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