Developing Inclusion Competences in B.Ed. programmes

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Inclusion is thought of in terms of two broad categories:

**Inclusion of Pupils with Special Educational Needs**
- Learning needs
- Disability

**Social Inclusion**
- Socio-economic disadvantage
- Religious perspectives
- Cultural perspectives
- Ethnic origin
- Gender

Removing barriers to learning
How do we do it?
The framework for competence development

- College traditions
- GTCNI Competence framework
- The Reflective and Activist Practitioner
- Additional experience
- DMU
- Community-based initiatives
- International and Global Dimensions

Academic programme
Values framework
School experience
Additional experience
• Revision of B.Ed. (2009 and ongoing)
  – Content:
    • infusion of SEN throughout modules (Education Studies and subject modules)
    • compulsory content in year 3 on cultural diversity/EAL
    • skills-based/foundational (rather than exhaustive)
  – Rationale for content and relation to GTC competences
  – Years 1-3 (compulsory modules)
  – Year 4 (specialist options)
• Placements
  – Year 1 Diversity visits
  – Year 3 post-primary Special School Placements
  – Year 4 Alternative Placements
Stranmillis University College

School
(segregated along religious lines)

Initial Teacher Education
(segregated along religious lines)

School Based Work
(segregated along religious lines)
Year 1 Diversity Visits

- First year student teachers on the four year B.Ed. Degree in post-primary education
- Students visit three different schools on consecutive days
  - A Controlled (de facto Protestant) non-selective
  - A Maintained (Catholic) non-selective
  - An integrated school
• Very positive feedback
  – 96% rated the experience valuable or very valuable.

*It has broadened my awareness of different school communities, all very positive but different from each other nonetheless.*

*I feel my stereotypes have been reduced and my understanding of a school as a diverse society has increased.*

*A very positive experience. Would never have had the opportunity to talk to a priest or be in a Catholic environment. School looked quite normal inside. Not as many statues as I thought there would have been.*
• School Placements ctd.
  – Year 3 post-primary Special School Placements
    • now entering its third year
    • 100 students to date
    • 12 schools (MLD, SLD)

  – Year 4 Alternative Placements
    • now entering its fifth year
    • education-related settings (e.g. special schools, AEPs, BBC, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Ulster Scots Agency)
• Student comments from special school placement:

• *It is fair to say that I had expected School X and indeed other special schools to be ‘doom and gloom’. I had the stereotypical view that it would be like a hospital or day care centre with a depressing atmosphere. However the school ethos and environment were much more positive than any mainstream school I have visited.*

• *The atmosphere within the school was very caring, full of warmth and compassion.*

• *If the chance did crop up in the future, at least now I would be able to make an informed decision on whether or not I would apply for the job.*
To provide opportunities for teacher education students from both university colleges to meet together to explore and discuss issues around diverse and shared heritage in our society by means of a range of interactive and genuinely collaborative activities.
Challenges and opportunities

Recruitment

Teacher knowledge and expertise

Managing more diverse classrooms

Managing the extra resources
  - human
  - material
  - physical

Relationships with stakeholders

What about the needs of gifted and talented pupils?