  
  
Profile for Inclusive Teacher Professional Learning

**European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education**

This is an extract from the [*Profile for Inclusive Teacher Professional Learning: Including all education professionals in teacher professional learning for inclusion*](https://www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/TPL4I-profile) report.

With a view to greater accessibility, this document is available in 25 languages and in accessible electronic format on the Agency’s website:   
[www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/TPL4I-profile](http://www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/TPL4I-profile)

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Introduction

The [***Profile for Inclusive Teacher Professional Learning***](https://www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/TPL4I-profile) aims to support all education professionals in committing to quality education for all learners.

Throughout the *Profile*, the terms ‘teachers’, ‘school staff’ and ‘education professionals’ refer to **pre-service and in-service teachers, mentoring and support teachers, school leaders, teacher educators, teaching assistants and specialists***.* Connecting school-based and non-school-based staff, ‘education professionals’ is regarded as a comprehensive term that considers all professionals as equal members of an inclusive professional learning community.

Built upon the core values for inclusion and the associated areas of competence identified for teachers and other education professionals, competences are understood as complex combinations of attitudes, knowledge and skills. A certain attitude or belief demands certain knowledge or a level of understanding, and then skills to implement this knowledge in practice (European Agency, 2012)[[1]](#footnote-2). None is sufficient on its own. In what follows, attitudes, knowledge and skills are referred to as:

* ‘Attitudes and beliefs’ or the basic assumptions, the crucial ethical and moral dimensions of inclusion and how these are shown in ways of working, discourse, communication and relationships.
* ‘Knowledge and understanding’ or the essential knowledge and insights, the theoretical basis of the profession, the evidence, basic concepts and principles underpinning quality education.
* ‘Skills’ or the practical skills required to carry out the essential tasks, and the decision-making and efficacy to put knowledge into practice in varying situations and contexts, to assert basic assumptions and to re-imagine practice for quality education.

Their listing within competence areas does not imply a hierarchical order or isolation of competences, as they are all closely interconnected and interdependent.

Particular attention should be paid to the *Profile*’s focus on the **collaborative task** of implementing inclusive practice, its value for a growing **professional community** involved in inclusion and its use in **work-based learning**. It is important to note that this wider perspective does not affect the *Profile*’s value for teachers, who remain the first and most significant practitioners among all professionals involved.

As a competence framework for inclusion and equity in education, the *Profile for Inclusive Teacher Professional Learning* offers education professionals, including TPL providers, a **common language**, a **common repertoire** and a **reference** for professional learning for inclusion for all school staff.

The following **core values**, associated areas of **competence**, suggested **attitudes and beliefs**, **knowledge and understanding**, and **skills** address all education professionals to engage in competence development for inclusion.

Valuing learner diversity

Learner diversity is considered a resource and an asset to quality education.

Areas of competence within this core value relate to:

- conceptions of inclusion, equity and quality education;

- education professionals’ views of learner difference.

Conceptions of inclusion, equity and quality education

Attitudes and beliefs underpinning this area of competence include …

… education is based upon a belief in equality, a commitment to human rights and the promotion of democratic values in school communities;

… inclusive education is about social justice in education and societal reform more broadly; it is non-negotiable;

… inclusive education and quality in education cannot be viewed as separate issues;

… access to mainstream education alone is not enough; participation means that all learners are engaged in learning activities that are meaningful for them;

… inclusive education is based upon a commitment to each and every learner’s belonging, achievement, well-being and mental health.

Essential knowledge and understanding underpinning this area of competence include …

… theoretical and practical concepts and principles, as well as international conventions underpinning inclusive education within global and local contexts;

… the wider system of educational institutions’ cultures and policies that impacts on inclusive education; the local education system’s possible strengths and weaknesses regarding equity;

… inclusive education as an approach to make schools welcoming, supportive and challenging for all learners, not just those who are perceived to have different needs and may be at risk of exclusion from educational opportunities;

… the language of inclusion and diversity and the implications of using different terminology to describe, label and categorise learners;

… inclusive education as the presence (access to education), participation (quality of the learning experience) and achievement (learning processes and outcomes) of all learners;

… inclusive education as an approach to ensure the representation of all learners’ experiences, the recognition of all learners’ outcomes, and effective resource distribution.

Crucial skills and abilities to be developed within this area of competence include …

… critically examining one’s own beliefs and attitudes and the impact these have on actions;

… engaging in ethical practice at all times and respecting confidentiality;

… the ability to deconstruct educational history to understand current situations and contexts;

… coping strategies that enable teachers to challenge non-inclusive attitudes and segregated situations;

… being empathetic to learners’ diverse strengths and needs;

… modelling respect in social relationships and using appropriate language with all learners and stakeholders in education;

… as an inclusive leader, setting the direction to foster and sustain an inclusive school culture that is characterised by generosity and the true belonging of all.

Education professionals’ views of learner difference

Attitudes and beliefs underpinning this area of competence include …

… variability in human development is natural and should be considered the norm;

… learner diversity must be respected, valued and understood as a resource that enhances learning opportunities for all and adds value to schools, local communities and society;

… the teacher is a key influence on a learner’s self-esteem and, consequently, their learning potential;

… categorisation and labelling of learners can negatively affect learning opportunities;

… each staff member in education has a responsibility to contribute to a school culture that welcomes diversity.

Essential knowledge and understanding underpinning this area of competence include …

… that it is ‘normal to be different’;

… essential information about learner diversity arising from support needs, culture, language, socio-economic background, etc., the interactions between diversity characteristics and their interaction with the school context;

… concepts underpinning different aspects of learners’ identities (disability, gender, multilingualism, etc.) and the impact of discriminatory practices (based on racism, ableism, etc.);

… that learners learn in different ways, and these can be used to support their own learning and that of their peers;

… that the school is a community and social environment that affects learners’ self-esteem and learning potential;

… that the school and classroom population are constantly changing; diversity cannot be seen as a static concept.

Crucial skills and abilities to be developed within this area of competence include …

… learning how to learn from learner diversity;

… identifying the most appropriate ways of responding to diversity in all situations, including dealing with racist incidents and avoiding deficit-oriented approaches to learner behaviour;

… addressing diversity in curriculum implementation;

… using diversity of learning approaches as a resource for teaching;

… intercultural dialogue, mediation and peace education to create cohesive classroom communities;

… contributing to building schools as learning communities that respect, encourage and celebrate all learners’ achievements;

… offering guidance among colleagues, pre-service and newly qualified teachers in responding to diversity.

Supporting all learners

Teachers and other education professionals are deeply committed to all learners’ achievements, well-being and belonging.

Areas of competence within this core value relate to:

- promoting all learners’ academic, practical, social and emotional learning;

- supporting all learners’ well-being;

- effective teaching approaches and flexible organisation of support.

Promoting all learners’ academic, practical, social and emotional learning

Attitudes and beliefs underpinning this area of competence include …

… learning is primarily a social activity;

… from a holistic view, academic, practical, social and emotional learning are equally important for all learners;

… teachers’ expectations are a key determinant of learner success and therefore high expectations for all learners are critical;

… parents and families are an essential resource for a learner’s learning;

… each learner’s learning potential must be discovered, stimulated and valued.

Essential knowledge and understanding underpinning this area of competence include …

… that the development of intelligences and capacities is malleable;

… the value of prevention and early interventions;

… typical child development patterns and pathways, particularly in relation to social and communication skills;

… different models of learning and approaches to learning that learners may take;

… learners’ individual needs, the planning of support and monitoring of learners’ outcomes;

… the need for reasonable accommodations and supports (physical, social, emotional, and/or academic) to address individual circumstances that need attention at a point in time.

Crucial skills and abilities to be developed within this area of competence include …

… effective verbal and non-verbal communication to respond to the varied modes of communication of learners, parents and other professionals;

… supporting the development of learners’ communication skills and possibilities;

… assessing and developing effective learning strategies and skills in learners;

… facilitating peer learning and other co-operative learning approaches;

… facilitating safe learning environments where learners can take risks and even fail;

… assessment for learning approaches that take account of social, emotional and academic learning.

Supporting all learners’ well-being

Attitudes and beliefs underpinning this area of competence include …

… the importance of building a positive teacher-learner relationship with every learner;

… the importance of being sensitive to learners’ emotional needs;

… the importance of taking care of one’s own well-being as a professional.

Essential knowledge and understanding underpinning this area of competence include …

… positive behaviour and classroom management approaches;

… how mental health affects general well-being and learning;

… understanding that emotions and social contexts can trigger or block learning.

Crucial skills and abilities to be developed within this area of competence include …

… using classroom leadership skills that involve systematic approaches to positive classroom management;

… removing social barriers in group arrangements;

… implementing positive behaviour management approaches that support learners’ social development and interactions;

… developing resilience and coping strategies to deal with challenging behaviour.

Effective teaching approaches and flexible organisation of support

Attitudes and beliefs underpinning this area of competence include …

… effective teaching seeks to represent all learners;

… teachers take responsibility for facilitating the learning of all learners in a class;

… learners’ abilities are not fixed; all learners have the capacity to learn and develop;

… heterogeneous classrooms have the potential to support the learning of all;

… learning is a process, and the goal for all learners is to develop effective learning strategies and skills, not just content or subject knowledge;

… the learning process is essentially the same for all learners; there are very few ‘special techniques’ required;

… sometimes, particular learning difficulties require responses based on adaptations to the curriculum and teaching approaches;

… adaptations for some learners are not at the expense of others but contribute to building universal teaching approaches.

Essential knowledge and understanding underpinning this area of competence include …

… how learners learn and pedagogies that support the learning process;

… managing the classroom’s physical and social environment to support learning;

… how to identify and then address different barriers to learning and their implications for teaching;

… developing basic skills – in particular, key competences – along with associated teaching and assessment approaches;

… assessment of learning focused on identifying each learner’s strengths;

… culturally responsive pedagogies and differentiation of curriculum content, learning processes and learning materials to include all learners and meet diverse needs;

… the principles and guidelines of universal design, differentiation and other frameworks to develop inclusive learning environments and ensure meaningful learning experiences for all;

… personalised learning approaches that support all learners to develop autonomy in their learning;

… developing, implementing and effectively reviewing individual education plans or similar individualised learning programmes for some learners, when appropriate.

Crucial skills and abilities to be developed within this area of competence include …

… using classroom leadership skills that involve systematic approaches to positive classroom management;

… working with individual learners as well as heterogeneous groups;

… using the curriculum as a tool for inclusion that supports access to learning;

… addressing diversity issues in curriculum development processes;

… differentiating methods, content and outcomes for learning;

… using evidence-based teaching approaches to achieve learning goals, such as flexible instruction, alternative learning routes, collaborative problem-solving and clear feedback for learners;

… facilitating co-operative learning where learners help each other in different ways – including peer tutoring – in flexible learner groupings;

… using ICT and assistive technology to support flexible approaches to learning;

… using formative and summative assessment that support learning and do not label or lead to negative consequences for learners;

… drawing on a range of verbal and non-verbal communication skills to facilitate learning.

Working with others

Advocacy, collaboration and teamwork are essential approaches for all teachers and other education professionals.

Areas of competence within this core value relate to:

- giving learners a true voice;

- working with parents and families;

- working with a range of education professionals.

Giving learners a true voice

Attitudes and beliefs underpinning this area of competence include …

… learners are a resource for quality education;

… learners’ opinions must be heard on matters that concern their school experiences, support for learning and planning for their future;

… learners’ personal dreams, goals and fears matter and must be heard, particularly those of learners with complex needs or who belong to vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups, and including those of learners who are out of formal education or in pre- or post-school education.

Essential knowledge and understanding underpinning this area of competence include …

… learners’ voices include the values, opinions, beliefs, views and perspectives of learners and their families, as well as the degree to which these are considered and acted upon when important decisions that affect their lives are being made;

… the risk of marginalisation of particular groups of learners and families;

… developing autonomy and self-determination in learners, which requires relatedness/connectedness and the belief that everyone can learn;

… different ways of inviting learners to express their views;

… the importance of self-advocacy, self-expression and the role of advocacy groups that represent the most vulnerable learners.

Crucial skills and abilities to be developed within this area of competence include …

… listening to learners’ views attentively and respectfully;

… considering learners’ views and acknowledging them as an equal and integral part in discussions;

… giving learners opportunities to initiate ideas or plans that are taken forward for joint discussion and that can be acted upon and embedded in policy decisions at the local, regional and/or national level;

… developing independent and autonomous learners;

… ensuring all learners can be active decision-makers in the learning and assessment processes in which they are involved;

… working with learners and their families to personalise learning and set targets.

Working with parents and families

Attitudes and beliefs underpinning this area of competence include …

… teachers and school teams share responsibility in developing learners’ self-advocacy skills;

… giving a voice to parents and families is an added value;

… working collaboratively with parents and families is an added value;

… respect for parents’ and families’ cultural and social backgrounds and perspectives;

… school teams are responsible for effective communication and collaboration with parents and families.

Essential knowledge and understanding underpinning this area of competence include …

… the importance of issues of identity, representation and self-advocacy of marginalised groups;

… the impact of inter-personal relationships on achieving learning goals;

… inclusive teaching being based on a collaborative working approach;

… the importance of positive inter-personal skills.

Crucial skills and abilities to be developed within this area of competence include …

… supporting learners’, parents’ and families’ self-advocacy;

… effectively engaging parents and families in supporting their child’s learning;

… communicating effectively with parents and family members of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic and social backgrounds;

… understanding learners’ and families’ own realities;

… facilitating school-parent partnerships and creating and sustaining opportunities for parental involvement in school development.

Working with a range of education professionals

Attitudes and beliefs underpinning this area of competence include …

… an awareness that teachers do not work in isolation;

… awareness of colleagues’ professional backgrounds, experience and perspectives;

… inclusive education requires all educators to work in teams, to share and to recognise different needs, interests and concerns;

… in developing team agency, inclusive education requires flexible role-taking among different professionals, in view of the common goals;

… collaboration, partnerships and teamwork are essential approaches for all education professionals and should be welcomed;

… collaborative teamwork supports professional learning with and from other professionals.

Essential knowledge and understanding underpinning this area of competence include …

… the value and benefits of collaborative work among teachers and other education professionals;

… the support systems and structures available for further help, input and advice;

… multi-agency working models, where teachers in inclusive classrooms co-operate with other experts and staff from a range of different disciplines;

… collaborative teaching, where teachers take a team approach involving learners themselves, parents, peers, other teachers, support staff, and multi-disciplinary team members, as appropriate;

… the language/terminology and basic working concepts and perspectives of all professionals involved in education;

… the power relationships that exist between different stakeholders that must be acknowledged and dealt with effectively.

Crucial skills and abilities to be developed within this area of competence include …

… implementing classroom leadership and management skills that facilitate effective multi-agency working;

… co-teaching and working in flexible teaching teams;

… working as part of a school community and drawing on the support of internal and external school resources;

… building a class community that is part of a wider school community;

… contributing to whole-school evaluation, review and development processes;

… collaborative problem-solving among all education professionals;

… contributing to wider school partnerships with other schools, community organisations and other educational organisations;

… drawing on a range of verbal and non-verbal communication skills to facilitate co‑operation with other professionals;

… adult education coaching skills to support and mentor all educators at different stages of their careers.

Personal and collaborative professional development

Teaching and supporting learners are lifelong learning activities for which teachers and other education professionals take personal and shared responsibility.

Areas of competence within this core value relate to:

- teachers and other education professionals as members of an inclusive professional learning community;

- professional learning for inclusion that builds on initial teacher education and the competences of other education professionals.

Teachers and other education professionals as members of an inclusive professional learning community

Attitudes and beliefs underpinning this area of competence include …

… teaching is a problem-solving activity that requires on-going and systematic planning, evaluation, reflection and then modified action;

… reflective practice facilitates educators to work effectively with parents, as well as in teams with others working within and outside of the school;

… evidence-based practice is important to guide a school team’s work;

… teaching and collaborative practice in education are unpredictable, multi-dimensional and always unfinished;

… valuing the importance of developing a personal pedagogy to guide an educator’s work;

… valuing the importance of peer-to-peer feedback in professional learning.

Essential knowledge and understanding underpinning this area of competence include …

… personal, meta-cognitive, learning-to-learn skills;

… what makes a reflective practitioner and how to develop personal and peer-to-peer reflection on and in action;

… methods and strategies for evaluating one’s own work and performance;

… the value of professional learning communities for developing inclusive learning environments;

… action research methods and the relevance for educators’ work;

… participatory research methods and their relevance for inclusive education;

… the development of personal and collaborative problem-solving strategies.

Crucial skills and abilities to be developed within this area of competence include …

… critically examining one’s own beliefs and attitudes and the impact these have on staff relationships, shared beliefs, repertoire and actions;

… systematically evaluating one’s own performance in acting jointly as agents of change for inclusion;

… the capacity to ‘unlearn’ former practices found to be ineffective or not in line with the core values of inclusion;

… rationalising challenging, unpredictable teaching and learning by acknowledging and weighing competing philosophies and avoiding a purist stance;

… effectively involving others in reflecting upon teaching and learning;

… involving families in a team’s professional growth process;

… contributing to the school’s development as a learning community.

Professional learning for inclusion that builds on initial teacher education and the competences of other education professionals

Attitudes and beliefs underpinning this area of competence include …

… teachers and other education professionals are responsible for their own continuing professional development;

… initial teacher education is the first step in teachers’ professional lifelong learning;

… teaching competences are a crucial element of the professional learning of all education professionals involved in inclusive learning communities;

… teaching and providing learner support are learning activities; being open to learning new skills and actively asking for information and advice are a good thing, not a weakness;

… an educator cannot be an expert in all questions related to inclusive education; basic knowledge for those beginning in inclusive education is crucial, but continuous learning is essential;

… educators need the skills to manage and respond to changing needs and demands throughout their careers.

Essential knowledge and understanding underpinning this area of competence include …

… the educational law and the legal context that education professionals work within and their responsibilities and duties towards learners, families and colleagues;

… the professional standards of teachers and/or of other education professionals;

… possibilities, opportunities and routes for in-service teacher education or other in-service professional routes to develop knowledge and skills to enhance education professionals’ inclusive practice;

… the added value of teacher competence development for non-teaching professionals in inclusive education and, likewise, the added value of specialised professional learning for teachers.

Crucial skills and abilities to be developed within this area of competence include …

… flexibility in teaching strategies that promote innovation and personal learning;

… using time management strategies that accommodate possibilities for pursuing in-service development opportunities;

… being open to and proactive in using colleagues and other professionals as sources of learning and inspiration;

… sharing insights with colleagues in professional learning communities;

… contributing to whole-school community learning and development processes;

… facilitating professional learning opportunities and peer-learning activities for inclusion among school staff.

1. European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012. *Profile of Inclusive Teachers*. Odense, Denmark.   
   [www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/teacher-education-inclusion-profile-inclusive-teachers](http://www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/teacher-education-inclusion-profile-inclusive-teachers) (Last accessed June 2022) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)