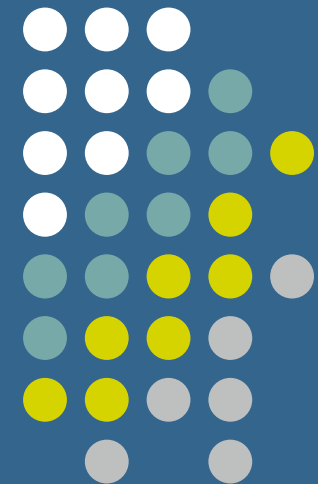# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TEACHER EDUCATION

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Some Initial Thoughts

- **No consensus**
- **Problematic and controversial**
- **Gap between rhetoric and reality**
- **Gap between policy and practice**
- **Integration rather inclusion – current policy and practice**

Policy for Inclusive Education

- **Human rights, equal opportunities lobby**

  but also

  Economic expedience
- **UK**
- **Netherlands**
- **Internationally**

Experience of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Inclusive Education - UK,NL & internationally

- Emphasis on subject specialism and the curriculum rather than pedagogy (especially in the UK and in secondary teacher education everywhere) – very little on inclusive education
- Teachers as deliverers of the curriculum
- Standards agenda – narrow view of performance management
- Specialised courses for Special Educational Needs (SEN), inclusive education etc. (usually after ITE, often in separate institutions)
- Most courses/modules focus on specific disabilities (dyslexia, autism etc.)
- Notion that inclusive education is about excluded groups
- Myth of expertise perpetuated – strong vested professional interest in maintaining the status quo (also teacher educators)

Teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- Specialised courses/modules – autism, dyslexia, behaviour management etc.
- Emphasis on inclusive education as being about excluded groups
- Funding often linked to new policy initiatives and short term
- One off 'day events' – training
- School/system and policy focussed rather than teacher/pupil focussed
- Often linked to performance and promotion

Some Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education

- 'What about the other children ?'
- 'It's not my job it's a job for the experts'
- 'It's about special needs children not normal children'
- 'Parents don't want it'
- 'Challenging behaviour is the real problem'
- 'Not enough resources/time' - 'Too many children in the class'
- 'I don't have enough specialist knowledge'
- 'It won't/doesn't work'
- Resistance !!!

Inclusive Education Requires;

- **Understanding and awareness of the issues surrounding inclusive education and its development – ITE & CPD**
- **Positive attitudes towards *all* children**
- **Emphasis on learning processes rather than end products**
- **Teacher as a facilitator of learning - managing the learning environment**
- **A wide range of flexible learning and teaching strategies**
- **Problem sharing, investigative approaches**
- **Learning how to learn (pupils, teachers and teacher educators)**
- **Partnership with pupils on the learning journey**
- **Focus on the development of intrinsic behaviour management through learning rather than as external control**

ITE and CPD for Inclusive Education

- Inclusive education should underpin whole programme of study including practicum - problems attached to school based ITE

- Main focus on learning (pupil, teacher and teacher educators) and the learner and strategies to support and manage the *whole range* of learners – rather than gaining subject expertise

- Teacher as the manager of a challenging, stimulating learning environment – learning as fun not a chore !

- Teacher as an agent of change and development - investigative problem solving/sharing approach to learning, teaching and in own practice

- Critically reflective practice

- Experience rather than expertise - empowering models of teacher education

- ITE and CPD as a necessary and required continuum

Policy Making For Inclusive Education

- Positive rather than deficit policy and legislation – no 'let out clauses'
- Inclusion and inclusive education as issues for the whole of education – not just a Special Educational Needs issue
- Emphasis in ITE on pedagogy and *informed* practice rather than subject expertise – developing genuinely *critically reflective professionals/practitioners* – teacher educators as well as student teachers
- Inclusive education and practice as compulsory elements underpinning the whole ITE curriculum
- Inclusive practice tied into flexible supportive model of performance management and continuing professional development (CPD)
- Positive resourcing tied to inclusive education outcomes – schools, Further and Higher Education