school teaching experience, the transition to academia appears to be difficult. Van Velzen et al. (2010) note that teacher educators have to familiarise themselves with the organisation of the university (organisational induction), as well as to prepare for the new role of teacher educator (professional induction).

Swennen et al. (2009) give some examples of issues encountered by beginning teacher educators, such as workload (a combination of new tasks and the wish to perform these tasks well) or a sense of isolation (being the only one with this problem, being thrown in at the deep end with no 'peers' in the same situation).



With regard to professional induction, beginning teacher educators have to get accustomed to being confronted by student teachers (young adults), dealing with uncertainty about the sufficiency of their subject knowledge, and uncertainty about their role as teacher educator being a 'second order teacher' (Murray, 2008; Murray and Male, 2005).

Van Velzen et al. (2010) support the view that prior teaching experience might hinder induction, as it could prevent new teacher educators from taking account of the different context of higher education and undergoing a process of change.

Existing research recognises that the most influential professional learning for teacher educators appears to take place in informal workplace settings, which might include day-to-day interaction, local collaborative work, support for scholarship and research and external networking opportunities (Boyd et al., 2011). This incidental and occasional learning is complemented by formal induction activities like courses, workshops and mentoring (Van Velzen et al., 2010).


Boyd et al. identify the following priorities for teacher educator induction:

- *developing their pedagogical knowledge and practice, including assessment processes, appropriate to teaching student teachers in higher education settings;*
- *enhancing their scholarship, leading to publication in their chosen area of expertise;*
- *acquiring the pragmatic knowledge necessary to acclimatise to their new institutions and roles (2011, p. 8).*

6.3 Competences

As previously mentioned, there is not yet a shared understanding about the competences required by teacher educators. The European Commission's *Supporting Teacher Educators for better learning outcomes* (European Commission, 2013b) urged member states to define the role of teacher educators through competence-based criteria. In the communication, teacher educators' competences are classified as follows:

- *First-order competences concern the knowledge base about schooling and teaching that teacher educators convey to student teachers – as related to subjects or disciplines;*
- *Second-order competences concern the knowledge base about how teachers learn and how they become competent teachers. They focus on teachers as adult learners, the associated pedagogy, and organisational knowledge about the workplaces of students and teachers (European Commission, 2013b, p. 15)*

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- Key competence areas, which include ‘knowledge development, research and critical thinking competences’; ‘system competences (i.e. managing the complexity of teacher education activities, roles and relationships)’; ‘transversal competences’; ‘leadership competences (inspiring teachers and colleagues; coping with ambiguity and uncertainty)’; and ‘competences in collaborating, communicating and making connections with other areas’ (ibid.).

Special attention must also be paid to teacher educators’ capacity to use a student-centred approach in teaching at university level and their capacity to supervise school practice in partnership with school-based mentors. School-based teachers’ capacity to offer high-quality mentoring must also be considered (European Commission, 2010).

In the UK context, McNamara and Murray outline the role of teacher educators as partners in teachers’ professional learning across their career course as being:

to develop and maintain a scholarly culture and the capacity for critical thinking about learning to teach and teaching; to provide academic qualifications for teachers and for the continuing professional learning of the teacher workforce; to lead public debates about education policy; to theorise about educational values, processes and practices; and to engage in and with research about educational values, process and practices, and to encourage teachers to do the same (2013, p. 17).

The general competences outlined above must be augmented by a specific focus on teaching for diversity and an open and continuing dialogue about what this entails. The OECD report on *Educating Teachers for Diversity* (2010a) notes that teacher educators must put in significant effort to prepare the teaching candidates with the strategies they need to target diverse student populations. As Echeita suggests: ‘Teacher educators must be a mirror in which student teachers see the key competences of inclusive education in action’ (2014, p. 64).

The literature review for the UNICEF REAP Project mentions that teacher educators generally lack knowledge, understanding, commitment and experience to include children with disabilities and suggest reflectivity, co-teaching and collaboration as effective ways to overcome some of these barriers. The review provides a useful example of this being addressed in Vietnam, by a nationwide programme which ‘aimed to “upskill” all teacher educators so that they had the necessary skills, curriculum and pedagogical knowledge to educate teachers for inclusion’ (Rieser, 2012, p. 59).



Increased diversity in the teacher workforce is also necessary to accomplish this aim. Rieser (2012) highlights the importance of also having teacher educators with disabilities who can act as role models.

OECD outlines a useful process to strengthen teacher educators' capacity to address diversity issues and also to demonstrate to their students how to make diversity issues central to their practice. This process includes three phases: the pre-active phase (class planning), the interactive phase (during teaching) and the post-active phase (critical analysis-reflection) (OECD, 2010a).

6.4 On-going professional development

Florian notes that:

one problem that has received little consideration is that many teacher educators may not have had experience of inclusive education when they were teaching, nor may they agree with its associated approaches to teaching and learning (2012, p. 276).

She therefore calls for the professional development needs of teacher educators to be addressed as part of the reform of TE for inclusion.

Teacher educators must adopt a lifelong learning mind-set to develop their competences and to enhance the quality of ITE. Teacher educators' professional development can, therefore, be seen as a journey.

Several studies have reflected the current individualised character of teacher educators' professional development and the scarce systemic opportunities for peer learning. Hence, a shift towards more systematic approaches for teacher educators' professional development, both individually and collectively, seems essential (Karagiorgi and Nicolaidou, 2013).

Teacher educators can continue to develop their practice, both in general and more specifically for diversity issues, in a number of ways. OECD (2010a) identifies three useful strategies:

1. Conducting on-going research, which prompts teacher educators to challenge their own assumptions
2. Collaborative teaching, (teacher educators working together to structure and deliver course content) which requires negotiation, reflection and on-going inquiry
3. Self-study, during which teacher educators produce local knowledge and theory and negotiate their own teaching practice.

Writing and publishing can also support teacher educators' professional development (Shteiman et al., 2010), as can emerging technologies, which could be



incorporated into TE programmes. Nisiforou et al. (2015) reveal blogging's great potential in helping teacher educators to provide ideas and guidelines on how to design, organise and deliver effective professional development courses on integrating technology as a tool.

Dengerink et al. (2015) also suggest that professional development for beginning and experienced teacher educators, and for school-based and university-based teacher educators should be differentiated.

Israel's MOFET Institute

(<http://www.mofet.macam.ac.il/eng/about/Pages/default.aspx>) is a notable example which is devoted to teacher educators' CPD. MOFET's work could provide an example for other countries seeking appropriate ways to meet teacher educators' professional development needs. Approaches might include courses for beginning teacher educators, opportunities to work and learn together and opportunities to publish (Shteiman et al., 2010).

Finally, Snoek et al. argue that, in order to strengthen the profession, teacher educators need to be involved in professional associations. These authors stress the need for:

a more intensive exchange of policy practices and for mutual peer learning by teacher educators and their professional associations on issues regarding policies that promote the professionalism of teacher educators (2011, p. 662).

6.5 Summary points

This chapter has focused on teacher educators and has identified the need for more information about this key profession. Agreement on the criteria for entrance to the profession, teacher educators' experience and qualifications (national or institutional) and a clearer definition of teacher educator competences are essential and could facilitate the establishment of quality criteria for the teacher educator profession. There is also a need for teacher educators to enhance their skills in addressing diversity issues so that they can better prepare student teachers for inclusive practice. This can be achieved through the development of a lifelong learning mind-set and professional development opportunities, which should include collaborative and peer learning activities. Finally, increasing the diversity of the teacher educator workforce could further enhance teacher preparation for more heterogeneous classrooms.



7. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

7.1 A continuum approach to teacher education

There is widespread consensus that teachers' learning is not limited only to ITE, but spans their entire career. Viewing education as a career-long process means that such learning can be developed 'through the professional continuum, throughout the continuum' (McMahon et al., 2015, p. 174).


Ireland's Teaching Council provides a comprehensive definition of the continuum model of TE as:

the formal and informal educational and developmental activities in which teachers engage, as life-long learners, during their teaching career. It encompasses initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development and, indeed, late career support (2011b, p. 5).

The *Report of a Peer Learning Activity in Naas* mentions that 'Work also needs to be set in the context of the local or national understanding of the continuum of teacher education [...] and the modern learning environment' (European Commission, 2011b, p. 7).

The recent overview of policy issues in ITE (European Commission, 2014) also stresses the need for a continuum approach that aligns ITE with induction (transition to the teaching profession) and CPD. The review specifically suggests the following cornerstones of TE policy:

- *a clear reference framework for the competences of teachers, to provide common ground between different teaching/learning settings, stages (e.g. ITE, induction, CPD), activities and actors;*
- *multiple selection mechanisms, placed at different points of teachers' professional continuum (e.g. entry/exit stages of ITE; induction completion; further career levels acknowledging advanced expertise), with flexibility in 'selection filters' to fit specific needs and contexts*
- *consistency in teacher assessment and feedback (across ITE, induction, CPD), with key structures and procedures that define what, how, why and when to assess and who should do it, in different settings and career stages*
- *careful selection, preparation, professional development and support of teacher educators, so that they can offer optimal conditions for developing teachers' potential, in school and university settings;*
- *a common policy framework for effective school leadership, to ensure quality school leaders who can monitor and support teachers' motivation and*



practice, for improvement in teaching and learning (European Commission, 2014, p. 3).

7.2 Induction

Eurydice defines induction as ‘a structured support programme for qualified first-time teachers’ (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a, p. 42). It is the transition phase to the teaching profession – at the start of the continuum – and mainly involves mentoring in schools by experienced teachers (European Commission, 2014). The length of induction programmes can vary from several months, to short introductory programmes of work in specific schools (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a).

In the 19 EU countries that participated in the TALIS 2013 international survey, less than half of all teachers reported that they had taken part in a formal induction programme during their first regular employment as a teacher (OECD, 2014b). More specifically, the EU *Education and Training Monitor* notes that beginning teachers have access to a structured induction programme in only 16 member states (DE, EE, IE, FR, IT, HR, CY, LU, MT, AT, PT, RO, SI, SK, SE and UK). This usually takes place directly after gaining an initial qualification. In FR, IT, LU, MT, PT and UK, induction is also considered a probationary period and is thus linked to obtaining a permanent contract. In most countries, with the exception of MT and AT, induction applies to all beginning teachers at all levels of education (European Commission, 2013c).

Mentoring by experienced teachers is the main type of support offered during an induction phase. Teachers’ participation in an induction phase early in their own careers appears to increase the likelihood of them, in turn, becoming mentors. In some countries they also get special training and other forms of support (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a).

The induction programme usually includes regular meetings, advice about lesson planning and job shadowing. It often entails course modules, seminars or workshops at ITE institutions, although co-operation between schools and universities varies. Even where formal induction programmes are absent, mentoring support measures for new teachers are generally in place (European Commission, 2014).

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice highlight the need for action ‘to make Initial Teacher Education (ITE) more effective while reinforcing the role of induction and mentoring’ (2015a, p. 15). OECD (2010a) also propounds the promotion of internships in schools with diverse populations.

A structured induction programme, providing professional, social and personal support in the early years, is one mechanism that can help newcomers adjust to



the profession, improve overall quality, and tackle the issue of teacher retention faced by several countries (European Commission, 2013c, p. 33).

7.3 In-service professional development

With regard to teachers' professional development, 'formal and traditional forms of in-service training, such as courses, workshops, and conferences prevail in almost all education systems' (European Commission, 2015d, p. 4). Nevertheless, more diverse professional development activities are beginning to emerge (ibid.).

Avalos notes that 'professional development is about teachers learning, learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students' growth' (2011, p. 10). She also draws attention to the fact that professional development is a complex process that requires both:

cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively, the capacity and willingness to examine where each one stands in terms of convictions and beliefs and the perusal and enactment of appropriate alternatives for improvement or change (ibid.).

A vast amount of research shows that teachers overwhelmingly want professional development (OECD, 2014b). Several priority areas for CPD have been consistently identified throughout Europe (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a).

These include:

- Teaching cross-curricular skills
- Teaching in multilingual and multicultural settings
- Student career guidance and counselling
- Teaching students with special educational needs
- New technology in the workplace
- Approaches to individualised learning.

Recent evidence (European Commission, 2015d) shows significant differences between the barriers to professional development perceived by male and female teachers. Women are more likely than men to refer to some of these barriers, such as 'family responsibilities' and the cost of CPD (ibid., p. 2). Moreover, in some countries (BE FI, CZ, DK, FR, NL, PL and SK), men are more likely than women to go abroad for professional purposes. Such mobility frequently has a positive impact on career development (ibid.). A mismatch was also found between teachers' stated needs and the content of the professional development in which they participate. The report concludes that top-down intervention must be 'fine-tuned' to teachers' needs (ibid., p. 3).



Sebba et al. challenge traditional approaches to CPD, which are based on transferring knowledge or 'best practices', and introduce the term 'joint practice development' (JPD) as:

the process by which individuals, schools or other organisations learn from one another involving interaction and mutual development, sometimes co-constructing new ways of working (2012, p. 2).

However, some critical differences exist between CPD and JPD, as West-Burnham and Harris (2015) note: CPD is provider-driven, managed by leaders, has generic content and uncertain impact. It is also an event and tends to be individualistic. By comparison, JPD is teacher-driven, facilitated by leaders, has a specific focus and direct impact and is a collaborative process.

Cordingley (2008) argues that the key to self-directed professional development is 'professional learning' and suggests that more work needs to be done related to the learning experiences of professionals. According to Cole, professional learning:

embraces both learning acquired through professional development activities and activities designed to guide improved performance... the term also helps to situate the teacher/learner rather than the development program at the centre of the action (2004, p. 3).

According to the *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders*, professional learning can only be effective when it is 'relevant, collaborative and future focused, and when it supports teachers to reflect on, question and consciously improve their practice' (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2012, p. 4).

Cordingley and Bell argue that CPD for teachers is more likely to benefit learners when it is:

- 'collaborative';
- 'supported by specialist expertise';
- 'drawn from beyond the learning setting';
- 'focused on aspirations for students';
- 'sustained over time';
- 'exploring evidence from trying new things to connect practice to theory';
- 'enabling practitioners to transfer new approaches and practices and the concepts underpinning them to practice multiple contexts' (2012, p. 4).

The CPD approaches found to be most effective included the following characteristics: 'collaborative enquiry', 'coaching and mentoring', 'networks',



‘structured dialogue and group work’ (ibid.). Focusing on the effectiveness of different forms of CPD provision, Cordingley and Bell also found ‘positive benefits from online learning (particularly where face-to-face opportunities are logistically difficult)’ (ibid., p. 5).

A report by Walter and Briggs provides evidence from 35 studies of teacher professional development and concludes that CPD makes the most difference to teachers when it:

1. *is concrete and classroom-based*
2. *brings in expertise from outside the school*
3. *involves teachers in the choice of areas to develop and activities to undertake*
4. *enables teachers to work collaboratively with peers*
5. *provides opportunities for mentoring and coaching*
6. *is sustained over time*
7. *is supported by effective school leadership* (2012, p. 1).

Previous work by the Agency (2009; 2011b) has underlined the crucial role of leadership in fostering collegiality and support and in promoting inclusive change. In particular, the Agency’s literature review for the Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education project emphasises the importance of creating a school culture of mutual professional learning which supports innovation and sharing of practice and creating a ‘learning school’ (Fielding et al., 2005 in European Agency, 2013, p. 36).

For the creation of inclusive ‘learning schools’, school leaders firstly need support to identify teachers’ support needs and then to provide quality opportunities to meet those needs. School leaders must also have mechanisms in place for the evaluation of professional development in all its forms, to ensure that feedback informs and improves further CPD practice.

Jayaram et al. propose a teacher professional development programme that is:

integrated with a system for evaluating teachers’ strengths and areas for improvement and can provide a serious boost to teacher performance and student outcomes (2012, p. 1).

In addition, Smith and Tyler (2011) specifically argue that online training materials and resources can supplement and enhance personnel preparation coursework and professional development experiences.

Finally, Avalos (2011), following a review of studies of teacher professional development over ten years, notes the power of teacher co-learning and the need



to increase partnership experiences between universities and teachers to modify the traditional separation between academia and the professions.

7.4 Evaluation and quality assurance

Research suggests that the quality assurance mechanisms in the CPD system vary widely, and are sometimes missing altogether (Vidović and Domović, 2013).

It seems that the challenge to create reliable tools for exploring professionals' learning still remains (Cordingley, 2008). Power and McCormick (2014) argue for more programmes of TE and/or educational technology, to explicitly examine their underlying theories of change, and to seek to evidence the nature and extent of changes observed.

Avalos found a number of studies that highlighted the effects of policy environments centred on standardised examination results and restricted ideas of teacher accountability. She says that, in their attempt to secure better examination scores for their students, teachers are 'provided with "outside experts" to teach them how to produce results in the short periods of time demanded by their education systems', rather than 'imaginatively renewing' their teaching through collaborative work among themselves (2011, p. 18).

Overall, the research literature demonstrates that CPD that promotes inquiry, creativity and innovation can have a positive impact on curriculum and pedagogy, as well as teachers' sense of commitment and their relationships with learners (Goodall et al., 2010).

7.5 Summary points

This chapter highlights the need for a continuum approach that aligns ITE with induction and CPD. Attention should be paid to the development of more structured induction programmes that provide professional, social and personal support in the early years of the teaching profession. Also, this review has identified the variation that exists in CPD and professional learning activities and has stressed the importance of more collaborative approaches (such as co-learning), which should be supported by effective school leadership. Finally, it highlights that research, monitoring and evaluation in CPD is an area that requires special attention and needs further development.



8. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This review aims to provide background information from research and, in particular, from recent European level work, to support the analysis of country policy and practice in the case study. The review is structured around the main features of TE which also play a key part in the development of inclusive practice:

- initial teacher education (ITE): organisation and content;
- development and professionalisation of teacher educators;
- continuing professional development (CPD).

This section will draw together the main findings as presented in the summary points of each section of the review. It will also consider the implications for future work in this area, by highlighting the ways forward to develop teachers' competences and empower them to promote inclusive practice.

8.1 Policy developments


Political support is needed to empower teachers within an inclusive education system. This can be provided through appropriate legislation and policy (at national and local levels) that is underpinned by inclusive values and has an increasing focus on human rights and equity. In particular:

- Inclusive principles should be ingrained in all components of ITE and CPD programmes.
- Policies should be introduced to develop a 'continuum of support' to enable teachers to meet the full diversity of learner needs. Such policies should guide future work to develop criteria and guidelines for reconceptualised programmes of ITE, induction and CPD.
- Policies should address the gender imbalance and lack of representation in TE and particularly in participation in CPD (European Commission, 2015d). Greater efforts should be made to increase diversity in the teacher workforce and to attract more young people into and retain them within the teaching profession.
- Accountability measures that impact upon teachers' work should be put in place to support the development of a cohesive quality assurance framework that reinforces consistent messages regarding inclusive practice.

8.2 Initial teacher education

This review notes that effective ITE programmes should:

- be fit for purpose, combining subject matter, pedagogy and practice;

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- include core content for the development of inclusive values, competences and approaches;
 - develop competence frameworks for inclusive practice, which can serve as indicators to monitor TE policy and practice throughout the continuum;
 - focus on the development of teacher skills in research to enable them to effectively review evidence, collect and analyse data and reflect on and use a range of information to inform their practice;
 - develop and maintain a close and positive relationship between HEIs and schools, with shared responsibilities and ‘structured roles for planning, management, monitoring and assessment’ (European Commission, 2014, p. 5);
 - use clear and consistent evaluation and quality assurance frameworks which are aligned with the areas of competence for inclusive teachers.

8.3 Teacher educators

This review has highlighted the information gap that exists around the key profession of teacher educators. The following priorities should be addressed in order to strengthen the teacher educator profession:

- More data is needed on the criteria for entrance to the profession and on teacher educators’ experience and qualifications (national or institutional).
- A clearer definition of teacher educator competences is needed to facilitate the establishment of quality criteria for the profession.
- Teacher educators’ skills in addressing diversity issues and in using inclusive approaches should be enhanced so that they are better able to prepare their students to become inclusive practitioners.
- Teacher educators should engage in research to inform the on-going content and structure of TE programmes (British Educational Research Association, 2014).

8.4 Continuing professional development and support

According to the review, CPD and support include various models of collaborative, evidence-based practice and should involve leaders, external experts and the local community within a supportive political context. The review has highlighted the importance of a lifelong professional learning mind-set for the continuous development of highly qualified inclusive teachers. It particularly stresses the need to:

- address the variation that exists in CPD and professional learning activities;



- develop a continuum of support throughout ITE, induction and CPD;
- recognise that the induction phase is crucial for strengthening and promoting inclusive teacher practice and, therefore, needs further development;
- support leaders, through networks and collaboration with local and national peer groups in order to promote more collaborative approaches in schools;
- develop quality assurance mechanisms in the CPD system.

Finally, it has been argued that the higher the standard of ITE and CPD, the higher the quality of teaching. Thus, sharing knowledge about effective ITE and CPD programmes, within and between countries, indisputably brings benefits. As Peček and Macura-Milovanović put it:

The conceptual and philosophical problems of equity and education for all are shared concerns. International studies are therefore indispensable as it is easier, with distance and through comparisons with other contexts, to recognise one's own problems and paths to solving them (2015, p. 272).



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