

DEVELOPING INCLUSION COMPETENCIES IN ONE-YEAR PGCE PROGRAMMES: SOME REFLECTIONS

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OLD-STYLE & CONTEMPORARY SEN DISCOURSES

- Great concerns about the assumptions lying behind much past thinking and practice in the SEN field;
- Instead of signifying belonging & entitlement, the terms “special” and “needs” are viewed as weasel words with connotations of helplessness and inadequacy (Salmon, 1995, p73);

CHANGING TIMES - CHANGING IDEAS

FROM DIFFERENCE AS CHILD DEFICIT

- A group of children/young people can be identified who are special
- Difficulties experienced by certain pupils are explained in terms of certain characteristics that appear to inhibit their progress e.g. disabilities, home background, intellectual ability

CHANGING TIMES - CHANGING IDEAS

FROM DIFFERENCE AS CHILD DEFICIT

- These children need special teaching in response to their problems
- It is best to teach children with similar problems together
- Other children are normal and benefit from existing teaching

CONTEMPORARY THINKING DIFFERENCE AS NORMAL

- Every adult and child, without exception, experiences learning difficulties in particular circumstances - and consequently have additional support for learning requirements
- We are not talking about a relatively small number of students, but any student who is perceived by his/her teacher to be having difficulties

CONTEMPORARY THINKING

DIFFERENCE AS NORMAL

- Special educational needs is a **relative and interactive concept**. Learning difficulties arise from complex inter-connections between - individual, social, current and developmental factors
- Whether or not a student has learning difficulties depends on the learning context - try asking yourself..What helps you learn ??

CONTEMPORARY THINKING

DIFFERENCE AS NORMAL

- The majority of children with special needs require teaching and resources based on principles of effectiveness for all;
- Special needs provision is not a discreet separate aspect of school life which affects a minority of children, but about effective teaching and learning throughout the school and across all abilities.

FROM

Diagnosis

Labeling

Impairment becomes focus of attention

Assessment, monitoring, programmes of therapy imposed

Segregation and alternative services

Ordinary needs put on hold

Re-entry if normal enough or permanent exclusion

Society remains unchanged

Child is faulty

TO

Child is Valued

Strengths and Needs defined by self and others

Child is Valued

Identify Barriers and develop solutions

Outcome based programmes designed

Resources are made available to Ordinary services

Training for Parents and Professionals

Relationships are nurtured

Diversity welcomed: Child is Included

Society evolves

THE CONTEMPORARY TASK

- Inclusive Teaching -

- The special educational needs task has now becomes one of ensuring that provision for the majority of students is sufficiently flexible to accommodate students who cause concern. The emphasis is put on ways in which schools and classrooms can be more responsive to the diversity of students they contain

TEACHERS' BELIEFS


- “Educational improvement depends on what teachers’ do and think, it’s as simple and complex as that” (Fullan 1992, p 121)
- “The key to working towards an enabling educational practice is greater reflexivity and political literacy, or, “The ability to interrogate and be aware of the professional discourses, models, ideas, terms around the systems, institutions and people with whom we work” (Todd, 2006 *p 153*).

TEACHERS' BELIEFS

- It is very clear then that how we view students strongly affects how we treat them;
- Teachers differ in their beliefs about learning difficulties and this is reflected in how they practice in inclusive settings (see Jordan, A., Glenn, C., & McGhie-Richmond, 2009)
- Teachers beliefs about learning, and their beliefs about learning difficulties, are correlated (Smith & Lambe, 2009)
- Effective teaching is akin to effective inclusion, and conversely, acquiring teaching skills that are effective for students with learning difficulties and disabilities benefits the development of overall teaching effectiveness (also see Jordan, A., Glenn, C & McGhie-Richmond, 2009)


INCLUSION



- Barriers to learning defined as things 'inside children'
 - Children & young people do not have barriers to learning; barriers are created by people and systems
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INCLUSION



- Trying to change children
 - Adapting the cultures, curricula and communities of schools
 - Increase the participation of all students - particularly those “at risk” of being marginalised
- 

INCLUSION



Views of intelligence

- Intelligence as fixed and as setting limits to achievement


Intelligence as malleable

Development of thinking skills, meta-cognition etc



INCLUSION




- Need for “specialist teaching”
 - Seek to develop new teaching responses that stimulate and support the participation of all students and overcome the barriers to participation
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INCLUSION



Theories of learning:

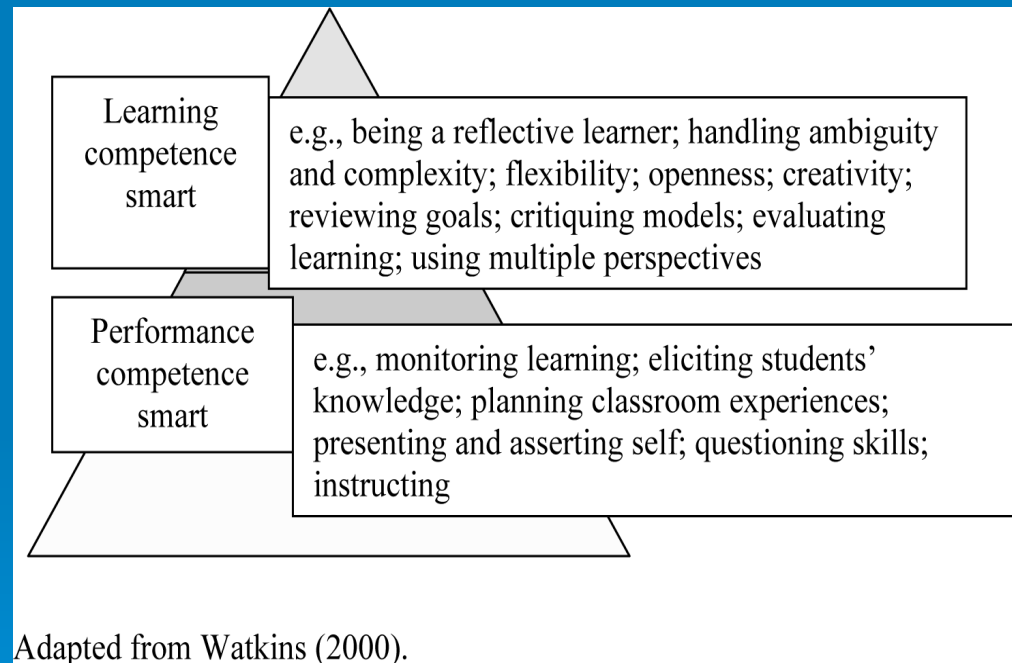
- Learning as an individual activity
 - Learning as a social activity
 - Learning as a cultural activity
 - Mind as Passive
 - Mind as Active
- 

An evolving vision of inclusive education

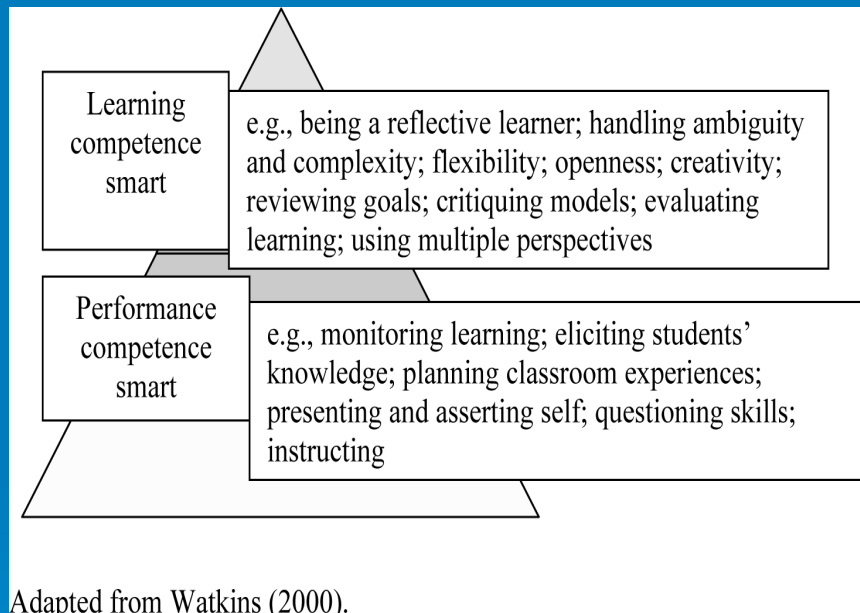
“a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children” (UNESCO, 2005)

TEACHER AS PERFORMING FUNCTIONARY OR PROFESSIONAL WHO MAKES A DIFFERENCE?

- The difference may depend on how we think of teachers' competencies, and how much of the hierarchy opposite we consider



LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE COMPETENCIES SMART



- Learning competencies imply greater complexity and reflexivity than lower levels. Upward movement is supported through learning which expands possibilities, on a broadening spiral, and which adds extra variation to existing repertoires.

- It is not about conformity or compliance to standards, but about being **competencies smart rather than competencies strangled**

THE POST-PRIMARY PGCE IN MAIN SUBJECT WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

- A teacher education collaboration between two 1-year Secondary PGCE Initial Teacher Education providers in Northern Ireland (ITE: University of Ulster & Queen's University Belfast)
- Cohort of 20 students with all main subjects represented

THE POST-PRIMARY PGCE IN MAIN SUBJECT WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

Gary's Story

- Designed to take advantage of a feature unique to 1- year ITT programmes. That is, the nature of the life-experiences of trainees - many of whom have competencies working for and with children past the novice stage
- (adding extra variation to the learning repertoires of appropriately experienced trainees - see op)

Gary came to teaching later in life than many beginning teachers. In his 30s, with a wife and two children, Gary decided to become a teacher because he enjoyed working with children and was something that he was good at doing. He believed that his previous role coordinating youth justice programmes gave him the street smartness and insider knowledge to work with the most disadvantaged youth.

THE POST-PRIMARY PGCE IN MAIN SUBJECT WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

- “*not only*” a pre-service teacher education programme, “*but also*” a professional development journey for all concerned
- seen as providing space, despite the time constraints, for teacher educators in both institutions, to dialogue about developing creating synergies between learning and performance competencies - all in the pursuit of *Inclusive Teaching* for all

THE POST-PRIMARY PGCE IN MAIN SUBJECT WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

- We expect that those taking this programme would be very well placed to secure posts within school subject departments where there was a particular or urgent need for someone to take *departmental responsibility* for developing inclusive practices and contribute to departmental schemes of work for pupils whose progress was of concern, or were “at risk” of becoming disengaged from learning

The Programme

Holding ideals is not exhibiting warm and fuzzy feelings but needs to be valued as part of intensive educational debate about fundamental purposes...the absence of which undermines the heart of professionalism... (GTCNI, 2007, p8, citing Sockett (1993))

Rationale

- The aims of the elective are cross referenced to:
 - The NI Teacher Competencies (GTCNI, 2007)
 - The NI School Improvement programme
 - The ten year strategy for Children and Young People in NI (OFMDFM)
 - The Shared Futures Report (2004)
 - The Fundamental Review of Special Educational Needs in NI
 - Research (both Global and National) around contemporary pedagogical issues relating to SEN and Inclusive Education

Assessment: evidence of competence

- A competence based model for teacher education must be values based...

...in endorsing this approach....the teacher competencies must be considered holistically and not treated as a series of discrete entities, divested of values or a sense of mission and professional identity (GTCNI, 2007, p 5).

- The permeated model: ensuring effective practice in ITE (Lambe , *in press*)
- Targeting the subject specialist and expanding and permeating experience

Assessment 1: Programme content

➤ Embracing the concept of...

...the reflective and activist practitioner who, individually and collectively, will reflect on the nature and purposes of education, and will seek to act as both a shaper of policy and a well informed critic of proposals and reforms (GTCNI, 2007, p.9)

➤ Individual and group activities, online reflective discussions on Learning NI



Elective programme
on LNI



Online discussions



Student
contributions

Discussions can get heated....

Surely in this day and age every child deserves the right to get the same education regardless of their abilities or indeed disabilities. I agree with Ballard's view that inclusion involves all students in a community with no exceptions. School is a community and therefore every child should have the opportunity to be educated within that community. The idea that people are "uneducable" is absolutely ludicrous, they can teach parrots to speak but yet they don't think a child with special needs can be taught the same things in the same environment by the same person as a "normal" child. Time to get with the programme folks! There is no such thing as a "normal" child or a "normal" school. If you look closely every child has a special need at some stage in their school lives so should we have a different school for every single child in the world. I hardly think so!

Ms. Connolly 24/09/2009 21:45

Assessment 2:

Developing innovative resources to support classroom practice and expand knowledge base

...the competencies have been designed to enhance professional autonomy, both at an individual and collective level, in a way that encourages creative and innovative approaches to teaching... (GTCNI, 2007, p8)



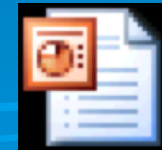
Resource design
brief



Example 1: James
Wells



Example 2: Claire
Tanney



Example 3: Kevin
Healy

Assessment 3:

The development of the professional
e-portfolio



Music eportfolio

Assessment 4:

- Classroom practice: school placement



Emma Andrews
placement

The qualification



Certificate



Learner