TEACHER EDUCATION FOR INCLUSION ACROSS EUROPE

Challenges and Opportunities

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European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

At the launch of the World Health Organisation *World Report on Disability* in New York (June 2011), I stressed the importance of teachers: 'We can discuss inclusion on many levels: conceptual level, policy level, normative or research level, but in the end it is the teacher who has to cope with a variety of students in the classroom! It is the teacher who implements the principles of inclusive education. If the teacher is not able to educate a variety of students in the mainstream classroom, all the good intentions for inclusive education are worthless. So the challenge for the future is to develop curricula and educate teachers in how to cope with diversity'.

The Agency three-year project was started in 2009 to investigate how all teachers are prepared via their initial training to be 'inclusive'. Fifty-five experts have been involved, from 25 countries: Austria, Belgium (both the Flemish and French speaking communities), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales).

The expert group has included policy makers – responsible for teacher education and inclusive education – and both general and specialist teacher educators. During the course of the project, a wider number of other stakeholders have also been involved including student teachers, teachers and school leaders, local area administrators, representatives from voluntary organisations, learners and parents. The Agency owes thanks to all of these for their valuable contributions. (Further information and experts' contact details can be found in Annex 1.)

This report is a synthesis of the detailed country reports received on policy and practice for teacher education for inclusion from participating countries. It also draws on the policy and research literature reviews produced as part of the project and information gathered during the 14 Country Study Visits to highlight interesting examples and make recommendations for ways forward. The project will also produce a *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* that will outline a framework of the areas of competence necessary for preparing all

teachers to work in inclusive settings, considering all forms of diversity. It is hoped that this report, along with the Profile document will make a significant contribution to the development of teacher education for inclusion across Europe.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of teacher education is high on the policy agenda across Europe and globally and the role of teachers and therefore of teacher education in moving towards a more inclusive education system is being recognised.

The *World Report on Disability* (2011) stresses that: 'The appropriate training of mainstream teachers is crucial if they are to be confident and competent in teaching children with diverse needs' and emphasises the need for this training to be focussed upon attitudes and values, not just knowledge and skills (p. 222).

In late 2007, representatives of the member countries of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (the Agency) met to discuss issues relating to the topic of teacher education for inclusion, which had been prioritised as an area for Agency examination from 2009 onwards.

Following discussions and taking into account the then current priorities at European level and at national level within member countries, a decision was made to focus on the essential question: how can all teachers be prepared via their initial training to be 'inclusive?'

Initially, the project brief referred to 'mainstream or general teachers', but this was later changed to 'all' teachers as project participants felt strongly that all teachers should be prepared to take responsibility for all learners in their classes. They also acknowledged that many teachers will need support to build their capacity to do so.

The three year project set out to examine the essential skills, knowledge and understanding, attitudes and values needed by everyone entering the teaching profession, regardless of the subject, specialism or age range they will teach or the type of school they will work in.

The project aim was to provide information on best policy and practice to support the development of teacher education for inclusion. This would take the form of:

− Recommendations for teacher education institutions;

− Recommendations for policy makers;

− Examples of innovative practice.

As Agency member countries also requested information on the competences, attitudes and standards required for all teachers working in inclusive settings, a key output from the project will be a profile of inclusive teachers based upon national level information, but agreed upon at the European level. More information is provided in section 1.1.

This report sets out the project methodology and background context for teacher education for inclusion across Europe. It provides summary information gathered from the country reports submitted by the participating countries, listed in the Foreword. Although 25 countries took part in the project, 29 reports were submitted, including individual reports from the Flemish and French speaking communities of Belgium and the four jurisdictions of the United Kingdom – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

1.1 The approach taken in the Agency Teacher Education for Inclusion project

Following a review of international policy documents and research literature since the year 2000 (both available from: http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/teacher-education-for-inclusion), an initial survey of Agency member countries was conducted on key issues and challenges associated with teacher education for inclusion. More detailed information regarding policy and practice was then gathered via a questionnaire to nominated experts in participating countries**.**

An initial kick-off meeting was held in Dublin in October 2009 and a further full project meeting was held in Zürich in September 2010. Both meetings, in addition to valuable opportunities for networking, supported the participation of all country experts in project planning and the drafting of project outputs.

Study visits to 5 countries were undertaken in 2010 and a further 9 visits in 2011. These visits made a valuable contribution to the project by providing opportunities for debate about key issues and, in particular competences for 'inclusive' teachers among country experts and policy makers. Full details of all the country study visits can be found at: http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/teacher-education-for-inclusion/country-study-visits

The project has been supported by a Project Advisory Group of Agency Representative Board members and National Co-ordinators, Agency staff and an external consultant, Kari Nes from Norway. An extended Project Advisory Group also met throughout the project with representatives from the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG-EAC), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (OECD-CERI) and UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) to ensure consistency with other European and international initiatives in this area of work.

1.1.1 Project outputs

In addition to the policy and research literature reviews mentioned above, the project outputs include:

− Reports on teacher education for inclusion from 29 countries. All these reports are available to download from: http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/teacher-education-for-inclusion/country-info. The country reports are also presented in a consistent format to allow searching across countries by specific themes.

− A 'matrix' document linking evidence from the project directly to the project recommendations made in this, the project synthesis report. The matrix document draws on information from the literature and policy reviews, country reports and study visits and cross references this evidence with the recommendations presented in the final chapters of this report. This is available from: http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/teacher-education-for-inclusion

− A *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* developed during the project as a result of research, country information and in particular, discussions with project experts and stakeholders during study visits. The 9 study visits in 2011 were used specifically to validate and verify the content of the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers*.

The Profile provides a framework of areas of competence applicable to any teacher education programme (i.e. not specific to age, phase, sector or any delivery route or method). The areas of competence should be developed during Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and used as a foundation for later professional development. The profile is based on agreed core values that are seen as essential for all

teachers working in inclusive education, taking responsibility for all learners. The areas of competence are:

– Valuing learner diversity: difference is considered a resource and an asset to education;

– Supporting all learners: teachers have high expectations for all learners' achievements;

– Working with others: collaboration and teamwork are essential approaches for all teachers;

– Personal professional development: teaching is a learning activity – teachers take responsibility for their lifelong learning.

Attitudes and beliefs, knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities are set out for each area of competence. The profile is intentionally broad to enable countries to adapt it to relevant local contexts, following debate with a full range of stakeholders.

More information on the Profile can be found on the project web area: http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/teacher-education-for-inclusion

Finally, the project has lead to the development of this synthesis report, which draws upon all sources of project information in order the present key findings relating to Teacher Education for Inclusion across Europe.

1.2 Project synthesis report on teacher education for inclusion

The Agency project team were aware that the EURYDICE Eurybase reports provide a comprehensive source of information on education at the European level, including information on initial teacher education. The EURYDICE Eurybase reports can be found at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php

Country teams made up of Agency Representative Board members and National Co-ordinators, along with country experts, completed a questionnaire to provide information on teacher education for inclusion that further develops rather than duplicates the Eurybase information. The respondents were asked to comment on the definition of inclusion and national policy and principles that particularly impact on teacher education for inclusion in their country. They also included information on and innovative examples of current policy and practice in the specific area of teacher education

for inclusion. The questionnaire can be seen in the Teacher Education for Inclusion (TE4I) project web area at: http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/teacher-education-for-inclusion/annexes

This country information has been the main source of evidence in the preparation of this synthesis report. However, due to the varying contexts and different understandings of inclusive education, the information from the country reports is primarily used in this report to highlight common ground and key issues, and to provide some analysis of any differences that occur in order to learn from these and show possible ways forward. It should be noted that, due to recent reforms in higher education across Europe, most countries have recently undergone – or are currently undergoing – significant change at the time the survey was completed.

1.2.1 Report objectives

The objectives of this report are to:

− Provide a synthesis of national level trends, similarities and differences with relevant contextual information and supporting information from other project strands – the literature reviews and country study visits;

− Identify key issues and common challenges for policy makers and initial teacher education (ITE) institutions in moving towards teacher education for inclusion within different national policy contexts;

− Disseminate information about innovations and approaches to overcoming barriers to changing policy and practice for teacher education;

− Identify recommendations for initial teacher education and for wider education policy, underpinned by evidence from European and national level information and project research.

1.2.2 Country examples of practice

Many countries have provided examples of practice in teacher education that have been drawn upon in this synthesis report to illustrate key points. As practice varies within countries, these examples do not necessarily represent definitive or consistent country practice.

Some stand-alone examples are presented in text boxes, as vignettes in chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6 to show innovative approaches to initial teacher education. They aim to stimulate thinking in moving towards teacher education which effectively prepares all new teachers to meet diverse needs in today's classrooms. Shorter examples of country practice are included throughout the main text.

1.2.3 Report structure

Throughout the report, the term 'learners' is generally used to refer to children and young people of school age and the term 'student teacher' or 'ITE student' to refer to those currently engaged in teacher education. The term 'teacher education' is used in preference to 'teacher training' to reflect the need for teachers to engage in study and reflection to develop underpinning knowledge and understanding and support the development of skills.

The next section of this report discusses some of the common challenges identified by member countries and by recent European and international literature. The report then provides a summary of country practice in teacher education for inclusion, including key features, curriculum content, assessment, information about teacher educators and competences. The analysis of findings throughout the report is summarised in a section on key issues and challenges before making recommendations for addressing these in order to strengthen teacher education for inclusion.

2. EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION – THE 'INCLUSION' DEBATE

This chapter outlines some of the common challenges faced by countries in moving towards more inclusive education systems and, in particular, key issues in developing more inclusive teacher education.

Many countries now use the term 'inclusion' in relation to a far wider range of learners vulnerable to exclusion than those identified as having special educational needs (SEN). The 48th session of the International Conference on Education (ICE) (2008) recommended that policy makers should acknowledge that: 'inclusive education is an on-going process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination' (UNESCO-IBE 2008, p. 3).

However, a key issue raised in recent literature as well as in project country reports is that of terminology. Ainscow and colleagues (2006) acknowledging the complexity of this issue, developed the following typology of six ways of thinking about inclusion which are all evident to varying degrees, in the project country reports:

- Inclusion as a concern with disabled students and others categorised as 'having special educational needs';

- Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusion;

- Inclusion in relation to all groups being vulnerable to exclusion;

- Inclusion as developing the school for all;

- Inclusion as 'Education for all';

- Inclusion as a principled approach to education and society.

Haug (2003) suggests that there are two levels of definition – one concerning ideology and value-orientation and a second dealing with how these influence educational practice (that is increasing fellowship, participation, democratisation and providing benefit for all).

While many countries are moving towards the notion of a 'school for all', others continue to focus attention primarily on learners with

disabilities and special educational needs and those whose behaviour may cause disruption in the classroom. The use of the term 'integration' also continues in a number of countries, with its connection to discussions primarily about the placement of learners in special or mainstream schools. The country report from Hungary reports on a recent debate about whether inclusion means all learners 'being under the same roof' in a common school, or being engaged in a 'common learning endeavour' resulting in inclusion therefore being compatible with specialist settings.

A minority of countries are beginning to replace categories linked to special educational needs and disability with ideas of barriers to learning and participation. Norwich (2010) states that the term 'special educational needs' was introduced to move away from deficit categories and increase the focus on what was required to provide learning opportunities and support learning. However, despite increased attention to the assessment context and learning environment, the focus on negative labelling often remains. This debate is not new. In 1993, Ayers stated: 'In the human-centred act of teaching, all attempts to define categories lower our sights, misdirect our vision and mislead our intentions. Labels … offer a single lens concentrated on a specific deficit when what we need are multiple ways of seeing a child's ever-changing strengths' (p. 228).

Naukkarinen (2010) points out that teachers must see learners as having 'multiple intelligences and learning styles along many dimensions, rather than belonging to a category' (p. 190). This understanding allows the development of a 'continuum of support services' model rather than a special education model based on categorisation and specialisation. An emphasis on participation as well as learning is needed, moving away from the withdrawal of learners from the classroom for specialist input aimed at 'fixing' difficulties. Pijl (2010) suggests that such medical model thinking, including the provision of specialist training for teachers can, in itself, lead to an increase in referrals to special education, as does teachers' lack of confidence and competence in meeting diverse learners' needs. However, the need to replace 'compensatory' support with reform of teaching and learning and attention to the environment in order to increase the capacity of schools to respond to diversity is being recognised more widely.

Sliwka (2010) describes the paradigm shift from homogeneity through heterogeneity to diversity – terminology also increasingly in use across Europe. In this scenario, difference is firstly not acknowledged, then seen as a challenge to be dealt with, then finally seen as an asset or opportunity. Under the first paradigm (homogeneity), learners are perceived to be similar and treated the same. Under the second (heterogeneity) adjustments are made for learner differences while under the third (diversity), differences are seen as a resource for individual and mutual learning and development. In the country reports, nine countries use the term 'heterogeneous' or 'heterogeneity' and while still more use the term 'diversity', this change in terminology however, does not always reflect a change in thinking.

It is important to agree consistent terminology within, and if possible, between countries in order to support a move towards greater inclusion in education and in wider European society. It is also essential that the underpinning ideology associated with the terms used is widely understood, for example, language that supports the move from a 'charitable' view of disability towards a human rights approach. The issue of terminology is discussed in more depth in chapter 8 of this report.

To achieve consistency in terminology and secure a holistic approach to policy-making, wide debate is needed to achieve some agreement between key stakeholder groups on the guiding values and principles. Arnesen and colleagues (2009) say that in education, inclusion policies have been associated with the following broader values and principles:

− Access and quality;

− Equity and social justice;

− Democratic values and participation;

− Balance between (comm)unity and diversity.

Policy uncertainties about inclusion arise as efforts are made to take account of diverse values and resolve the dilemma around commonality (meeting the needs of all children and promoting belonging and acceptance) and differentiation (responding to individual needs) voiced by Minnow (1990): 'When does treating people differently emphasise their differences and stigmatise or

hinder them on that basis? And when does treating people the same become insensitive to their difference and likely to stigmatise or hinder them on that basis?' (p. 20)

This issue also impacts on where learners should be taught, what (curriculum content) they should be exposed to and how (pedagogy) they should be taught. These tensions are discussed further in chapter 8.

However, it must be acknowledged that there is a group of young people with very complex needs who are always likely to require support. In such cases, the imperative for inclusive education is to develop independence to the fullest extent possible and ensure that all young people have experience of fulfilling relationships to enable the development of support networks within local communities.

With regard to children and young people with disabilities, the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* is providing a force for change, but while many countries have signed and ratified the Convention – and the EU itself has signed both the Convention and the Optional Protocol (see: http://www.un.org/disabilities/ for further information) – the wide variation across Europe in interpretations of 'inclusive education' and what this means in practice remain.

Article 24 of the Convention states that inclusive education provides the best educational environment for children with disabilities and helps break down barriers and challenge stereotypes. The convention emphasises the need to train all teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms – a conclusion supported by many other communications at European level that recognise the increasing diversity in today's classrooms.

The recent *Council Conclusions on the Social Dimension of Education and Training* (Council of Ministers, 2010) note that education and training systems across Europe need to ensure both equity and excellence and recognise that improving educational attainment and key competences for all are crucial, not only to economic growth and competitiveness but also to reducing poverty and fostering social inclusion. This highlights the importance of holistic policies that foster collaboration between agencies and ensure consistency across all areas of work. As Garcia-Huidobro (2005) points out, equity must be at the centre of general policy

decisions and not limited to peripheral policies oriented to correct the effects of general policies that are not in tune with a logic of justice or prevention.

The OECD (2007) highlighted two dimensions of equity in education – fairness, which implies ensuring that personal and social circumstances should not be an obstacle to achieving educational potential, and inclusion, which implies ensuring a basic minimum standard of education for all. The OECD states that inclusive education is desirable because:

−   There is a human rights imperative for people to be able to develop their capacities and participate fully in society. The long-term social and financial costs of educational failure are high.

−   Those without the skills to participate socially and economically generate higher costs for health, income support, child welfare and security.

−   Increased migration poses new challenges for social cohesion in some countries while other countries face long-standing issues of integrating minorities. Equity in education enhances social cohesion and trust.

A fitting conclusion to this chapter is provided by Barton (1997) who writes: 'Inclusive education is about responding to diversity; it is about listening to unfamiliar voices, being open, empowering all members and about celebrating "difference" in dignified ways' (p. 234).

The remainder of this report aims to discuss the key issues in developing teacher education to equip the profession with the skills, knowledge and understanding, attitudes and values to fulfil such aspirations. Further information on all the vignettes and examples included in the following chapters can be found in the individual country reports available at: http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/teacher-education-for-inclusion/country-info

3. FEATURES OF INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

This section will highlight key features of teacher education for inclusion in Agency member countries and provide some analysis on the structure and content of initial teacher education courses.

3.1 Structure of initial teacher education

One of the key priorities for teacher education identified by respondents at the start of the study included the need to review the structure to improve teacher education for inclusion and to merge the education of mainstream and special education teachers. The changing role of teachers is increasingly acknowledged, emphasising the need for significant changes in the way teachers are prepared for their professional roles and responsibilities. The report from Lithuania states: 'The knowledge society will change the role of a teacher: the holder of knowledge will be replaced by the organiser of the learning process, creator of learning opportunities, learning adviser, partner, mediator between the learner and different modern sources of information' (p. 4).

Information from the country reports shows that there is a wide range of initial teacher education courses of varying lengths and contents. Although the Bologna reforms of higher education in Europe have led to growing formal consistency, the length of initial teacher education courses currently varies between 2 and 5.5 years. The majority of countries however require a 3 or 4-year Bachelor's degree course with a minority extending this to a 4 or 5-year Master's programme (e.g. Finland, Portugal, Iceland, France, Spain). This is clearly a positive development in terms of both the status of teachers and the increased time for relevant study and practice – bearing in mind that more inclusive approaches cannot be achieved simply by 'bolting on' additional content.

The two main models of initial teacher education are the 'concurrent', in which both the school 'subjects' and the knowledge and skills needed to teach them are studied at the same time, and the 'consecutive' in which education in a higher education institution (HEI) in one or more school 'subjects' is followed by a separate course involving pedagogy, didactics, classroom practice, etc.

It is interesting to note that Spain is moving from a degree plus a short 'educational update' course for secondary teachers to Master's level training due to concern about the drop-out rate from secondary education. In France, a move is also planned from a 'consecutive' to a 'concurrent' model. In Germany, teacher education is divided into two stages, a course of higher education plus pedagogy and didactics that take place in training schools.

In some countries, teacher education takes place in HEIs that do not have university status but are able to award degrees. However, France has recently moved all teacher education into universities and moved to Master's level courses with a greater emphasis on the academic content. The course structure, content and amount of time spent on school placement differ across countries and these issues will be explored in the following sections of this report.

A small number of countries are developing 'fast track' models or employment-based training. The 'Teach First' Programme in UK (England) provides leadership development and transferable skills for 'high calibre, highly motivated graduates' over a two-year programme. A similar programme is being developed in Germany, Estonia and Latvia. The majority of courses however, follow a traditional model of full time attendance at college with periods of teaching practice in school.

The increasing use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in web-based and 'blended' learning courses (where a mix of methods is used) has the potential to increase the flexibility of courses as well as impact on content of all courses. Distance learning and e-learning are also being introduced in particular where geographical location and sparse population make travel to college difficult or viable teaching groups hard to achieve. The potential of such developments to improve the accessibility of training and increase the diversity of the teacher workforce should be explored.

3.1.1 Entry requirements

For entry to initial teacher education, all countries require a satisfactory leaving certificate from upper secondary education or an equivalent in terms of grades in higher level examinations. Lithuania has recently introduced a 'motivational test' to support the selection of teacher candidates. A minority of countries have tests to regulate entry to the teaching profession but recent research by Menter and

colleagues (2010) highlights evidence showing that there are many dimensions of effective teaching that are not reliably predicted by tests of academic ability. This conclusion is certainly supported by the project literature review and country reports, as both highlight the importance of attitudes, values and beliefs in addition to knowledge and skills in developing inclusive practice. These, together with dispositions that support the development of the required competences are difficult to ascertain even through an interview situation and further research is needed into methods of selecting of teacher candidates.

Even in countries where teaching is a high status occupation and there is greater competition for places, such as Finland, there is no guarantee that the most able candidates in academic terms will become the most effective teachers. Account needs to be taken of candidates' prior experiences of working with learners with diverse needs and their reflections upon these, together with references from experienced personnel regarding some of the dispositions that are critical in inclusive practice.

Entry requirements are increasingly flexible for mature entrants and people with disabilities and relevant prior learning may be taken into account for such applicants. However, some country reports raise a concern about entry criteria discriminating against certain minority groups at a time when it is generally agreed that the make up of the teaching force should more closely reflect that of the population as a whole.

Article 24 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006) requires State Parties to 'take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille' (p. 15). Some countries (e.g. Cyprus, Germany, France, Ireland, Sweden) state that they are actively trying to address this issue.

3.1.2 Representation from minority groups

Only 7 out of 29 country reports provide information based on formally collected data about the number of students and teachers from minority groups. In some countries, there are restrictions on the collection of data, particularly around sexual orientation.

Most countries that do not collect data report anecdotally on the under-representation of people with disabilities and those from

minority ethnic groups among student teachers and qualified teachers and the situation appears to be similar among teacher educators.

Efforts are being made in some countries to increase the number of men entering, in particular, primary teaching and to increase diversity among the teacher workforce. However, while it is widely recognised that the provision of appropriate role models is an important aspect of developing inclusive practice, a great deal of work is required to remove the barriers presented by the selection process in many countries.

3.2 Content of initial teacher education

In a small number of countries the content of teacher education courses is determined by legislation. A second group of countries set out standards/broad competences but leave decisions regarding the course content to individual colleges. A third group of countries leave content entirely to the discretion of colleges. This inevitably leads to variations not only between but also within countries. A growing trend is to involve the teacher education students themselves in course development.

In most countries, courses consist of a combination of a main subject and subsidiary subjects, general education studies – including pedagogy, psychology, philosophy etc., and periods of teaching practice. Content usually varies according to the age of learners the student wishes to teach and many countries report that courses for secondary teachers are more subject focused while those for primary teachers include a greater emphasis on pedagogy.

Several countries acknowledge that there is insufficient time to cover all the content considered to be necessary in initial teacher education courses. As the report from Malta points out, this makes the introduction of any 'additional' content to address inclusion and diversity difficult, particularly in secondary teacher preparation.

A move towards a model where relevant content is incorporated into all courses and coherent links are made across courses within institutions may help to improve this situation.

Work in the UK (Scotland) has suggested that training for teachers of all learners should be merged regardless of the target age group. While this supports the view that teachers should, first and foremost,

be teachers of children – not 'deliverers' of curriculum content – the idea may be contested by some subject specialists.

A recent survey completed for this project showed that less than 50% of the 43 German universities with teacher education programmes for primary school teachers offered lectures or seminars which focus on inclusion/inclusive education. Similarly, a small-scale study in Lithuania showed that only 31% of universities and colleges engaged in teacher education included some content on special needs education/inclusion – and most of these were primary courses.

Denmark along with several other countries identifies with the dilemma expressed in the country report for Sweden, which states that issues around diversity and inclusion are still most often discussed during special needs courses, rather than by all teacher educators in all general courses. The authors recognise that there may be a danger in incorporating inclusion issues into all courses with the risk that the impact is reduced or the focus lost entirely. They recognise that the pedagogical implications of different disabilities require some specialist input. However, evidence from the literature and the weight of opinion among project experts suggests that, in the longer term, the aim should be to develop single courses to prepare all teachers to meet the full range of diverse needs.

The report from Spain points out that many courses on inclusion are linked to 'the evolution of special needs education and school integration of SEN', rather than tackling diversity issues more broadly and this is in agreement with Gultig (1999) quoted in the project literature review, who states that teacher education tends to get caught in the trap of focussing on detail, for example teaching about human rights, rather than taking a human rights approach. However, Haug (2003) points out that lecturers and students need to be acquainted with the arguments and solutions tried and rejected in the move towards a school for all, if they are not to be 'tricked by populist political rhetoric' (p. 111).

3.2.1 Assessment

As more active teaching methods are introduced in initial teacher education, the ways in which both academic requirements and teaching/school practice are assessed must also change. Increasingly, teacher education students are involved in the assessment of their own work and learning as well as that of their

peers. Assessment takes places across both academic assignments and school practice with 'assessment for learning' approaches that encourage student teachers to reflect on their own work and performance and, with support as needed, formulate their own targets for improvement and plans for future learning. Harris and Lázár (2011) stress the importance of guided reflection and say: 'It will be difficult to offer any challenge without knowing where trainees/teachers "are at"' (p. 105).

Hattie (2009) also highlights the importance of knowing about student teachers' understanding in order to provide progressive challenges. Such approaches in teacher education institutions will, in turn provide a good model for more inclusive assessment practice in schools.

Several countries (e.g. France, Malta, UK (Northern Ireland)) use portfolios as a way of gathering information and reporting on student teachers' progress in all areas of competence. Portfolios that include examples of work and reflections on study and practice experiences can focus on areas of work (such as the 'softer skills' acquired during teaching practice) that may be harder to assess through more formal assignments or tests/examinations. Portfolios can lead student teachers to ask the 'why' questions and engage in deeper, critical thinking. However, such assessment methods may be more labour intensive and will call for new and different skills, knowledge and experience from teacher educators.

In the next section, the different approaches to teacher education for inclusion are discussed with reference to examples of practice from the country reports.

3.3 Approaches to initial teacher education

The main approaches to initial teacher education, identified by Pugach and Blanton (2009) will be used in this section. These include 'discrete' courses or separate programmes; 'integrated' courses developed through collaboration between general and special education faculties and staff, and 'merged' courses in which the initial education of all teachers equips them with skills, knowledge and attitudes to take responsibility for and meet the needs of all learners. In moving towards 'merged' provision, an appropriate step may be to include some content in separate modules (discrete courses) or take an integrated approach, increasing opportunities for

staff collaboration. Any such steps will require careful management to consider for example, appropriate time allocation for courses and how links can best be made to ensure that 'discrete' content impacts on wider thinking and practice.

An overview of the 29 country reports submitted shows that less than 10% of countries offer a specialism in SEN during initial teacher education. Most countries do now include some content on meeting the needs of different learners but this varies widely from a focus on SEN and disability, to an emphasis on meeting the diverse needs of all learners. As the terminology used also varies, it is difficult to establish an accurate picture, but the majority of countries report that such content in ITE is often 'ad hoc' and usually stand-alone with little integration into other study areas. Regarding time allocation, content relating to inclusion also varies from one or more modules to a substantial and sometimes compulsory part of the course.

In Iceland, a study of initial teacher education carried out for this project in early 2010, grouped over 200 courses into five different types:

• Inclusive education is the main content: These are courses about inclusive education; building on ideas of inclusive education and the main content is inclusive practices. Two courses were found in this group.

• Inclusive education to a certain extent: These are courses that integrate the idea of inclusive education and it is part of the course content. Ten courses were found in this group.

• Inclusive education is indirect: The course builds on diversity in many different ways although inclusive education is rarely or never mentioned. Twenty courses were found in this group.

• No inclusive education: There is no indication in the description of the course content that there is an emphasis on diverse population, inclusive, multicultural education or learners with special needs. Most courses in teacher education are in this group.

• Special educational needs or multicultural education: The content in these courses is special; some introduce disabilities or specific learning needs others focus on multi-culturalism. Two courses were found.

The vignette from Iceland illustrates a range of possible ways to address inclusion/diversity issues and suggests that these models are better seen as a continuum, rather than distinct approaches.

Further research is needed to establish the impact of different models on the coherence of the curriculum and the development of knowledge and skills and it is also worth considering the impact that collaboration between faculties and general and specialist teacher educators has on teacher educators' attitudes and beliefs about including all learners. It may be that some teacher educators adhere to their 'traditional' views of teacher education and any courses attempting to address inclusion and diversity issues remain 'bolt on' with limited impact on the thinking of staff or teacher education students. However, some countries report that discrete courses do help to raise awareness of possible inequalities in school and provide opportunities for discussion on relevant issues.

It may sometimes be difficult to make judgements about content, due to the language used. In Austria, although most colleges cover the topics of heterogeneity, inclusion, individualisation, the promotion of gifted learners and project-oriented and learner-centred methods in general teacher education, the term 'inclusion' is used in the curricula of only four colleges. In Denmark, the term 'differentiation' is commonly used.

This point is also illustrated by the Swiss national recommendations on the SEN content of initial teacher education (COHEP, 2008). These go beyond the traditional view of SEN/disability and include: basic questions of SEN; diversity questions; teaching in inclusive settings; collaborative practice and school development and organisational development towards inclusion. This content should cover 5 % of both primary education and secondary programmes.

3.3.1 Discrete and integrated courses

Several countries have introduced courses or modules designed to support inclusive practice. Although many are currently separate courses, most do involve collaboration between college faculties or staff and reinforce certain ideas or concepts across courses. For this reason, it is easier to view these models as a continuum, as stated above and this section therefore describes both discrete and integrated models. This is illustrated by the following example from Spain:

The Autonomous Madrid University has developed a core 6 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) course called 'Psycho-pedagogical Bases for Inclusive Education' taught in the second half of the Primary Education Teaching Degree. This course adopts a perspective based on the concept of 'diversity' and not of the care of a particular group of learners and is specifically planned to reinforce concepts, procedures and inclusive educational values in the course Education for Equality and Citizenship (6 ECTS).

The course is organised around the three dimensions shown in the definition of inclusive education established by UNESCO (2005): presence, learning and participation and focuses on, in particular, learners with SEN and immigrant learners. The content includes the principles of Universal Design for Learning (CAST 2008) and overcoming barriers to meaningful learning.

The teaching methods adopted for the development of the subject try to be consistent with the approach itself and also develop in teacher education students a sense of responsibility for their own learning. They write a learning diary during the course and maintain an e-portfolio. The whole teaching and learning process is supported by the use of an e-learning platform in Moodle to encourage participation linked to their individual learning process.

Three assessment benchmarks have been established: one related to 'knowledge' (reflected in their coursework, tests and evaluations), another one related to 'knowing how to do and organise' (reflected in the quality of their e-portfolio, and the compliance with the responsibility to agreed work or test deadlines), and finally, one connected to 'knowing how to be and to participate in class' (reflected in their active participation in discussions in person or virtually through the forum).

Similarly, a consortium of Universities around the Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres (IUFM) in Paris offers a course called 'Multi-referenced approaches to the diversity of the public' lasting 80 hours across 2 years. At Borås University College in Sweden, included within the framework of general education studies is a course of 7.5 ECTS called 'special needs education perspectives'; this course aims to provide a basic understanding of the role of special needs education in 'a school for all'. Questions of inclusion/exclusion and normality/difference are discussed and the

relevance of 'special needs' skills for all teachers considered. In Latvia, all ITE students have an introductory course in special education. The following vignette from UK (Northern Ireland) describes a programme designed to support teachers working with learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

To address the 'new' demands on teachers in relation to their understanding of different cultural and religious differences and the challenges posed by working with learners for whom English is not their first language, one of the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers in UK (Northern Ireland) developed a programme made up of two sections: understanding diversity and working with English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners.

The programme is delivered via a series of lectures, seminars and workshops by college staff with some outside speakers. The competences developed relate to professional values (commitment to all learners), social, cultural and linguistic contexts, special education and inclusion and professional skills and application (planning and preparation, working with other adults, promoting a safe and challenging learning environment and employing a range of teaching strategies and assessment).

In Germany, the University of Köln offers courses in inclusive education, where mainstream and special education teacher education students work 'in tandem' to reflect on school visits, course work and assessments. A similarly co-operative approach is taken at Siegen University. Here, in the course 'Grundschule-Forderschule – Gemeinsamer Unterricht' (Primary school – Special school – Inclusive education), primary and secondary teacher education students can visit a range of special and mainstream settings, consider the perspectives of staff from a range of professions and co-operate in seminars and discussions.

In Norway, a new compulsory 60 ECTS course has been introduced called 'Pedagogy and Pupil-related Skills' (PPS). This course is distributed over the first three years of ITE and aims to develop subject knowledge, methodological competence and skills in addressing relational and social issues. Additionally, the students write a bachelor thesis (15 ECTS) related to topics relevant to the PPS.

In the example below, ITE students work with people with disabilities and develop resources to use with local schools.

At the Department of Education of the University of Cyprus, ITE students are presented with the theoretical framework of Disability Studies. They are encouraged to draw connections with the inclusive education agenda in order to develop teaching practices that accommodate disability culture and target the development of positive attitudes towards disability.

As disability culture is absent from the national curriculum and the school textbooks, the course encourages teachers to think critically and combine the theoretical framework with their teaching skills in order to develop intervention programmes at school level to develop positive attitudes and promote the social model rather than the medical or charity model of disability.

In this module, work from people with disabilities is presented and analysed in terms of its potential use as a resource for teaching. Occasionally, people with disabilities are invited for in-class discussion about their lives and their work. Teacher education students are asked to build networks with organisations for people with disabilities to gather resources and work with local schools in order to implement their intervention programme. This module forms part of the specialisation route for primary school student teachers.

Research suggests that separate units or modules of content on learners with SEN and other minority groups can reinforce the 'difference' of learners. This, in turn, may lead teachers to believe that they are not able to teach certain groups of learners unless they have taken specialist courses. However, many countries report that such courses do have a positive impact on skills, knowledge and attitudes, which 'carries over' into other courses and into students' practical work.

The following example from Switzerland uses e-learning to develop a range of relevant skills and knowledge.

The 'Learning Arena: Inclusive Special Education (LAISE)' at the Zürich University of Teacher Education is an optional course that combines problem based learning (PBL) and blended learning to offer realistic learning contexts for ITE students. On the e-learning platform cases of learners with SEN in inclusive settings are provided

in the form of documents, descriptions, videos and interviews. Student teachers take the role of a school team working with the learner and have the task of developing an individual educational plan and adequate measures to support the learner in school. The ITE students and teacher educators acting as 'coaches' discuss and evaluate the results together. This course develops knowledge of: SEN, co-operation and collaboration, diagnostics and assessment for learning, individual educational planning, differentiation and individualisation of teaching.

In Germany, the integrated special education Bachelor and Master Course at University of Bielefeld was developed to overcome the strict separation between general professional education and special education. The field of special education is integrated into the course of study 'educational science'. It is taught through an interdisciplinary comparison of different perspectives and includes discussion of heterogeneity, diversity and difference. The integrated special education programme focuses on learning and emotional and social development and aims to prepare teachers for 'schools for all children'.

3.3.2 Merged courses

A number of countries are working to ensure that content relevant to inclusive education is included throughout all of their courses.

In Finland, the foundations of special needs education are compulsory in all teacher education, although content varies between different universities. In general, discussions are held about recognising and naming differences and related pedagogical practices and teachers are made aware of their professional duty to enhance both cognitive and social skills. Teachers are expected to develop the competences for multi-agency work, to co-operate with and support parents and be aware of their role in enhancing equality in society. Finally, they learn to implement the curriculum for diverse learners, following the principles of universal design. Teacher education as a whole is based on the idea of teachers as researchers, supported to reflect, analyse and then adjust their teaching as a continuous process.

In UK (Northern Ireland), the ITE curriculum aims to build upon the student teacher's attributes, inform their knowledge and understanding of SEN policy and best practice and develop their

capacity to work with learners of all abilities. A merged approach is taken whereby in all ITE courses, students are encouraged to consider the individual needs of all learners and to plan accordingly. In addition, a more explicit consideration of policy and practice issues surrounding SEN is delivered in specific courses and modules.

The literature suggests that the merged approach requires careful planning and collaboration between faculties if it is to be coherent and effective. How HEIs might move towards such an approach is described in the example below outlining work undertaken in UK (Scotland).

The University of Aberdeen was funded by the Scottish Executive (2006–10) to develop new approaches to the education of teachers for inclusive education and ensure that newly qualified teachers: (1) have a greater awareness and understanding of the educational and social problems/issues that can affect children's learning; and (2) have developed strategies they can use to support and deal with such difficulties. This work takes account of the broader concept of educational inclusion and the exclusionary pressures associated with migration, mobility, language, ethnicity and intergenerational poverty.

The ITE course reforms at Aberdeen have been driven by three key concepts: (1) the understanding that the challenge of inclusive practice is to respect and respond to human differences in ways that include rather than exclude learners in what is ordinarily available to others in the daily life of the classroom. Such an understanding is apparent when (2) the teacher works to extend what is ordinarily available to all, as opposed to doing something 'additional' or 'different' from that which is available to others. This is a complex pedagogical endeavour that depends on (3) a shift in thinking about teaching and learning from that which works for most learners along with something 'additional' or 'different' for those who experience difficulties, to the creation of lessons and learning opportunities that enable all learners to participate in classroom life (Florian and Rouse, 2009). The interrelationship of these three key concepts is expressed in practice as the interaction of teachers' 'knowing', 'doing', and 'believing'. This practical expression maps onto Shulman's (2007) conceptualisation of professional learning as apprenticeships of the head (knowledge), hand (skill, or doing), and heart (attitudes and beliefs).

In practice, these ideas have served as a foundation for the Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) curricular reforms and are also consistent with the content of the four-year Bachelor of Education course. The Inclusive Practice Project approach encourages teacher education students to think broadly about the responsibility they have for children's learning.

The examples above show the development of teacher education for inclusion through courses that aim to increase knowledge and understanding of key issues around inclusion and pedagogy and practice to meet more diverse needs in the classroom. The move along the continuum from the introduction of modules that 'cover' inclusion towards a situation where all ITE students study the same curriculum that will prepare them to include all learners will require an increase in collaborative working between teacher educators with this area of expertise and their colleagues in other faculties. It will also require larger scale reform to ensure that schools linked to HEIs model effective inclusive practice and provide consistency in terms of key messages.

3.4 Attitudes and values in initial teacher education

The importance of attitudes and values in teacher education is an issue raised in many country reports. As Forlin (2010) points out, inclusive education imposes directly on teachers' belief systems, challenging their innermost thoughts about what is right and just.

Ryan (2009) examined the attitudes of pre-service teachers and defined an attitude as a multi-dimensional trait made up of: cognition (beliefs and knowledge) that is believed to influence actions (behaviour) and affect (emotions).

The importance of positive experiences in changing attitudes is raised by a number of countries but while it appears that teacher education can influence attitudes, values and beliefs, few examples are provided in the country reports showing ways to bring about such change. Evidence from all strands of the project does, however, support the view that there is a way of being that is essential to inclusive practice and that cannot be achieved by the transmission of knowledge or ticked off on a list of competences.

At Charles University in Prague, students studying special education combined with other subjects (who will be teachers in mainstream schools) co-operate on the project 'We are living one day through your eyes' ('Jedeme v tom s vámi').

As teacher education for inclusion is more effective when using concrete demonstrations rather than verbal and abstract presentations, student teachers experience travelling by public transport as (a) a person using a wheelchair, and (b) as an assistant to a person with a disability. This develops a range of competences including problem-solving, communication, self-reflection, team work, flexibility and the ability to recognise unethical and otherwise inappropriate attitudes and behaviours in society.

Student teachers become acquainted with the physical and social barriers that people with a disability have to face in everyday life. They become advocates for the rights of people with disabilities based on the written reflections of their experience and can use this 'hands-on' approach when creating an inclusive environment in their future classroom/school.

In Austria, the position paper of the Ministry of Education states:

'It is one of the central tasks of the education of primary and lower secondary school teachers to stimulate them to critically discuss and reflect on their own attitudes and concepts of disability to overcome segregating attitudes.

Every student should get to know the relevant conceptual and operational approaches (paradigms) of special needs education and inclusive education, and their evolution in the historical context. Students shall be inspired to reflect upon the fundamental questions on ethics related to the respective paradigm, and to make deliberate value decisions' (Feyerer, Niedermair and Tuschel 2006, p. 16).

The report from Austria shows that the content and methods used during an interdisciplinary module on 'inclusion' had a positive impact on student teachers' attitudes towards the joint education of learners with and without disabilities. During a self-awareness project at the teacher training college of Salzburg, student teachers also reported sustainable effects on their attitudes towards people with disabilities.

3.5 Summary

This chapter has outlined the trend towards common core content in teacher education courses for teachers of all learners and young people; in particular this may require an increased focus on pedagogy for subject specialists preparing to teach learners in secondary education.

The examples from the country reports show that it is possible to include content which raises awareness among student teachers of the diverse needs of learners – not only those with special educational needs and disabilities – but many others who may be vulnerable to under-achievement and exclusion.

These examples also highlight the need for progression towards greater collaboration within HEIs and further integration of such content across all teacher education courses. The need to provide experiences and opportunities for interaction and discussion to impact on students' attitudes and values is also stressed. As Richardson (1996) suggests, attitudes and beliefs can be compartmentalised in the mind, allowing teachers to present attitudes that support social justice and equality of opportunity while showing contradictory actions in the classroom. This stresses the importance of being clear about the ideas and beliefs of student teachers and of addressing any tensions between these and their developing practice.

4. TEACHING PRACTICE

Teaching practice is a key component of initial teacher education, but the amount of time that student teachers spend in schools varies across countries. Some countries are moving towards a more practice based model of training while others are concerned that such an approach can lead to 'teachers as technicians' lacking the academic rigour supplied by HEI based courses.

Practice also varies with regard to how school placements for teaching practice are found. A small number of countries use a centralised system while others allow student teachers to find their own placements. In Iceland, for example, ITE students attend the same placement for three years, building on their experience, while most other countries encourage students to gain experience of a variety of schools and settings.

In UK (England), the national inspection agency, Ofsted (2008) identified the variability of school placements as the key to the quality of initial teacher education. Many countries report difficulties in finding sufficient high-quality placements, in particular placements modelling inclusive practice, and this represents a major barrier to the effective integration of theory and practice.

In order to provide opportunities to work directly with learners with diverse needs, some countries use placements in special schools or in the local community. Other countries supplement school practice with a range of simulated experiences as in the following example.

In Latvia, as opportunities for tackling complex practical situations may be limited by the student teacher's role on teaching practice, the skills of evaluating, making decisions and responding to a given situation are developed through role play and case study analysis work. ITE students express their reaction to the facts and try to analyse the situation from different points of view by searching for the arguments and underpinning actions of all sides involved. Everybody has the opportunity to discuss their opinions and justify their position.

For example, the following situation may be discussed:

A mother of an 8 year-old boy with a hearing impairment who uses a wheelchair arrives in the mainstream school in April asking for a

school place in September. The student teachers decide what people (teachers, parents, headmaster, social workers, other professionals) should be involved and what questions should be asked in order to meet the educational needs of the child. The ITE students need to consider possible difficulties and appropriate solutions for the child, the parents, the school and the classmates and also the educational environment and physical access for the child.

This process helps student teachers to revise their acquired knowledge about different disabilities and diverse educational needs of students. They improve their skills of conflict resolution, decision-making, substantiating their point of view and teamwork – how to involve other professionals. Importantly, they come to understand that the teacher alone cannot solve all problems and do everything; he/she must know where to ask for help and not be ashamed to do so.

While on teaching practice, student teachers in Spain have 'double tuition': a) at school by a professional tutor who monitors and assesses their work according to standard criteria provided by universities and b) an academic tutor who also monitors the process, promotes reflection on the learning process at school and eventually assesses the student teacher.

A close and positive relationship between HEIs and schools is clearly needed if the maximum benefit is to be gained from school practice. The vignette below, from Finland illustrates this practice.

In the Finnish teacher education, theory and practice are closely aligned. After certain theoretical studies, ITE students go on teaching practice for 5-6 weeks each year. The lecturers of the teacher demonstration school or field teachers and the university lecturers both supervise the student practice to model collaboration between teachers and give a wider point of view about teaching heterogeneous classes. Often, student teachers are also placed with their peers to experience co-teaching first hand. During or after every teaching practice there is usually a pedagogical or didactic seminar at the university, where students reflect on the experiences that they have had in their teaching practice and on their visits to different schools. Reflection is seen as an important part of professional development. The student teachers build up the theory to underpin

their practice piece by piece to become aware of their own educational philosophy and identity as a teacher. This approach supports the view of practice as a two-way process that not only allows student teachers to make sense of knowledge gained during their course but also impacts on their acquisition and use of new theoretical knowledge.

Iceland similarly has introduced the idea of 'associate' schools which take an active part in teacher education by participating in a 'learning community' of school based teachers and HEI tutors. This approach helps teachers to become increasingly aware of what actions they take in different situations and reflect on the reasons why, making the knowledge underlying action more explicit.

At the University of Malta, a 4-ECTS unit on responding to diversity has been introduced, assessed through a project carried out during a 6-week teaching practice. Student teachers are asked to identify a student or group of learners with diverse strengths and needs. They must plan, implement and evaluate four lessons that respond to these diversities and keep a brief reflective journal of the process to be shared with fellow teacher education students. The taught part of the unit provides an introduction to the issues of openness to diversity, the human right for a quality education and differentiated teaching and Individual Educational Planning. ITE students note that they overcome their fear of and develop confidence in working with learners with special needs, who need individualised learning. The course also leads to the successful inclusion of a learner who may otherwise be excluded from his/her class in some way and to improved collaboration with parents and support staff.

This example reinforces the need for integrated approaches where the teacher education institution and placement schools collaborate to support an on-going dialogue on the student teacher's journey over the weeks of teaching practice.

In some teacher education programmes in Lithuania, student teachers have reflective observational practice at the beginning of their studies. They spend a few weeks in different practical placements and have the opportunity to observe, reflect on and discuss different practical situations. Observational practice also takes place in other countries (e.g. Austria, Latvia) and is in line with research from the USA (Darling-Hammond and colleagues, 2005) that suggests that teacher candidates should gain such experience

from the beginning of their programme. Early practice experience can provide a context for theory and help student teachers to see the relevance of such learning.

Some countries set out a plan for the progressive development of skills through school practice during each year of the course.

In Denmark, the 2007 Act on the Training of Teachers for the Danish Folkeskole specifies teaching competences that should be acquired through school practice, over 24 weeks (36 ECTS) during the four-year course. The focus for each year is on:

1 – Teacher identity, school and educational culture;

2 – Goals, content and evaluation of teaching;

3 – Collaboration and learning environment;

4 – Professional teaching.

In Norway, a similar model is used with a focus on specific themes during each teaching practice: Year 1 – The teacher's role and didactics; Year 2 – Student diversity; Years 3 and 4 – The school as an organisation and professional community, co-operation with parents and others.

At Oslo University, a new mandatory course is being introduced in 2011/12. Students take Mathematics, Pedagogy and one additional subject, together with support in ICT. The course is based on the fact that, as schooling at the upper primary level becomes more demanding as far as reading comprehension is concerned, learners with a minority language may become more vulnerable. The course is linked to the students' practical teacher training during four weeks in the spring term.

Before teaching practice, student teachers are given lectures on basic skills in their different subjects. They then develop a lesson plan involving the further development of basic skills directed both towards learners with and without Norwegian as their first language, under supervision from the College staff. Finally, the student teachers carry out their lesson plan in the multicultural classroom, during their school practice with College staff present.

This course develops a broadened understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of 'basic skills', and of the importance of co-

operating with fellow teachers, to enhance the development of basic skills among the learners. ITE students also gain a research-based understanding of how a lack of reading comprehension in different subjects influences the learning outcome for all learners, but especially for those with Norwegian as a second language. An important issue is also to enable teacher students to actively use different linguistic and cultural competences that learners with other linguistic and cultural backgrounds bring to the classroom.

Although the focus here is on basic skills, this example shows an effective way of 'integrating' content across a number of courses/ subject areas to develop a broader understanding of the inter-disciplinary nature of basic skills and the importance of co-operation with fellow teachers.

In the UK (England) resources for use in ITE and professional development are provided by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) http://www.tda.gov.uk/

The materials for ITE include a user guide, information on the pillars of inclusion, film clips and guidance on lesson observation. Resources for the one-year post-graduate programmes include subject-based information and a personal learning task. This compulsory task requires all teachers to work intensively over 6-8 hours with a single learner with an identified learning difficulty/ disability.

The task involves observation, reading records on a learner and planning teaching to carry out under the supervision of the SEN co-ordinator in school and the initial training co-ordinator representing the programme in the placement school.

The competences developed include personalised teaching and learning, developing positive attitudes and building relationships with learners with SEN/disability, practical teaching knowledge and skills. Teacher educators, ITE students and learners involved have all been shown to benefit.

The country reports and the research literature reviewed for the project support the development of a clear conceptual framework that will help students to link theoretical and practical learning. If this is not in place, the school practice may become more influential than learning in the HEI and – given the difficulty in most countries of

finding sufficient quality placements – may not support the development of inclusive practice.

In the UK (Northern Ireland) the academic component of the programme is contextualised in school placement where teacher education students engage in self-reflection and evaluation activities. In their final year teaching practice, student teachers work closely with the classroom teacher, the support teacher and other professionals to get to know one learner and make every effort to include him or her throughout their teaching practice. They document information on the learner's priority learning and support needs and consider the impact of any learning difficulties/disabilities on learning. Targets are planned and practice evaluated. The student teachers report that they find this a challenging but rewarding element of their final year teaching practice and come to realise that even in the absence of experience, expertise and resources it is possible to provide each learner with a welcome and a sense of belonging as a valuable contributing member of the class. The competences developed include: teacher as inclusive practitioner; collaborator; researcher; facilitator of learning; differentiator of practice and assessor, monitor and evaluator.

The level and the nature of support and supervision for student teachers on school practice is also crucial and the examples here highlight the importance of close links between HEIs and practice schools as well as training for school personnel involved in practice supervision. Such steps must be taken to ensure that the messages given during taught classes and theoretical discussions are consistent with those modelled by teachers and senior staff at the practice school.

4.1 Summary

This section has examined the importance of practical school placements for student teachers. As Hagger and Macintyre (2006), state: 'whatever student teachers need to learn to do as teachers in schools for their future careers, it is in schools that they need to learn to do these things' (p. 65).

Although quality inclusive placements may be difficult to organise, the country reports show many examples of innovative practice where carefully planned experiences and quality support for student teachers address the theory to practice gap and provide them with

an opportunity to examine their own beliefs and values and begin to develop the skills necessary to meet diverse needs in the classroom. The importance of larger scale, systemic change to develop more inclusive schools and the need for education and professional development for mentors and school-based supervisors of school practice, as well as teacher educators are also raised. These issues are discussed in the following chapters.

5. TEACHER EDUCATORS

The Report of Peer Learning on the Profession of Teacher Educator (European Commission, June 2010) defines teacher educators as 'all those who actively facilitate the (formal) learning of student teachers and teachers' (p. 3). This includes those involved in Initial Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development.

This definition indicates that teacher educators are a very heterogeneous group. In this project the focus is mainly on teacher educators based in HEIs, although much of the content of this report also applies to school-based teacher educators and those in other settings.

In some countries, HEI-based teacher educators have high academic qualifications (Master's degree or Ph.D) in a relevant subject area. Broad teaching experience, including teaching learners' from diverse backgrounds is increasingly mentioned as an advantage. However, the work of the European Commission peer learning activity shows that many countries have no set requirements for becoming a teacher educator and that this group are only tentatively being brought into line with other academic disciplines.

Snoek, Swenne and van der Klink (2009) analysed policy documents on teacher education on an international level and found limited references to the professionalism of teacher educators. As a consequence, they suggest the development of an induction process and further professional development to enhance the status of teacher educators as a specialised professional group.

Information gathered for the Agency project shows that while in HEIs that offer courses in special needs education, staff may have qualifications and experience in this area of work, such a background is not usually required for teacher educators delivering general courses.

In Austria, teacher educators must have seven years of work experience as a teacher, so that they have gained experience at least in some fields relevant for inclusive education (e.g. behavioural disorders, children and adolescents with a migrant background, gifted children). Other countries specify the need for recent and relevant teaching experience. Such recent teaching experience is perhaps most firmly consolidated by practice in some HEIs where

teacher educators continue to teach in demonstration schools. (e.g. Finland).

The extent to which general teacher educators collaborate with colleagues who have specialisms in the area of SEN/disability or diversity also varies. In most countries, such collaboration is on an informal basis although in some countries such as Malta there are moves to make such links more formal. In some countries, recent appointments in ITE hold qualifications in both general and special education, in an attempt to narrow the gap between these.

Practical barriers are mentioned, for example, when teacher educators do not work together on a daily basis. The geographical location of various courses and the use of physical space may also have an impact. The report from Austria notes that, due to difficulties in financing 'double staffing', many HEIs only offer a limited model of collaboration.

There is wide agreement that all teacher educators need to practice what they preach and move towards a greater range of teaching methods such as those mentioned above. As the report from UK (Northern Ireland) states: 'The pedagogical approaches adopted on ITE courses should promote collaboration, reflection and discussion'.

Boyd and colleagues (2007) suggest that one challenging element for new teacher educators in higher education is moving from a more restrictive learning environment (seen in many schools) to a more expansive learning environment, involving among other things, greater collaboration, opportunities for reflection and personal development and the extension of professional boundaries. For teachers who become teacher educators, Swennen and van der Klink (2009) also state that this is a move to another distinctive profession that in particular, requires competence in second order teaching (i.e. teaching *about* teaching).

Teacher educators should ideally model inclusive practice for student teachers but Burns and Shadoian-Gersing (2010) note that as few of the current generation of teachers and teacher educators have had personal experience of inclusive settings during their own education, this may be problematic.

The authors of the Spanish report also believe that the teaching methods that will have the greatest impact on future teachers' education with regard to the improvement of their inclusive practice

are those where HEI teachers apply the same principles and implement methodologies for inclusion. For example:

− Showing acceptance and respect for differences among their students as an enriching factor of their teaching.

− Being aware of each student's starting point, assessing what they know about the topics that they will be working with before providing new learning experiences or addressing the appropriate contents.

− Encouraging an active and participative learning experience, which takes into account the diversity of skills, ways of learning and motivation of the students.

− Promoting the possibility of diversifying teaching contents, empowering students to choose, and use different ways of expressing the learning achieved.

− Diversifying the methods of assessment, gathering different evidence on student teacher's progress and performance.

− Practising collaborative and co-operative work among students, while making explicit the accountability of individual students for their own progress.

− Using information technology and communication to facilitate access and participation of student teachers.

− Explicitly enabling values and ethics related to the right of all to a quality education.

− Supporting at all times and with different procedures, critical reflection on beliefs and attitudes towards diversity and how to address it in inclusive settings.

The country report for Iceland similarly highlights the need for teacher educators to walk the walk by teaching and working in the ways they would like their student teachers to teach and offering a variety of approaches to inclusive pedagogy. At the University of Iceland, an elective course offered to all student teachers focussing on inclusive education is co-taught by a teacher educator and an inclusive teacher from a compulsory school. A framework for curricular design is introduced and explores how to design a learning environment for a diverse group of learners.

Increasingly the format of courses includes not only lectures and seminars but also opportunities for discussion and reflection, collaborating with a range of peers, tutors and other relevant stakeholders. Practice in Poland includes more active methods such as filming classes for analysis and role-play. Most countries now use a mix of more formal methods together with self-directed study and problem-based learning. Innovative practice includes 'modelling' principles such as universal design and different ways of presenting content, encouraging participation and expressing views.

5.1 Professional development

In many countries, HEIs arrange staff development for teacher educators. This can be through formal, accredited courses through to the provision of information, attendance at national and international conferences and research-based activities. However, these opportunities are largely aimed at teacher educators based in HEIs, with little attention to teacher educators who are based in schools.

In Estonia, all universities provide 'Teaching in Higher Education' courses that include aspects about diversity in society. 'Programme Eduko' also provides activities for the continuing education of teaching staff who are encouraged to participate in courses and conventions, seminars and summer and winter schools on the specifics of teacher education. In 2008, the Centre of Teacher Competences in Lithuania also created guidelines for the training of school based mentors and tutors.

In Sweden teacher educators develop their skills through close contact with schools including supervising students' practical activity and carrying out action research. In Belgium (Flemish community) teacher educators particularly value action research and collaboration with the bachelor-after-bachelor programmes (a second bachelor programme with a professional specialisation) for special educational needs held in the same institution.

School-leaders and school-based mentors also play an important role in initial teacher education and should equally be provided with appropriate professional development opportunities.

Although in most countries, teacher educators are individually involved in national and international networks, projects or research communities, there appears to be little consistency in the appointment of teacher educators and their on-going professional

development is often on an 'ad hoc' basis. Recent research (Boyd et al., 2006; Murray, 2005) indicates that newly-appointed teacher educators' introduction to the profession is uneven and sometimes inadequate, often taking place within departments and through non-formal learning. The systematic induction of teacher educators and their continuing professional development, particularly in relation to meeting diverse needs in classrooms, therefore needs to be developed to further the teacher education for inclusion agenda.

5.2 Summary

The qualifications and experience – and indeed the roles – of teacher educators across Europe vary widely as do the opportunities for collaboration between faculties and colleagues. This may have an impact on the development of courses that promote inclusive practice. Similarly, there are no consistent opportunities for induction and professional development either for teacher educators based in HEIs or for those working in schools. This is an area requiring urgent attention to further develop the 'hidden profession' of teacher educator (European Commission, 2010, p. 1).

6. TEACHER COMPETENCES

Over 75% of countries taking part in the project describe some form of teacher competences or standards. Most are agreed at national level and in some countries are supported by legislation, while other countries provide non-statutory guidance. In a small number of countries, such outcomes are not agreed centrally but guidance is provided for individual HEIs either on a national or regional basis. Regardless of the existence of desirable standards or competences, in many countries, the practical design and implementation of courses is at the discretion of individual HEIs. A summary of country information about ITE and the use of competences for inclusive education is provided at: http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/teacher-education-for-inclusion/annexes

Snoek and colleagues (2009) state that 'an overarching priority is for countries to have in place a clear concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and to do' (p. 2). During project discussions, some experts expressed the view that with the rise of market-driven education systems where schools can buy in training from a range of providers, the implementation of agreed competences may be increasingly important to ensure some consistency in developing policy and practice in teacher education and in evaluating its effectiveness.

The terms 'competences' and 'standards' are not inter-changeable and the following definitions have been agreed with experts for use within the TE4I Project.

– Standards generally refer to a set of measures against which student teachers/teachers/teacher education courses can be evaluated – the summative outcomes at the end of a programme of study.

– Competences are seen as developing over time with ITE students and teachers demonstrating progressive mastery in a range of settings and situations. As such, they form both the foundation for ITE and the basis for continuing professional development.

The issue discussed in section 3.3 regarding discrete, integrated or merged models in teacher education also impacts on the development of standards and competences. While some countries predominantly cover aspects of inclusive practice in their general

teacher professional standards or statements of competences set out for ITE, other countries outline more specific requirements aimed at promoting greater understanding of inclusion. This again raises the dilemma discussed earlier of whether merging such issues into general competences will result in a loss of focus – although, in the longer term, such an approach clearly represents the ideal.

In Portugal, the principle of inclusion is perceived to be an integral part of the culture of the country, so the teacher competences for inclusion are not explicitly outlined but are an expectation for all primary teachers. These competences include:

• Developing the curriculum in an inclusive setting, integrating the scientific knowledge and skills necessary for the promotion of students' learning;

• Organising, developing and evaluating the teaching process based on the concrete analysis of each situation, namely the knowledge diversity, skills and experiences that each learner has when s/he initiates or continues learning;

• Developing interest in, and respect for other people and cultures and promoting the learning of other languages, mobilising the available resources.

• Promoting the active participation of learners, collaboration and solidarity and respect for a democratic education.

In France, 10 skills seen as necessary for all teachers have been drawn up. Details regarding aspects of these that are relevant to the development of inclusive practice are provided in the country report for France.

A primary teacher education college in the Flemish Community of Belgium conducted research to identify the main competences required by inclusive teachers in primary education as the basis for curriculum reform. While at the start, researchers looked for competences relating to special needs expertise, by the end of the study, these were no longer considered central for inclusive practice. The following competences were selected as crucial for inclusion, in particular the final point that refers mainly to attitudes: taking care of the well-being of learners; differentiation of the curriculum, support and evaluation (preferably in-class); deeper communication with

parents; collaboration with external and internal colleagues within the classroom; curiosity, critical thinking, flexibility and a sense of responsibility.

The report for Norway states that: 'new future teachers shall not only be able to recognise special needs in their students and take measures to meet them … they, as teachers, are expected to meet/ prevent learning difficulties in their individual students and to adapt their teaching to the abilities and prerequisites of their individual students, preserving a good (inclusive) class environment' (p. 5). Norwegian teacher candidates are expected to know about the objectives of education, the value basis and legal basis for education as well as learners' rights.

In Austria, competences are seen as personal pre-requisites necessary for successfully dealing with situations; they contain cognitive but also meta-cognitive and motivational aspects. The competences required for inclusive education were published in a paper from the Ministry of Education (Feyerer et al, 2006) and include:

• Differentiation and individualisation, learner-centred education;

• Use and production of teaching materials, design of learning environments;

• Assessment, feedback and evaluation of learner achievements;

• Collaboration with teachers, parents and staff from other disciplines;

• Reflection on and adaptation of own values, attitudes and actions;

• Intercultural learning, gender education and the education of gifted learners;

• Autonomous further training via research, experience;

• Quality assurance and school development (e.g. using the Index for inclusion

• Good relations with all school partners to positively influence public opinions.

Seven universities in UK (Scotland) collaborated to produce a Framework for Inclusion to support the standards for initial teacher education. This emphasises, in particular, the continuum of

development throughout a teacher's career. In UK (England, Northern Ireland and Wales) standards also include many of the competences described above as an integral part of the standards expected of all teachers.

> The Profile of the Competence of the Teacher's Profession (2007) for Lithuania sets out 4 areas of competence: common-cultural competences, professional competences, general competences and special competences. While many of the competences listed coincide with those listed above, Lithuania also specifies the need to:
>
> • Acknowledge the importance of the home environment for child education and diversity of family values;
>
> • Teach learners in accordance with humanistic values;
>
> • Create an environment based on tolerance and collaboration.

In the Czech Republic, for example at Charles University in Prague, courses are included to improve work with parents. Other countries such as Slovenia promote the idea of inter-disciplinary working and some invite speakers from other agencies to contribute to courses. In Estonia, at the University of Tartu, a compulsory course 'Pedagogical communication' gives ITE students the opportunity to initiate and sustain contact with children and parents from different backgrounds in a range of activities requiring mutual partnership and communication to develop their ability to meet diversity with open and understanding hearts and minds and reformed attitudes.

The project literature reviews, country reports and study visits all indicate that reflective practice is a key area of competence for all teachers, involving, in particular:

− Open mindedness (the 'will to know' and look out for something better), responsibility (thinking about the effects of actions on the life chances of learners) and wholeheartedness;

− Judgement informed by enquiry and research – reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983);

− Creative mediation of externally developed frameworks for teaching and learning and the questioning of 'received truths' (Pollard and colleagues, 2005).

In the 2011 project study visits, it was stressed that teachers need to develop their own rationale for action, supported by school leaders

and inspectors who should encourage 'professional freedom' and innovative approaches that take account of diversity among teachers.

Lauriala (2011) believes that the complexity of the classroom situation demands 'unique and authentic' action by the teacher. Teachers, therefore, need to build their own professional identity and knowledge together with personal pedagogical theories.

Sciberras (2011) similarly said that respecting the diversity of teachers and establishing environments that allow them to be creative in their own unique way is crucial in instilling an inclusive philosophy. She believes that a teacher who feels respected and supported with reference to their own professional diversity is more likely to create and facilitate inclusive environments in their own class.

6.1 Assessing competences

In order to establish the impact on initial teacher education of such profiles or statements of competence, there needs to be a consistent way to assess achievement. This change is likely to demand new skills and approaches from teacher educators who will need to ascertain the level of competence of pre-service teachers and what is needed to help them move on in their learning.

Warford (2011) applies the work of Vygotsky (1986) on the Zone of Proximal Development to teacher education, suggesting that development can be supported by identifying the distance between what teacher candidates can do alone and the level they might attain through strategically mediated assistance from more capable others.

The curriculum at the Teacher Training College of Upper Austria differentiates between the following fields of competences: Becoming a professional in instruction (instructional competence); getting along well with young people (educational competence); having success in (working) life (self-competence); actively organising school (school development competence). The competence dealing with heterogeneity runs across all fields.

The following stages of competence have been identified by teacher educators:

• Naive action and copying;

• Acting according to specifications;

• Transferring and generalising;

• Autonomous control.

The college recognises that not all student teachers start their competence development at the first stage, and that different competences are attained at different times. The stages above show the growing autonomy in a teacher's actions and his or her reflection guided by theory and avoid any 'mechanistic' use of competences. The aim is to promote sustainable interaction of theory and practice, by putting the theoretical content of training into practice as soon as possible and encouraging reflection to prevent theoretical knowledge remaining inactive. As competences cannot be directly observed, judgements are made on the performance rendered on the basis of the respective competence.

Jansma (2011) compares professional competence to an iceberg, where only the tip (representing teacher action) is visible. Beneath the surface lies the base of personal qualities, professional attitudes and beliefs and professional repertoire based on knowledge and responsibility.

6.2 Summary

In summary, the key competences highlighted by the majority of countries as most relevant to the development of inclusive practice typically include:

−	Reflecting on their own learning and continually seeking out information to overcome challenges and support innovative practice;

−	Attending to the well-being of learners, taking responsibility for meeting all learning and support needs and ensuring a positive ethos and good relationships;

−	Collaborating with others (professionals, parents) to assess and plan an engaging curriculum to meet the diverse needs of learners, attending to issues of equality and human rights;

−	Using a variety of 'inclusive' teaching methods and group and independent work appropriate for the aims of learning, the

learners' age, and their abilities/stage of development and evaluating learning and the effectiveness of methods used;

– Addressing language learning in multi-lingual contexts and valuing cultural diversity as a resource.

The development of such competence descriptions must be seen as critical in initial teacher education but will also support career long learning, underpinned by a firm belief in and commitment to inclusive principles. Moran (2009) suggests that it is only through engaging with and exploring the broader meaning of competences that teacher educators and student teachers 'become aware of their own identities and value positions, and of their crucial role in preparing and forming future citizens for a democratic society' (p. 8).

7. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND FOLLOW-UP

In most countries, programmes for initial teacher education must be externally accredited by a central body and/or by Ministries of Education. On-going quality assurance may be provided by external inspections (e.g. Ofsted in England) and by external involvement in assessment and examinations. Other methods of quality assurance include external validation of programmes by review (usually annually) of the quality of student teacher outcomes by external examiners, internal processes of course approval and validation and internal self-evaluation and quality improvement processes.

In Ireland, the Teaching Council has recently set out the criteria and guidelines which providers of programmes of ITE are required to observe. This role in the review and accreditation of initial teacher education is distinct from the academic accreditation that programmes also undergo. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a degree/diploma whereas professional accreditation for any profession is a judgement as to whether a programme prepares one for entry into that profession.

Quality assurance may also be based, as in Estonia, on self-evaluation. The advisory bodies for ITE programmes (Programme Councils) include representatives of all stakeholders, including students and employers. They are responsible for evaluating programme effectiveness and developing a strategic plan. However, the report from Estonia stresses that employers should be involved to a greater extent in the evaluation and design of ITE courses. Other countries also mention the importance of involving people with disabilities in programme planning.

While it is increasingly common to gather views of former graduates or newly qualified teachers (NQTs), for example by means of a questionnaire or survey, few countries have a systematic follow-up of new teachers and evaluation of ITE that pays specific attention to inclusion or focuses on attention to diversity as a criterion.

The Inclusive Practice Project in UK (Scotland) has followed up new teachers as part of their research project, to evaluate the impact of their reforms and Belgium (Flemish speaking community) are currently developing an instrument to follow up their students. In order to inform future changes, a more rigorous approach to course

evaluation and follow-up of new teachers is needed, possibly involving the use of agreed competences as a basis for judgements about 'quality' inclusive practice.

In Ireland, some institutions receive informal feedback through returning graduates seeking advice and through seminars conducted for graduates to give feedback on their pre-service education and to share the challenges and experiences of their first year in teaching. One institution reported on a recent event where graduates returned to the college for a series of SEN/inclusion support meetings during their first year of teaching. The result was a summer course designed by newly qualified teachers for newly qualified teachers to address the issues that these teachers had to engage with in their first year of teaching.

At the University of Tampere in Finland, lecturers invited students to discuss inclusion. Such discussions were also held with new teachers, experienced teachers and researchers to develop a new course called 'Diversity in education'.

ITE providers in UK (Wales) are responsible for providing each student teacher with a Career Entry Profile (CEP) to support the transition from ITE to induction as they start work in schools. NQTs are responsible for sharing their profile with their induction tutor who is a teacher nominated to support them when they start their first teaching post. The CEP helps NQTs to focus on their achievements and goals in the early stages of their teaching career; to engage in collaborative discussions when planning how to meet professional development needs, and providing a link between ITE and the schools where they will serve their induction period.

A number of countries are developing the role of school-based tutors or mentors and are providing training for these key people (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Sweden, UK (England)). Basic education in Norway is the responsibility of the local communities who organise the mentoring programme in schools. Teacher education institutions have been asked to develop a 30-ECTS, part-time study programme for teachers willing to become mentors. The programme will provide qualifications for mentors and it is hoped, also stimulate interest among teachers for quality development in teaching.

The 2009 White Paper in Norway recognises as serious challenges the dropout rates among teacher students, as well as the high number of teachers who leave the profession. To quote their report:

'Experience and research shows that the sudden confrontation with classroom realities and total teacher responsibility can be traumatic for new teachers. Classroom experience during teacher education is from a controlled environment, with highly competent instructors at hand … A qualified teacher, on the other hand, operates with no safety net … No wonder then, that many find it overwhelming' (p. 7).

One aim for their teacher education reform is to provide a softer start to a teaching career and life-long development of professional competence. All new teachers will be offered follow-up by a qualified and experienced mentor, to give professional and practical support and help them to build confidence, through access to the collective competence and experience of the school community. Such practice may also provide opportunities for learning through discussion about observed practice in school that may conflict with key messages provided during initial education. As well as eliminating the wastage of teaching resources through attrition (drop out), such support measures should improve the quality of teaching.

This raises the question of how teacher quality is defined. Should teachers be judged only on the academic performance of their students? If wider outcomes are to be considered and valued, how can they be clearly defined and measured? Further research is needed to study these issues and clarify what quality teaching in inclusive settings looks like in practice.

7.1 Summary

The issues surrounding the quality assurance of teacher education and the follow-up of new teachers have been discussed. It is evident that there is a need for more rigorous and systematic course evaluation and follow-up of new teachers, which should be part of the reflective, lifelong learning 'attitude' of all those involved in teacher education.

8. WIDER POLICY FRAMEWORK SUPPORTING TEACHER EDUCATION FOR INCLUSION

Many of the issues surrounding European and international contexts discussed in chapter 2 of this report have also been raised in the country reports and will now be considered in greater depth.

A number of countries have legislation in place to support inclusion while others have developed strategies or action plans of an advisory nature. Increasingly, the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* is also having an impact.

The majority of countries have recently undergone or are currently undergoing significant change in education policy and curriculum frameworks, prompted by one or more of the following factors:

− A concern for under-achievement, as evidenced in national assessments and international comparisons such as PISA;

− Increasing disaffection among secondary age learners and early school dropouts;

− Changing demographics and increasing numbers of learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds;

− A need to revise the curriculum to address key priorities, for example, promoting social cohesion and addressing the effects of the current economic climate.

The next section examines some of the key issues currently being debated as countries work to address these factors.

8.1 Terminology

In describing the background and more importantly, the policy context for developments around teacher education for inclusion, around one third of the project country reports provide a definition of inclusion. A few countries do not use the term 'inclusion' but use alternatives such as 'school for all' (Sweden) 'attention to diversity' (Spain) and 'differentiation' (Denmark). Countries are also at different points in moving on from the use of the term 'integration'. This term, as discussed in chapter 2 of this report, has mostly been associated with issues around placement of learners with a disability into mainstream settings, often with a focus on the individual deficits of the child rather than the limitations of the school environment.

While many countries have moved towards the use of the term 'inclusion' and a much broader understanding of this concept (such as that provided by UNESCO, 2009), there are still wide variations in understanding and, as a result, practice. It is also evident from the country reports that countries are increasingly using the terminology around 'heterogeneity' and are at different points in moving towards a diversity paradigm.

Labels that lead to the categorisation of learners need to be reviewed moving towards a focus on overcoming individual barriers to learning. The World Report on Disability (2011) states: '... assigning labels to children in education systems can have negative effects including stigmatization, peer rejection, lower self-esteem, lower expectations and limited opportunities' (p. 215).

Overall, the lack of agreed definitions for key terms remains a challenge; this is an issue specifically identified in the country report from Slovenia. The French report also makes reference to the issue of language use, noting that, despite changes in terminology, the concepts have not really changed. The report from Spain says 'when talking about inclusion, many teachers at all educational levels quite often just think about certain "special learners and measures", whereas attention to diversity should be an ordinary general activity.'

Such uncertainties reflect differences about the aims and functions of schooling in society and underpinning ideology and can impact on the development of clear and coherent policies for inclusive education.

8.2 Holistic policies to support all learners

Increasingly, there appears to be a realisation of the need for holistic and inter-connected policies – that a move towards inclusive education cannot happen in isolation and requires systemic reform – in particular, greater collaboration between decision-making bodies and the 'whole-government' approach advocated by the OECD (2010).

In Portugal Law 49/2005 outlines the right to education and continuous learning to promote the global development of individuals in a move to a more democratic society. The Organic law of 2006 in Spain, underpinned by strong values, similarly supports a holistic approach to inclusion, equity and non-discrimination. In France also,

Law 2005/02 supports the equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of people with disabilities.

As early as 1976, Norway merged the legislation for special and mainstream schools and the recent report 'Right to Learning' emphasises the importance of relationships, participation and personalised learning for all.

Some important principles regarding inclusive education and teacher education are stated in the national recommendations of the Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education (COHEP, 2008). These include a recognition of the fact that mainstream schools are the place for inclusive learning of all children and that teachers in mainstream schools have to be able to act professionally and competently in inclusive educational settings.

In Germany, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Bundeslander (KMK) in a strategy paper (April 2010) states that: 'all teachers shall be prepared and trained for the inclusive education of all pupils … in order to acquire the necessary competences in dealing with various forms of heterogeneity' (p. 4).

To implement such policy and practice and support a move towards greater inclusion, countries recognise the importance of underpinning values and positive school and community cultures. The report from Iceland states that one of the goals for learners is to gain understanding and tolerance of diversity and the many cultures found in Iceland and around the world. The authors feel that it is hard to see how such understanding can develop if school environments and practices are segregated and learners are not exposed to the diversity found in the country. Additionally, if such practices cannot be seen in initial teacher education, it will equally be difficult to prepare student teachers for diversity.

The current existence in many countries of separate provision for some groups of learners inevitably influences the education of teachers. Curriculum and assessment arrangements, together with pedagogy, must be designed to facilitate the achievement of learners with diverse needs, working at different levels within the same class and ensure that wider support needs – including, for example health and social needs – are also addressed through close collaboration with other agencies.

Many country reports raise the need for greater collaboration and joint education for the wider group of professionals working with learners in order to support a move towards a more inclusive system. Recent reform in Germany has also stressed the importance of joint approaches and local co-operation for learners, taking account of learning beyond school.

The Agency report on *Early Childhood Intervention – Progress and Developments 2005–2010* recommends improved co-ordination of services with shared understanding of different professions and common standards for evaluation along with holistic support for families through linked policies for Early Childhood Intervention, childcare, employment, housing etc.

Although the current project has focused on initial teacher education, many country experts have stressed the need for a continuum of education and development opportunities for teachers and school leaders with no 'gaps' or inconsistencies across different sectors of education. The Teaching Council in Ireland, has developed such a continuum to describe the formal and informal educational and developmental activities in which teachers engage, as life-long learners, during their teaching career. The continuum encompasses initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development and also late career support, with each stage merging into the next and interconnecting in a dynamic way with each of the others.

8.3 Accountability

In order to support the move to greater inclusion, the current systems of accountability and the impact of such systems on standards and equity require attention. Some country reports state that the emphasis on high standards of academic attainment can work against, rather than alongside policies for inclusion. Work by Meijer (2003) noted that the tension between, on the one hand, the pressure for better outputs of schools and, on the other hand, the position of vulnerable pupils, is increasing. Forlin (2010) also points out that teachers may experience tensions where government policy demands greater inclusion yet supports school expectations to achieve (continually improving) traditional examination results.

Moran (2009) suggests that teacher educators can also be 'overly consumed with conformity and the defensive pursuit of compliance

as they strive to meet the standards' (p. 3). They need to understand their work in a broader context, and bear in mind that teaching should be located within a democratic dialogue which is values-driven, ethically oriented and socially aware (Sachs, 2003).

The findings of the UNESCO report *Learning Divides* (Willms, 2006) provides evidence that strong school performance and equity can go hand in hand. The UNESCO *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education* (2009) recognise two important components of quality – the cognitive development of the learner and the role of education in promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and/or creative and emotional development. It is this broader perspective that needs to be kept in mind when considering how 'quality' in education – and teacher education – can be measured.

8.4 Summary

This section summarises the wider policy framework necessary to support the further development of teacher education for inclusion and highlights the consistency of key issues across the Agency member countries involved in the project. In particular, this section highlights the need for:

− Consistent terminology around inclusion and diversity and a clear understanding of underpinning ideology;

− Holistic and inter-connected policies and improved collaboration between professionals;

− Greater clarity around accountability and perceived conflict between high academic standards and inclusive education.

9. KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

This section summarises the key issues and challenges raised in the country reports and supported by the current literature and European and international contexts outlined in chapter 2. It offers some analysis as a basis for the recommendations provided in chapter 10.

9.1 Teacher education issues

In moving towards more innovative approaches to teacher education there are a range of demands that, according to Bates (2005), arise from political expectations, bureaucratic standards and claims for particular community interests. This section will consider some of the key issues needing consideration if robust and sustainable change is to be brought about in teacher education.

9.1.1 Recruitment and retention

In Europe, issues of supply and retention of teachers vary widely. In one group of countries including France and Germany, the number of those wishing to qualify to teach exceeds the number of positions available. In Finland and Ireland teacher supply is also strong and in Austria, newly qualified teachers exceed the number of vacancies. In a second group of countries, however, authorities struggle to fill places on ITE programmes and to fill vacant teaching posts with appropriately qualified staff; teacher recruitment, particularly at the secondary level in mathematics and science is problematic.

The age profile of the teaching profession is also an issue, with many teachers due to retire in the next 10 years and many education systems are supplementing teachers with increasing numbers of para-professionals playing a variety of roles (Moon, 2007).

However, it is not sufficient just to fill teaching vacancies; it is essential to attract people with the right values, attitudes, competences and knowledge. Research by Auguste and colleagues (2010) suggests that the world's best-performing education systems recruit all of their teachers from the top tier of graduates and create a mutually reinforcing balance between high selectivity and attractive working conditions; few European countries achieve this.

In countries such as Germany and France the status of teachers as civil servants offers security and stability. In some areas of the UK, however, additional payments have been necessary to attract

teachers into shortage subjects at secondary level. There appears to be fewer problems at primary level, particularly since initial teacher education in most countries has become an HEI responsibility and the status of primary teachers has improved. However, closer analysis of the factors that impact on teacher supply at primary and secondary level would be important to inform policy in this area.

Moran (2009) believes that teachers need to recapture their status and dignity as some of society's leading intellectuals, and not 'deliverers of other people's agendas'. She concludes: 'Those who focus only on teaching techniques and curriculum standards, and who do not also engage in the greater social and moral questions of their time, promote an impoverished view of teaching and teacher professionalism' (p. 15).

Further work is also needed on the processes used to select entrants to initial teacher education courses. How can decisions be made regarding the values and attitudes of potential teachers? Clearly qualifications or entrance tests do not provide such information (see Section 2.1) and interviews may also be limited in their scope. While Article 24 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* requires State parties to take measures to ensure the employment of teachers with disabilities, how can the recruitment process make this possible?

Moon (2007) stressing the need for coherent policy development in this area, outlines 10 key questions. The three most relevant to this project are as follows:

- What would be the defining characteristics of strong national and local policy structure around teacher supply, retention and training?

- How can a 21st Century policy framework build in the democratic involvement of teachers into decision making?

- Can a set of entitlements be identified that give substantive dignity to the professional role of teachers at all levels in the 21st Century?

A report in 2010 by UNESCO and the International Labour Organisation also underlined the importance of teachers, stating that '... under-investing in teachers is short-sighted and ultimately works against economic and social well-being' (p. 4). Similarly, failing to

recruit more diverse teachers into the profession may also work against wider societal change.

9.1.2 Teacher educators

Teacher educators are key players in assuring a high-quality teaching force; yet many European countries have no explicit policy on the competences they should possess or on how they should be selected or trained.

Swennen and van der Klink (2009) suggest that many teacher educators have difficulties in adjusting to the academic expectations of higher education-based teacher education work and find it hard to adjust their pedagogical skills to work with adult learners. They add that induction into formal research and publication activities is also needed. Cochran-Smith (2005) notes the importance of this 'symbiotic' relationship between being simultaneously a researcher and a practitioner in enriching teacher education.

Boyd and colleagues (2007) suggest that induction of teacher educators should be carried out over a 3-year period, providing time to work with managers and mentors to consider their new role and the pedagogy of ITE, to work with schools and take part in research activity. In earlier work, Cochran-Smith (2004) suggests that many teacher educators have not had the transformative learning experiences necessary to interrupt the conservative assumptions underlying many teacher education programmes and that, as a result, they need support to learn about issues of race, racism, diversity and social justice in education.

Preparing new teachers to be 'inclusive' requires so much more than the addition of a special education course or module and teacher educators must develop expertise to deal with contentious issues and address their own personal deeper values and attitudes. Their practice must also 'model' the ideas they present, for example by ensuring some personalisation and differentiation of courses for students of different ages/life experiences, social, cultural or linguistic backgrounds as well as those with disabilities. Student teachers also bring with them different attitudes and values as well as varying views about and experiences of 'effective' teaching and these must be taken into account and used as a resource for further development. Necessary changes to assessment methods in teacher education will also have implications for the development of teacher

educators, requiring judgements about the level of competence of pre-service teachers and most importantly what is needed for them to move on in their practice.

Considering change in teacher education at the meta-level, Haug (2003) notes that it appears to be characterised by a stable collective culture that responds slowly to change. He argues that the skills, knowledge and understanding needed by teachers cannot be developed by simple measures and teacher education, in preparing teachers for a long career, needs to take a much wider view and a more general approach than what goes on in current compulsory schools. He states: 'the significance of (inclusive schools) for teacher education cannot be neglected or argued against under the cover of instrumentalism or because it is thought to be of short-lived importance' (p. 98).

9.1.3 Partnerships with schools

Teaching practice is a key element of all teacher education courses and much depends on the way that teacher education institutions work with schools. Possible models include the teacher demonstration schools (e.g. Finland) where teacher educators work in schools and practice is informed by research. Networks or communities of practice that include groups of schools together with teacher educators can support appropriate feedback on the performance of new teachers. New teachers could also feedback through such networks regarding future course content and current challenges in school practice. Networks can go beyond sharing practice to support innovation and improvement and the implementation of reform. As such, they should be organic and lateral (not hierarchical), continuously developing in order to ensure new contacts to extend and challenge thinking.

Such collaboration and collegiality could therefore support teacher educators in the development of their own pedagogy and flexible methods of assessment (e.g. portfolios). Collaborative, school-based action research on inclusive practice, involving teacher education institutions should form one 'strand' of professional development for teacher educators.

9.1.4 Evidence-informed change

The lack of large-scale, cumulative research and empirical evidence in teacher education has been noted by the OECD (2010) and also

by the recent review of teacher education in UK (Scotland) (Menter and colleagues, 2010). Such research should be undertaken to secure a relevant body of evidence to inform change. The examples in this report highlight some key issues for research including:

− The effectiveness of different routes into teaching;

− Approaches to teacher education and the ITE curriculum and

− The role of discrete, integrated and merged courses and how best to move along the continuum towards a single initial teacher education course that prepares all teachers for diversity.

Other issues include teacher selection, induction and support, the follow-up of new teachers and the professionalisation and professional development of both teachers and, in particular, teacher educators.

The use of areas of competence should be explored to secure agreement on what 'quality' inclusive practice looks like and how best to prepare teachers to use the most effective approaches. Competences as a dynamic combination of knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities, developed during the process of learning cannot, in themselves, always be easily measured. A competence approach will therefore also require changes to assessment practice and will have implications for the professional development of teacher educators as outlined above.

9.1.5 Teacher competences

During the Agency project there has been wide agreement on the competences needed by new teachers to enable them to confidently take responsibility for all learners in their classes, managing learning and behaviour. In addition to subject knowledge teachers need knowledge of child/adolescent development and pedagogical skills – including constructivist approaches, problem-based learning and co-operative learning – approaches that allow them to create choice and opportunity for all learners to access and make sense of information and respond in different ways.

Teachers also need to see themselves as lifelong learners. They need to develop skills in research and use of research findings. Inter-personal skills and an understanding of the nature of collaboration are essential to work with others including professionals and parents who contribute to a full understanding of learners' needs.

Increasingly, teachers need to move from being 'private' to 'collective' practitioners and see themselves as contributing to the complementary skills of the whole school community. Initial teacher education must also impact on teachers' attitudes and core values, developed, at least in part, through interaction with people with diverse needs. Such experiences must be of high quality with time for in-depth discussion, supported by relevant research and study and guided by tutors with appropriate confidence, commitment and expertise.

As more learners are educated in inclusive settings, the number of students entering the teaching profession with direct and positive experience of inclusion should increase. This will, in turn increase the quality of inclusive teaching, as such teachers progress in their careers and act as models, tutors and mentors for students and new teachers. Appropriate expertise must also be maintained to meet the more complex needs of some learners.

The development of a growing body of experience and expertise as part of larger systemic change will therefore help to ensure quality in teacher education and school practice placements and reduce the 'theory-practice gap'.

9.2 Wider policy issues

9.2.1 Terminology

One key issue for all countries in the project is that of the terminology currently in use around inclusion and education for diversity. As countries move towards the broader definition of inclusion, it is clear that, in some cases only the language has changed with little impact on practice. This is particularly true in the area of disability, where the language is particularly emotive and carries with it long-standing 'hidden' meanings and associations (for example the charity model or medical model and the concept of 'integration'). Current work on the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, recently ratified by the European Union as well as many individual member countries, should support on-going change in this area.

The language used about inclusion cannot be divorced from fundamental beliefs about the nature and purpose of education and equity in society. This issue therefore needs to be discussed in order to ensure that it does not have a negative impact on policy making in

this area – which must become an integral part of all policy making. If the language used continues to promote the 'separateness' or 'difference' of diverse groups within society, policy is likely to be developed in the form of 'bolt-on' measures necessary to correct original policies that were not inclusive.

9.2.2 Identification of learners

The language issues discussed above also affect the identification of learners with additional support needs and result in considerable differences in processes and procedures, which are often linked to complex funding arrangements. 'Initiative overload', bureaucratic systems and requirements of inflexible policies can all work against the development of inclusive practice. Meijer (2003) points out that the fact that some countries identify more learners as having special educational needs/disability than others is linked to administrative, financial and procedural regulations, rather than reflecting the incidence and types of SEN. It is such processes and procedures that can detract time, effort and resources from moves towards inclusion.

Many countries' provision is based on the identification and categorisation of learners, rather than a continuum of services to meet a diversity of individual needs. Emphasis needs to be placed on the provision of support in classrooms, rather than requiring the 'separation' of learners from their peers.

McGrady and colleagues (2001) analysed the life stories of learners identified as 'learning disabled' and concluded that an educational label only has value if it allows people to acquire an accurate understanding of learning difficulties and develop effective strategies for meeting the educational, psychological and social challenges.

Long-term change in identification will need to be underpinned by a clear ideology and commitment to fundamental values, key concepts and terminology that impact on practice such as the 'ethic of everybody' (Hart and colleagues, 2006). Here, no assumptions are made about 'ability' and how far learners can progress, but the focus is on increasing the capacity of all learners.

9.2.3 Support for all learners

The *World Report on Disability* (2011) suggests that 'education systems need to move away from more traditional pedagogies and adopt more learner-centred approaches which recognize that each

individual has an ability to learn and a specific way of learning' (p. 220).

Good practice in teaching is essentially the same for all learners but requires innovative thinking and high expectations to increase 'learning capacity'. Flexible and interactive approaches are needed to support the participation and learning of whoever walks through the door, allowing all learners to perceive, understand, engage and process information and express themselves in different ways.

Teacher education institutions must, in line with these principles, believe that students have the capacity to become successful 'inclusive' practitioners. What is key for all learners, including children and young people in schools and students and teachers themselves, is the development of a 'growth' mindset (Dweck, 2006) and the importance of feeling safe to explore new ideas and see mistakes as learning opportunities.

New teachers must understand the complexities of teaching and learning and the many factors that affect them. They should recognise that all learners should be actively involved in making sense of their learning, rather than passive consumers of tightly prescribed curriculum content.

Alexander (2008) suggests that the term pedagogy should be used to 'connote the combination of the act of teaching, and the values, evidence, theories and collective histories that inform, shape and explain it'. It is, he says 'a word that will lead us away from the blinkered pragmatism of 'what works' into the realm of ideas and argument' (p. 173).

In order to understand diversity and move towards inclusive practice, teachers need to understand themselves and their own values in relation to others. Rodriguez (2010) feels that teachers must recognise that in most ways, they are like all others but that they will also have some characteristics in common with certain others and some features that make them entirely unique. This thinking must then extend to all learners as a basis for understanding and meeting their general, specific and individual needs.

9.2.4 Conflicting agendas

Few people would dispute the need for high standards for all learners. However, there is a need to question the values and assumptions that 'standards' in different countries reflect. If only a

narrow range of 'ability' is valued, then various forms of categorising and labelling are likely to continue, making it difficult to create classrooms where everybody can succeed. Teachers need to challenge frequently held beliefs about the causes of under-achievement and reflect on how the school system is affected by – and can perpetuate – larger social inequalities. They should not tolerate a limited – or limiting – curriculum for any child (Abu El-Haj and Rubin, 2009).

Carini (2001) talks about 'humanness and the valuing of humanness' as the starting point for education, and stresses that all learners need to be 'makers and doers, active agents in the world and their lives' (p. 20). This view demands a change in assessment methodology – and in the ways that learners – and also their teachers – are 'measured' and valued.

Some countries are reducing external monitoring of learner achievement due to issues of manageability, as well as potential conflict between a focus on academic standards and wider achievements, more closely aligned to the principles of inclusion. Schools should develop effective systems of quality assurance but balance the requirements of external authorities with the need to identify and maximise the progress of all learners.

Teacher education needs to prepare student teachers to observe learners in non-categorical ways – describing learning processes and outcomes which will not be adequately reflected by tests or checklists but which more accurately reflect learners capacities and inform further learning. Further discussion on these issues can be found in *Assessment in Inclusive Settings* produced by the Agency in 2007. The 'language of assessment' needs to be reviewed and pedagogy developed that focuses on the full range of learners, not just the 'average'.

Student teachers therefore also need to be prepared to develop and teach a curriculum that questions structural inequalities and 'competing educations'. Ivatts (2011) stresses the need to 'widen the responsibility base for society in deciding what knowledge, values, skills and understandings are relevant and important to pass on to the children and young people.' He believes that this would support more democratic participation and help to resist the competitive nature of curriculum design and the consequent risk of 'important

messages … becoming vulnerable to the "tick box" model of inclusion and compliance' (p. 35).

The OECD (2011) point out that improvement among the lowest performing students does not have to be at the expense of higher performers. The PISA results suggest that the countries that improved the most, or that are among the top performers, are those that establish clear, ambitious policy goals, monitor student performance, grant greater autonomy to individual schools, offer the same curriculum to all 15-year-olds, invest in teacher preparation and development, and support low-performing schools and students.

While a potential conflict between meeting the diverse needs of learners and expecting everyone to meet common standards remains, teachers need to focus on providing real learning opportunities for all young people and not just opportunities to participate in and be judged by high stakes assessments which have little meaning for them.

The recommendations presented in the following chapter attempt to address the issues raised in this section and draw primarily on the analysis of current practice in teacher education institutions across Europe, as described by experts from Agency member countries and also in meetings and discussions held during the project.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Teacher education in many institutions throughout Europe needs to be further developed if it is to effectively prepare teachers for diversity in inclusive classrooms. The examples of innovative practice in this report show how institutions might begin to move towards more inclusive practice themselves in order to better prepare their student teachers to work in inclusive settings. These changes should be closely monitored to further inform the actions set out in the recommendations presented in this report.

The recommendations in this chapter are presented in two parts. The first set of recommendations directly relate to teacher education and are, therefore, directed mainly towards professionals working in this area. However, it is essential to recognise that any reform in teacher education is unlikely to succeed without wider supporting policies across the education sector – and beyond.

The second set of recommendations are directed towards policy makers who will need to provide a coherent policy framework for managing the wider, systemic change necessary to impact on teacher education for inclusion.

10.1 Recommendations for teacher education

Effective approaches to improve the recruitment of teacher candidates and increase retention rates should be explored along with ways to increase the number of teachers from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities.

Recent research suggests that skills tests are not a reliable way forward in the selection of teacher candidates, however, many of the attributes looked for in teachers may not be easy to identify through qualifications or through interviews.

In order to select appropriate teacher candidates and reduce the number who drop out during initial teacher education or when later employed, further work is required to:

- Examine the selection process, bearing in mind that the aim should be to increase diversity in the teacher workforce both to serve as role models and to increase cultural knowledge and understanding of disability issues within the teaching profession from different perspectives.

- Study the status of teachers and ways to reinforce this by the advancement of a continuum of professional development and academic standards parallel to that of other professional groups. The concept of teachers as reflective practitioners who regularly update their competences and apply recent research findings in their own work should be disseminated, resisting any move towards approaches that reduce teachers to 'technicians' or the teaching process to a tick-box exercise.

Research should be undertaken on the effectiveness of different routes into teaching and the course organisation, content and pedagogy to best develop the competence of teachers to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

The evidence base to inform policy and practice in teacher education for inclusion is currently limited. A move towards a competence approach will require changes in content, pedagogy and assessment within initial teacher education. There is a need for rigorous, long-term research to investigate:

- The effectiveness of different routes into teaching e.g. 4/5 year bachelor/masters programmes, post-graduate programmes, fast track and school-based routes for teachers of learners of all ages and all subject areas.

- The organisation of initial teacher education programmes in terms of discrete, integrated or merged courses and ways of moving along the continuum from separate courses through greater collaboration and integration of content towards merged provision.

- The areas of competence needed for quality, inclusive practice in order to inform consistent judgements about the effectiveness of teacher education and the practice of new teachers.

- The most effective ways to impact on pre-service teachers competences (values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding) i.e. content, pedagogy and assessment to prepare them for inclusive practice.

The 'profession' of teacher educators needs to be further developed with improvements in recruitment, induction and continuing professional development.

The profile of teacher educators in HEIs and school staff with this responsibility should be raised by the appointment of candidates with

appropriate expertise and qualifications. Collaboration between faculties in institutions and between teacher educators and colleagues should be further developed to ensure that positive attitudes as well as knowledge/understanding about teaching learners with diverse needs contribute to a consistent, whole institution approach to inclusion with strong conceptual links across all courses.

Further work is needed to:

- Develop a formal induction process as part of a continuum of on-going professional development.

- Explore ways to maintain recent, relevant classroom experience for staff based in HEIs e.g. through close co-operation with inclusive schools, opportunities to take part in action research and put research findings into practice. School based staff should similarly be involved in academic research.

- Examine the implications of the introduction of a competences approach for the development of teacher educators' skills, knowledge and understanding to ascertain to what level competences have been met and to plan and mediate learning with the student to improve key areas.

Schools and teacher education institutions must work together to ensure good models in practice schools and appropriate placements for teaching practice.

As a major part of all ITE courses, teaching practice needs to be supported by a clear understanding of underpinning theoretical issues to close the theory-practice gap and ensure that practice does not become a box-ticking exercise focussing on the skills that can be most easily observed and measured. The introduction of competences may further support effective assessment in practical situations. The model of demonstration schools is worthy of closer investigation as it supports school practice informed by recent research and maintains the skills of teacher educators. Further work is needed to:

- Investigate effective models of teaching practice (e.g. concurrent rather than consecutive, spiral development of key concepts) to provide a context for theory.

- Explore effective supervision, mediating experience to support further learning. This would also include study of the necessary attitudes, values, skills and competences of supervisors/mentors in teacher education institutions and schools.

- Clarify the potential role of focused specialised placements, to provide awareness and some skill development to enable supported reflection on key issues around inclusion. Such practice, acknowledging that inclusion is a continuous process, would be a 'stepping-stone' to further development while inclusive placements are hard to find in many countries.

- Examine the potential of networks to provide opportunities for collaboration with school based colleagues who are also involved in teacher education and with a wider range of organisations who might provide practical experiences and personal contacts to extend knowledge and understanding of diversity.

10.2 Recommendations for wider policy

The recommendations that follow are for all policy makers and are not targeted at those dealing specifically with special education or disability issues. The development of more inclusive policy and practice is a shared responsibility and should be integral to the thinking of all policy makers for education generally and teacher education specifically.

> Wider, systemic reform is needed to ensure the development of inclusive schools, to support the development of teacher education for inclusion.

The importance of teachers is increasingly recognised and teacher education must, therefore, also be a priority. However, teacher education cannot work in isolation. The whole system reform needed to support change in teacher education will require commitment and strong leadership from policy makers in all sectors and the full range of stakeholders in education. Such cross-sector working has the potential to help break the cycle of experience of future teachers and begin to develop the attitudes and values needed to underpin inclusive practice.

Further work should focus on:

- The development of policy across sectors to support inclusive education as a key part of a more inclusive society.

- The implementation of multi-agency practice at all levels to support a holistic approach to meeting the needs of learners and their families.

Reform must include clarification of the language that is used when referring to inclusion and diversity.

Categorisation and labelling reinforces comparisons, builds hierarchies and can limit expectations and, as a result, learning. Work should focus on building a consensus around appropriate language and developing a clear rationale for its use. There should be:

- A move away from the categorisation and 'labelling' of children and young people that could encourage education and provision that is 'separate' from the mainstream for learners from the most vulnerable groups.

- Policy reform that supports all teachers and key professionals to develop a clear understanding of the underpinning premises associated with and the implications of using different terminology.

- A view of learners as having individual, multiple and changing identities. Teachers must be equipped to meet the diverse needs present in Europe's classrooms with confidence.

Policies should be introduced to develop a 'continuum of support' to allow teachers to meet the full diversity of learners' needs

Responsive assessment should identify the support needs of all learners at an early stage and facilitate the organisation of any necessary support in ways that ensure full participation in the class, school and wider community. This will require:

- An increase in the capacity of schools to meet a greater diversity of needs and support all learners within their local communities.

- Expertise and effective support for learners with more complex needs to be maintained – teacher advisers/ specialists and other professionals (which may currently include teachers from specialist schools/resource centres) should provide in-class support to share expertise and further develop the skills of all teachers.

Accountability measures that impact upon teachers' work should reflect the importance of wider achievements that are more closely aligned to inclusive principles.

The development of more inclusive policy and practice potentially conflicts with a narrow focus on academic standards – there is a need to be explicit about the values underpinning education systems and ensure that 'measures' focus on what is really valued. In considering the wider outcomes of education, a key question to be considered is 'what kind of education for what kind of society?' Policy makers should:

- Take note of the *Council Conclusions on the Social Dimension of Education and Training* (Council of Ministers, 2010), and explore ways to measure and value a wide range of outcomes of education, recognising that improving educational attainment is also crucial to reducing poverty and fostering social inclusion.

- Note the importance of all teachers and teacher educators in taking forward the inclusion agenda and recognise and support such action by coherent, long-term policies at the international, European and national levels for the inter-related areas of teacher education, school curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and accountability.

It is hoped that the recommendations in this chapter will provide a stimulus for discussion and ideas for ways forward to develop teacher education for inclusion as a key factor in the move towards more inclusive education systems across Europe.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Any reform of teacher education must be part of wider systemic reform to support inclusion. The importance of teacher education is increasingly being recognised along with the fact that policy and practice in this area requires collaboration between policy makers to ensure a holistic approach.

It is important to acknowledge the complexity of the issues surrounding teacher education. Dyson (2005) suggests that it is time to move beyond simplified debates around theory/practice; profession/craft; skills/knowledge; training/education; school-based/ HEI-based, into a new era based on collaboration, acceptance of diversity, effective dialogue and resource sharing to a new model of teacher education. Such developments are unlikely to take place unless the principle of inclusion is an integral part of the thinking of policy makers and other stakeholders – in particular school leaders – and is embedded in the culture of society and its schools.

Large-scale change inevitably takes time and highlights the importance of consistent, long-term policies, rather than continuous small-scale reform. In the foreword to the Council of Europe publication *Teacher Education for Change* (2011), Ólafsdóttir points out: 'Our education systems continue to reproduce patterns … that focus mostly on transmission of knowledge and preparation for employment, forgetting that the aims of education are also preparation for life as active citizens, personal development and the maintenance, in a lifelong perspective, of a broad and advanced knowledge base' (p. 8).

The benefits of increasing inclusion, linked to other priorities such as social justice and community cohesion, are also long-term and investment in early childhood education and an increasingly inclusive education system is likely to represent a more effective use of resources than short term initiatives designed to 'close gaps' or support certain marginalised groups.

At the project conference in Zürich in September 2010, keynote speaker Tony Booth stated that inclusion is a 'principled approach to the development of education and of society'. He stressed that greater clarity is needed regarding the differing perspectives around inclusion to enable all those involved to make informed choices. This

is clearly true for all teachers – and for teacher educators who play a key role in developing the thinking and shaping the practice of the teachers of the future.

Huber (2011) writes: 'If we want to meet the challenges our global world faces today, the education offered needs to develop the full potential of every citizen in our diverse democracies so that they can contribute with all their experience and expertise to the way forward. This has moved beyond a humanistic wish, it has become a necessity for the survival of our democracies' (p. 146).

In 2005, the OECD argued that the policy most likely to lead to gains in school performance was that of raising teacher quality. The policy makers and professionals involved in this project suggest this argument can be developed further – preparing teachers to respond to diversity may be the policy most likely to impact on the development of more inclusive communities.

The vision of a more equitable education system requires teachers equipped with the competences needed to meet diverse needs and it is hoped that this synthesis report can provide some ideas and inspiration to continue the journey to provide a quality education for all learners.

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Teacher Education for Inclusion across Europe – Challenges and Opportunities presents a synthesis of policy and practice from 25 Agency member countries. The Teacher Education for Inclusion project investigated how all teachers are prepared via their initial training to meet the needs of more diverse learners in the classroom.

This report draws on the detailed accounts of policy and practice in this area of work, prepared by participating countries and also on policy and literature reviews and information gathered during country study visits.

This report sets out the project methodology and background context for teacher education for inclusion in Europe and includes information about the structure and content of teacher education programmes, including teaching practice, the role and development of teacher educators and the competences considered necessary to be an effective, inclusive teacher.

Examples of innovative practice are included throughout the document, which concludes with a review of the wider policy framework to support teacher education for inclusion and a summary of key issues and challenges. The report makes recommendations both for wider policy and, more specifically to support further development of teacher education for inclusion.