Empowering Teachers to Promote Inclusive Education

A case study of approaches to training and support for inclusive teacher practice

EUROPEAN AGENCY
for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

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Editor: Verity Donnelly, Agency Staff

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CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full version
Agency:	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
CPD:	Continuing professional development
CRELL:	Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning
ECTS:	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EU:	European Union
IBE:	International Bureau of Education
ICT:	Information and communication technology
ITE:	Initial teacher education
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SEN:	Special educational needs
TE4I:	Teacher Education for Inclusion
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNCRPD:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. PREAMBLE

Inclusive education is a human right and also a strategy to prepare all learners for a 21st-century globalised society (UNESCO-IBE, 2014).

To facilitate the development of inclusive education systems fit for the demands of the 21st century, UNESCO has called for targeted case studies from different regions and countries to support the creation of a global knowledge base that will:

- Provide opportunities for knowledge sharing and learning;
- Strengthen the practice-policy-research connections;
- Inform teacher education institutions to rethink the way teachers are trained;
- Inform policy dialogue in light of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

This case study, prepared for UNESCO by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency), will contribute towards addressing the 'knowledge gap' (identified by the UNESCO-IBE expert meeting in 2014) on empowering inclusive teachers to address the diversity of learners by defining inclusive practices and inclusive teaching approaches and empowering teachers through training and support.

The case study is based upon examples of successful responses from Agency member countries. It discusses policy and practice in initial teacher education (ITE), continuing professional development (CPD) and on-going support for teachers and also considers the development of teacher educators to support the education of inclusive teachers.

The case study draws on the earlier work by the Agency in the Teacher Education for Inclusion (TE4I) project (http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/Teacher-Education-for-Inclusion) and uses that work's conclusions and recommendations as a basis for gathering information.

The Empowering Teachers to Promote Inclusive Education project has two main outputs:

- A suite of case study materials consisting of:
  - o a literature review and
  - o a case study
- The Inclusive Education in Action: Empowering Teachers: Empowering Learners website (http://www.inclusive-education-in-action.org), based on the original Inclusive Education in Action site developed jointly by UNESCO and the Agency in 2009/2010.

Finally, there is an accompanying methodology paper, which describes the approach taken to the development of all the materials, outlines the conceptual framework and clarifies the links between the different outputs. It also makes some suggestions about how the materials might be used to develop approaches to training and support for inclusive teacher practice.

2. INTRODUCTION

There is growing evidence that teachers play a critical role in the development of high-quality education systems – that 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and principals' (OECD, 2011, p. 235). It follows that enhancing teacher quality is intrinsically linked to the quality of initial and continuing teacher education programmes (OECD, 2012).

Recent research (for example: Mincu, 2013) also shows that the difference made by teachers is greater for lower achieving students, who are often from deprived backgrounds. It is not sufficient only to improve access to education – learning cannot be 'assumed as a by-product of increased access' (Hunt, 2015, p. 385) and many learners will, for different reasons, require additional support to overcome barriers to learning and participation. Such barriers may arise from:

> *existing organisational structures, inflexible or irrelevant curricula, inappropriate systems of assessment and examination and negative attitudes and beliefs about some children's potential* (Rouse and Florian, 2012, p. 5).

A key task for all teachers is to identify such barriers and work with learners and other education stakeholders to find effective ways to overcome them. This is not an easy task. It is imperative, therefore, that teachers receive appropriate preparation and also on-going support as they move through various career paths.

This case study will consider how countries can move forward in the development of ITE, CPD and on-going support to address the question: how can teachers be empowered to meet diverse learning needs – and to 'take account of the multiple markers of identity that characterise both individuals and groups' (Pugach, Blanton and Florian, 2012, p. 235)?

The methodology and conceptual framework for this case study are outlined in a separate document. The work builds on the TE4I project, which the Agency conducted between 2009 and 2012. While the TE4I project considered inclusive education in a broad sense – as offering quality education for all – thinking has developed further. This study is, therefore, underpinned by recent Agency work which states the following:

> *The ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers* (European Agency, 2015, p. 1).

In working towards this vision, a major task is to equip all teachers with the necessary competences to support all learners. The Empowering Teachers work also

uses the four areas of competence that the Agency identified in the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (2012a).

The case study aims to provide an analysis of country policy and practice for teacher education in some European countries. It will identify key challenges and highlight some of the ways in which countries are overcoming these and will also discuss critical issues and implications for future work. Although the case study draws on European examples, the literature review and the worldwide examples gathered for the Empowering Teachers: Empowering Learners website ensure that the issues addressed by the study are globally applicable.

This case study includes material on: the changing context for teacher education – legislation and policy; organisation and content of ITE (including recruiting a diverse teacher workforce); teacher educators; CPD and support for teachers and school leaders, and implications for future work.

The focus throughout is on empowering teachers and the study shows, through the use of country examples, some of the ways in which teachers are being given the skills, knowledge and attitudes and thus the confidence to address learner diversity and, in turn, empower all learners.

3. METHODOLOGY

The Agency's Teacher Education for Inclusion (TE4I) project made a number of specific recommendations in terms of both wider policy and specific areas focused on increasing teachers' capacity and capability for inclusive practice. In designing this case study, those recommendations were used as the basis for a short questionnaire to gather information regarding developments in ITE and CPD in Agency member countries since 2012.

The questions focused on: recent development in legislation and policy that may impact on teacher education; developments in the areas of teacher recruitment and retention and any initiatives designed to increase the diversity of the teacher workforce; research into the effectiveness of different routes into teaching and the organisation and content of ITE for inclusion; relevant developments in CPD; and finally, work on the recruitment and CPD of teacher educators.

The study was sent to all nominated country experts from 25 countries who worked on the Agency's TE4I project. Where experts had moved to new posts or retired, the questions were sent to the Agency Country Representatives.

In total, thirteen responses were received, from Austria, Belgium (Flemish speaking community), Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, UK (England) and UK (Scotland). Additional country/policy information was received from Malta, UK (Northern Ireland) and UK (Wales).

Material from the Agency's Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education project 2011–2014 (http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/organisation-of-provision) has also been used. In particular, the visit reports have been a valuable source, as they provide direct access to the views of teachers and school leaders who were involved in focus groups and interviews.

Country examples that highlight responses to particular challenges are presented in boxes. The examples selected for such presentation are those felt to relate in particular to the development of key areas of competence for teachers, i.e. those outlined in the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012a).

The study analyses policy and legislation that impact on teacher education and the reported practices in ITE and CPD. From these analyses, it raises critical issues around the development of inclusive practice for teachers. The final section draws together priorities from the critical issues identified and discusses the implications for future work.

The literature review, which follows a similar structure and should be read together with the case study, includes a review of recent European level initiatives and background research relating to teacher education and the development of inclusive

practice from both Europe and other regions. This and the triangulation of issues with worldwide examples received for the Empowering Teachers: Empowering Learners website help to ensure that the study's findings are also applicable beyond Europe.

4. THE CHANGING CONTEXT – LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Teacher education policy and practice cannot be considered in isolation from the values and beliefs underpinning the education system as a whole and the overarching national context. Ivatts stresses the need to:

widen the responsibility base for society in deciding what knowledge, values and skills and understandings are relevant and important to pass on to the children and young people (2011, p. 31).

Such an approach would, he believes, support more democratic participation and help to resist the competitive nature of curriculum design and the risk of 'important messages … becoming vulnerable to the "tick box" model of inclusion and compliance' (ibid., p. 35). Such issues clearly impact on teacher education. Key international and European developments are covered in more depth in the Empowering Teachers Literature Review (section 4), but are summarised here. This section then focuses on national legislation and policy that impact on the development of inclusive practice.

4.1 International and European developments

The Empowering Teachers Literature Review outlines key developments at international and European level that impact on teacher education and influence the direction of change. These include, at international level, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Together, these provide a framework for a rights-based approach in education and an end to segregating practices.

The United Nations post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, agreed in September 2015, aim by 2030 to:

… eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations (United Nations, 2015, Goal 4.5).

At European level, there is growing recognition of the need for inclusive education to promote citizenship and acceptance of differences of opinion, conviction, belief and lifestyle. EU Ministers agreed to strengthen actions with a view to empowering teachers:

… so that they are able to take an active stand against all forms of discrimination and racism, to educate children and young people in media literacy, to meet the needs of pupils from diverse backgrounds, to impart

common fundamental values and to prevent and combat racism and intolerance (European Commission, 2015a, p. 3).

Most recently, the *Joint Report* of the Council and the Commission on *New priorities for European cooperation in education and training* (European Commission, 2015b) reinforces these statements and the need to cultivate mutual respect and embed fundamental values in an open and democratic society.

The World Education Forum sets out a new vision for education for all in the *Incheon Declaration*. This commits to quality education and improving learning outcomes and states the agreement to*:*

> *ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems* (2015, p. 2).

4.2 Country level developments

Recent reports by the Agency, in particular *Raising Achievement for All Learners – Quality in Inclusive Education* (2012b) (http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/ra4al/synthesis-report) and the *Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education – Summary Report* (2014a) (http://www.european-agency.org/publications/ereports/organisation-of-provision-to-support-inclusive-education-summary-report), have followed up on issues of legislation and policy development and provide evidence of increasing awareness of inclusion across Agency member countries. However, changes in thinking take time and are only now beginning to impact on policy and practice.

As the research shows (please refer to literature review section 4), the policy discourse needs to move on from deficit models and categorisation of learners. Accountability systems need to develop to support innovation and reinforce common aims that are consistent with the principles of inclusion. The Agency noted that:

> *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* (2011, p. 70).

Pivotal to progress is a move from thinking about inclusion as mainly associated with learners with special educational needs (SEN) to seeing inclusion as providing high-quality education for all learners. Related to this is consideration of a move from a needs-based approach, which locates the problem within the learner, to an approach that focuses on identifying barriers to learning and participation and

providing anticipatory responses, planning for all learners 'up front'. The conceptual framework for this study, which considers these issues in more detail, can be found in the accompanying methodology paper.

At system level, such a change in thinking is required to enable support to be provided to schools in a way that will increase their capability to respond to diversity, rather than focusing on individual support and compensatory approaches.

In Austria, the Agency's TE4I project has influenced the recent re-organisation of teacher education. Now the view is that inclusive education covers all differences, for example: learners with disabilities and/or disadvantages, those from a migrant or different religious background, etc.

The following example, from Finland, also relates to such a conception of inclusive education, that sees learner difference as 'the norm'.

A national policy to support all learners

In Finland, 'special education is actually nothing special'. The Ministry of Education and Culture website points out that: 'early intervention and sustained individual support for every student are keys to educating the whole child'. The key drivers noted are equity and quality.

The new Pupil and Student Welfare Act, which came into force in 2014, emphasises the participation of all learners; collaborative learning; welfare, health and social responsibility; and interaction and inclusion. It also aims to improve co-operation between home and school. The new law promotes equal access to quality student learning, an accessible learning environment and early support for those who need it.

In the curriculum reform 2012–2017, key questions have been posed around vision, action, standards and teacher education. Prerequisites for success include clear standards and a well functioning curriculum, a culture of co-operation and trust and competent teachers with a high ethical orientation and commitment. The core of the reform is that the school will be developed both as a growth community and as a learning environment.

Similarly, a comprehensive re-examination of the educational act and regulation for the three school levels (pre-school, compulsory school and upper-secondary school) took place in Iceland between 2009 and 2012. The legislation is now grounded in the theory of inclusive education and, for the first time, the language used was built on an inclusive discourse. In 2011, a new national curriculum began to build on inclusive education, stating that all children should receive their education in inclusive schools.

France has introduced a range of measures to meet the needs of the growing number of learners attending mainstream schools, to improve the assessment of learner needs, to develop personalised education plans and improve the functioning of multi-disciplinary teams, as well as to provide support (in the form of assistants) to learners with disabilities.

The following example illustrates positive action in Ireland that reflects a wider view of inclusion and a move away from a deficit model.

Targeting resources to build school capacity

Currently under development in Ireland is the establishment of a single, coherent Inclusion Support Service (ISS) for children and schools. This service is aligned with proposals for a new model of resourcing (currently being piloted) that will focus on allocating support to schools to promote inclusion and early intervention, rather than the allocation of additional teaching resources being reliant on an individual learner receiving a diagnosis of disability.

The ISS's remit includes: the provision of CPD in special education for teachers, the provision of behavioural support in schools, and the provision of the Visiting Teacher Service for children and young people who are deaf/hard of hearing or who are blind/visually impaired. The ISS will play an important role in supporting schools and teachers to deliver more inclusive education. This type of on-going support for teachers is a critical consideration if the capacity/capability of all schools is to be increased and teachers are to be empowered to meet the full range of diverse needs.

The Organisation of Provision *Synthesis of Country Information* (European Agency, 2013a; http://www.european-agency.org/organisation-of-provision/organisation-of-provision-project-seminars) notes that legislation regarding the education of learners with SEN/disability has generally been developed separately from mainstream legislation. In light of both the UNCRC and UNCRPD, the report notes that legislation is often fragmented or overlapping, poorly co-ordinated and 'sectoral' so that laws do not sufficiently address the needs – or ensure the rights – of the most vulnerable learners.

The *Synthesis of Country Information* (ibid.) notes that some countries (for example: Czech Republic and Estonia) set out a learners' rights approach to support and that there is an increasing emphasis on early intervention (for example: in Finland, Denmark and Poland). New legislation in Belgium (Flemish speaking community) also sets out the right to enrol in a mainstream school and the right to reasonable accommodation and support.

The introduction of policies that strengthen the rights of learners to attend mainstream education with the appropriate provisions (such as early intervention and support when necessary and involvement in decision-making) has clear implications for teacher education. Firstly, those entering the profession must accept that they will be not only be teachers of subjects – but primarily teachers of children. They will need to take responsibility for all learners and develop knowledge and skills that will enable them to respond to the diverse learner needs that they will inevitably encounter. Furthermore, they should believe in equity, 'human rights and democracy for all learners (European Agency, 2012a).

Wider education policies will further impact on what student teachers need to know about curriculum and assessment, school and classroom organisation and systems of accountability. If there are inconsistencies between these key facets of the education system, teachers will be subject to potentially conflicting agendas, for example regarding how learners are assessed and 'categorised' and what is valued and measured to hold teachers to account.

The importance of such consistency can be seen in the inter-connected recommendations made in a recent audit of special needs and inclusive education in Malta. These include the need to:

- develop legislation and policy that promotes a rights-based approach to support the active participation of all learners;

- build the capacity of mainstream schools guided by a clear policy vision for inclusive education as an approach for all learners;

- establish a continuum of support and resources for colleges and schools;

- develop coherent training in inclusion for all school stakeholders;

- provide flexible frameworks for curriculum and assessment, together with teaching approaches that engage all learners and support their active participation;

- re-focus the identification of needs and allocation of support towards early support and prevention;

- embed coherent monitoring and evaluation processes in all school, service and ministry-level work (European Agency, 2014b).

The need for consistency has also been highlighted in Portugal, where new recommendations focus on bringing about greater alignment between the principles stated for special education policies and their implementation. New measures are designed to:

- enhance education for children with difficulties who, currently, do not fulfil the eligibility criteria for special education services;

- guarantee certification (at the end of their school career) for children with disabilities;

- develop supervisory and monitoring models for the work of special education teachers;

- develop rigorous regulation of specialised training courses focusing on scientific quality and pedagogic practice;

- in initial training, develop curricular units that allow the development of programmes in different disciplinary areas to consider adaptations for learners with disabilities;

- perform continuous training for a range of stakeholders (not only special educators) on the teaching and learning process of children with disabilities.

Furthermore, the following example highlights the importance of schools/teachers working with learners and their families and, in particular, of having a 'vision' and high expectations of the future prospects of every learner.

Increasing participation of learners and families

In Portugal, a new law sets out a framework for the transition process from school to employment or working life for learners with severe intellectual disabilities (aged 15 or over). Through a relevant curriculum and greater participation of learners and their families, the law aims to increase learners' prospects for inclusion in the labour market.

The framework:

- stresses the need for on-going participation of learners and their families in the process;

- establishes a new curricular matrix for designing the individual education plan that intends to assure quality standards and make educational programmes more relevant to learners;

- pre-supposes work experience in real work settings and ensures that qualifications achieved are reflected in the certificates obtained.

Recent changes in UK (Scotland), reflecting continuing development in underpinning thinking and terminology, include a revised *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice* (Scottish Government, 2010) and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The latter legislates for the 'Getting it Right for Every Child' practice model, which introduced a single planning approach for all children through the

provision of universal and targeted support. In particular, the Children and Young People Act aims to strengthen the rights of children and young people, bring agencies together for better collaboration and identify any problems at an early stage.

The Scottish Government agenda also includes a focus on tackling inequity through the Scottish 'Attainment Challenge', which focuses on raising the attainment of children and young people living in Scotland's deprived areas. Education Scotland, the national improvement agency for education, provides resources and promotes professional dialogue to embed inclusion and equality throughout the education system.

A new version of the self-evaluation document *How good is our school?* (Education Scotland, 2015) focuses on improving attainment for all, while closing the gap in attainment and achievement between the most disadvantaged children and their peers. The materials are designed to be used by practitioners at all levels and by a wider range of stakeholders to support 'collaborative enquiry and interrogative approaches to self-evaluation' (ibid., p. 3), as well as to promote well-being, inclusion and equality, enabling schools to identify their own effective practice and develop a shared understanding of the next steps for further improvement.

Elsewhere in UK, a new Children and Families Act (2014) in England has revised the SEN framework. It now focuses on improved outcomes and has reformed levels of support for learners with SEN. It aims to increase the participation of children and young people in decision-making and extends the rights of young people with SEN and Disability (SEND) aged 16–25.

In an attempt to improve joint working between services, local authorities will publish their local 'offer' of education, health and social care services to support young children with SEND and their families. The Act should also lead to a more streamlined assessment process and earlier intervention if the need for support arises.

In UK (Wales), a review of curriculum and assessment arrangements sets out a new, inclusive approach, starting with a great debate about key education issues. There is currently a consultation underway on an Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Bill that proposes a new legislative system for children and young people aged 0–25 with additional learning needs. Other initiatives include a new deal to support and develop the teaching profession as part of a wider reform agenda for 'every child in every classroom'. Increasing the focus on the rights of young people and supporting their participation in decision-making, the new bill also introduces an individual development plan that should put the learner at the centre and improve collaboration between services, replacing the current Statement of SEN.

Finally, in UK (Northern Ireland), a key policy is 'shared education', bringing learners from different community backgrounds together and building an inclusive society based on respect for diversity and difference.

4.3 Critical issues for wider policy

A number of Agency member countries are undergoing legislative changes that will, at least in part, support inclusive education and will therefore have implications for teacher education. These include the need:

- for all teachers to recognise that diversity is the 'norm' in schools and that all learners – many of whom may require support for different reasons, at different times – are their responsibility;

- to develop flexible curriculum and assessment frameworks at national/local levels and empower teachers to make use of the flexibility in providing quality learning opportunities for all;

- to develop self-evaluation as the basis for a self-improving system that focuses on improving learning outcomes for all learners – including leaders and teachers. This approach should support a culture of trust and professionalism, replacing control and punitive accountability measures;

- to raise awareness of the UNCRC and UNCRPD to ensure attention to the rights of all learners and the need for support, in particular for vulnerable learners to become more autonomous and have opportunities to express their views;

- for a focus on increasing the capacity/capability of schools and teachers by providing on-going support that may involve using existing resources in different ways;

- to increase co-operation/collaboration with parents and other agencies.

In the next section, routes into teaching, the organisation, content and evaluation of ITE programmes and the development of competences will be discussed, with further examples provided by Agency member countries.

5. INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

ITE varies between and even within countries, being mostly decided by higher education ITE providers. A recent review in UK (Wales) (Furlong, 2015) shows that the best teacher education programmes internationally:

- ensure that ITE programmes attract the best and most suitable candidates into the teaching profession;

- offer academic awards that are competitive, practice-focused and built on relevant educational research;

- develop strong links between theory and practice, in a way that helps students to understand and explore the inter-connectedness of educational theories and classroom practices;

- establish strong links between ITE and CPD of teachers in schools;

- ensure that all of the aforementioned principles are underpinned by a clear understanding of evidence about how student teachers learn to teach and that courses themselves are the subject of constant research and development.

There is growing consensus that increased attention should be given to the role of research in ITE (please refer to literature review section 5) – to inform the content and structure of ITE programmes and also to equip teachers to engage with research. Teachers should have the necessary skills to effectively use research evidence and also to conduct research to explore the outcomes of educational practice.

This section will now provide some examples of country practices that evidence the trends outlined previously and, in particular, focus on the development of inclusive practice.

5.1 Routes into teaching

To date, there has been little research on the effectiveness of different routes into teaching as recommended by the European Agency (2011). The recent review of the structure of ITE in UK (Northern Ireland) notes that:

> *Both concurrent and consecutive models of teacher education programmes are endorsed by international agencies such as the OECD and the EU. Whichever mode is employed, international developments highlight the value of a wide range of teaching-learning approaches* (Sahlberg et al., 2014, p. 10).

Therefore, it can be argued that it is the pedagogical practice, rather than the route taken, that can impact on the effectiveness of ITE. This indicates the need to

overcome the 'false dichotomy' (British Educational Research Association and RSA Action and Research Centre, 2014, p. 5) between school-based and higher education-based routes.

The literature review (section 5) notes that while some countries are maintaining the importance of universities in delivering teacher education – for example: UK (Scotland), Finland, Norway, Iceland and Portugal – others are moving towards school-based training routes. Although this 'apprenticeship' model could potentially offer many advantages in overcoming the divide between theory and practice, some possible problems have also been identified.
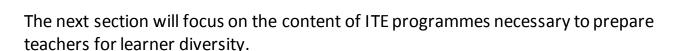
In UK (England), there has been a diversification of routes into teaching (and of types of school, including academies and free schools), which has led to some variability in training opportunities.

In order to work in English maintained schools (including maintained special schools), all teachers must have qualified teacher status (QTS) and must satisfy the Teachers' Standards (Department for Education, 2011), which include a requirement that they have a clear understanding of the needs of all learners, including those with SEN, and are able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them. Although free schools and academies may employ teachers without QTS, they must ensure that their teachers undertake appropriate training to meet the needs of learners, including those with SEN.

In 2014, Sir Andrew Carter chaired an independent review of the quality and effectiveness of initial teacher training (ITT) courses in UK (England). His report, published in January 2015, concluded that the system was working well, but that more needed to be done to ensure that all trainees receive a core grounding in the basics of classroom management and subject knowledge. In response, an independent working group has been established to develop a framework of core ITT content, including consideration of the recommendations around the SEND content. The group, expected to report to ministers in spring 2016, will also consider whether the framework of core content, or certain elements of it, should be statutory.

A further issue is the route into specialist teacher education – for example: for teachers of learners with identified SEN. Decisions regarding the extent to which this can and should be an integral part of ITE – or whether a higher level, specialist qualification is required – depend to a large extent on the country context and understanding of inclusion and diversity.

Latvia has maintained university-based ITE to prepare special needs education teachers, who work both in special settings and in mainstream schools in a support or consultancy role.

The next section will focus on the content of ITE programmes necessary to prepare teachers for learner diversity.

5.2 Developing inclusive practice

The literature review (section 5) notes that there is some consensus around the content of ITE.

However, one key task of ITE that has not been widely discussed in recent literature is that of preparing new teachers to enter a profession:

> … *which accepts individual and collective responsibility for improving the learning and participation of all children, taking account that there will be differences between them* (Rouse and Florian, 2012, p. 11).

This section will, with practice examples, discuss the emerging knowledge and understanding of how best to prepare new teachers to include all learners.

The *Aspiring to Excellence* report, conducted for the Minister for Employment and Learning in UK (Northern Ireland), notes that there is extensive research evidence on how student teachers learn to teach, for example:

> *how they often need to 're-learn' what they think they know about teaching and learning from their own very particular school experience; the difficulties they have in learning to 'see' how effective teachers actually teach (what often looks simply like common sense); the importance of experimenting firstly within a safe environment* (Sahlberg et al., 2014, p. 13).

Critical reflection is the key to the deep understanding necessary to make sense of complex issues, including underpinning values and assumptions. For example, in UK (England), Hellawell (2015) notes that the impact of the revised SEN and Disability Code of Practice (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2014) on teacher education has been to focus on differentiation, personalisation and skills for meeting with learners and families. She concludes that: 'critical engagement with its messages and intentions may better prepare beginning teachers to meet the demands and expectations articulated within' (Hellawell, 2015, p. 15).

Underpinning principles for ITE

In Scotland, between 2007 and 2011, ITE at the University of Aberdeen was re-organised around a set of principles to inform practice that acknowledges and responds to the diversity of learners that are present in every classroom, while at the same time avoiding labelling some children as 'different', with the pitfalls that this presents.

The three underpinning themes were as follows:

- Understanding learning – based on the principle that difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning. This approach also challenges any deterministic views of children's ability and practices based on assumptions around a 'normal' distribution of intelligence.

- Social justice – based on the principle that teachers are responsible for the learning of all children and that difficulties in learning are a dilemma for the teacher, rather than a shortcoming in the child. This principle also rejects the idea of planning for 'most' children with something different for 'some', moving to a rich learning environment that offers a menu of appropriate learning opportunities for all.

- Being an active professional – based on the principle that teachers should seek new ways to support the learning of all children and enhance their participation and that there is no division between mainstream and specialist teachers for learners seen as having SEN. All teachers should work together to support all learners.

Exploration of these themes enables student teachers to challenge many of the existing beliefs and practices that they may encounter when working in schools.

In 2014, a five-year master's level teacher education was introduced in the University of Iceland to give more space to focus on inclusive schools. The university also offers:

- A Bachelor of Arts in International Studies in Education, focusing on education in the context of globalisation, the development of multicultural societies, sustainable development and development studies and education in developing countries. This programme aims to train teachers to meet the needs of a growing group of immigrant and bilingual children in Iceland.

- A 10 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) course in Pedagogy that aims to prepare student teachers to teach students in international and multicultural settings in Iceland and around the world. This course is taught in English and attracts a nationally diverse student population.

- A graduate-level specialisation in Learning and Teaching in Inclusive Schools in a Multicultural Society, which includes a compulsory course on Working in Inclusive Practices (10 ECTS). This is outlined in the following example.

Developing a professional working theory with student teachers

The Working in Inclusive Practices course at the University of Iceland emphasises

critical engagement with learning and teaching in inclusive schooling. The course provides space for student teachers to develop their own professional working theories, established through professional knowledge, experience, reflection and ethical and moral principles. Through lectures, discussion and practical tasks – both in class and online – as well as formal assignments, student teachers are encouraged to respond creatively (e.g. by building a 3D visual model, rather than a written task). In this way, teacher educators demonstrate a range of teaching approaches. In their evaluations, students report a change in thinking, better connections between theory and practice and the development of a rationale for the type of teacher they want to become.

In Finland, student teachers undertake at least one course on inclusive education, although universities have different names for such courses. Recent legislation and the new core curriculum, to be introduced in 2016, emphasise the role of all teachers in student support.

Every university has similar courses for general teachers (in addition to separate education for special education teachers, which is one year's study for teachers with at least two years' teaching experience, or five years for those taking special pedagogy as a major). Now all teacher education emphasises collaboration with other teachers, shared teaching, differentiation and flexible grouping of students.

Valuing learner diversity

The courses for new class and subject teachers at Aalto University aim to illuminate the diversity of needs in every classroom and stress that, according to the new legislation, all teachers now have a role in answering the needs of all learners. The course covers:

- The importance of interaction and co-operation in the work of teachers.

- The importance of mental well-being in learning.

- Special education basic concepts – forms of support, pedagogical guidance, identification of learning difficulties, the challenges of studying, learning and teaching responses, personalisation, and inclusion and its practical implementation.

- Multicultural education basic concepts – guiding documents and different approaches, the realisation of social justice, diverse families, cultures and values, cultural capital and cultural identity, different world views and religions, intercultural communication and multicultural schools.

- Multiculturalism and the diversity of situations in school and kindergarten, and the pedagogical means for the teacher to act on them.

A recent study in Portugal analysed the attention that 17 higher education (HE) institutions give to the theme of inclusive education (Almeida and Lopo, 2015). The current scenario has changed from that described in the Portuguese report prepared for the Agency TE4I project (2009–2012), which noted that inclusion was almost non-existent in course plans and was often optional. However, this recent study notes that the content relating to inclusive education varies widely, resulting in future teachers with different levels of knowledge and skills for working with children with additional support needs.

This situation in Portugal may be helped by the 2014 decree-law (Decreto-Lei 79/2014), which aims to reinforce qualifications for teachers in general education by increasing the duration of study cycles and the relative weight of inclusive education in ITE. Further to including teachers' knowledge, capabilities and attitudes to perform activities in the classroom, the general teaching component now also includes areas of developmental psychology, cognitive processes, curriculum and assessment, educational organisation, SEN and classroom management.

Due to the increasing complexity of teacher education, different approaches involving greater collaboration both within and between institutions and other organisations, as well as practice schools, is likely to be required. A recent study in Norway stressed the need for more co-operation between and consolidation within different teacher education institutions. The report notes that it is not efficient for a single institution to offer a wide variety of subjects (Følgegruppen for lærerutdanningsreformen, 2014).

In Germany, in 2013 and 2014 the standards for teacher education for special education, educational science and all subject teaching areas were revised, with a focus on the requirements for inclusive teaching methods. This development should enable future teachers to deal with diversity and to support the joint learning of students with and without disabilities. These standards are now a basic requirement for the teachers' examination regulations in all 16 Länder.

In March 2015, the Standing Conference of the Ministries of Education of all Bundesländer (Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK), together with the German Rectors' Conference of the Universities (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, HRK), adopted recommendations for 'A teacher education for an educational system with diversity'. As part of a quality initiative by the State Ministry for Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF), all universities in Germany with teacher education programmes can apply for development grants. One of 16 main goals relates to improving how inclusion and heterogeneity is addressed at all stages of teacher education.

Variations between universities remain. Some universities have added an extra module to their programmes, some have a more integrated concept and have changed the modules on many subjects, while in others (e.g. Bielefeld, Potsdam) there are new teacher education programmes with a dual-degree examination (primary education in combination with special education). The number of ECTS in the programmes also varies.

In France, the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research is considering re-organising initial training for special teachers, with a focus on the certificates of professional competences for both primary and secondary level special teachers. The goal is for these certificates to fit the university training of teachers who now need a master's level degree to be recruited. The new programme will focus on common core courses and specific modules, depending on students' specialities and majors.

In Ireland, both the Teaching Council in its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (2011) and the Department of Education and Skills in its *National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People* (2011) recommended the reconfiguration and extension of concurrent teacher education programmes (primary and post-primary) to a minimum of four years and the postgraduate programmes (consecutive pathway) to a minimum of two years. The programme content has also been reconfigured and ITE is now seen as one phase in career-long development.

The revised programmes, introduced between 2012 and 2014, include substantial periods of school placement as central to student teacher development and a number of mandatory elements, such as inclusive education (special education, multiculturalism, disadvantage, etc.); literacy and numeracy; teaching, learning and assessment, including school and classroom planning; differentiation; behaviour management; and ICT in teaching and learning.

Comprehensive reform of teacher education has taken place in Austria, following conceptual work from 2012 to 2014. These developments have been driven by the ratification of the UNCRPD and a governmental agreement to establish an inclusive school system by 2020. The changes are supported by research and integrate different forms of teacher education.

The main changes include:

- Extension of the bachelor's course for primary teachers from three to four years (180 ECTS – 240 ECTS), plus a one-year compulsory master's level course in a selected subject area (e.g. sports, science, inclusive education, etc.)

- A four-year bachelor's course for primary teachers with a specialisation in the field of inclusive education (63 ECTS), plus a 1.5-year master's level course in inclusive education (90 ECTS).

There are currently different arrangements for secondary teachers studying to teach 5th to 8th grade (courses taken at the Pädagogische Hochschule) and 9th to 12th grade (courses taken at the university). The new teacher education could be a first step towards a comprehensive approach for all teachers. For a bachelor's degree, the course is four years (120 ECTS) with two subjects or one subject and inclusive education; for master's level study (120 ECTS), there is in-depth study in one subject or in inclusive education.

The following example illustrates how one university prepares teachers to work with diverse learners.

Pedagogy for all learners

At the Pädagogische Hochschule, Oberösterreich (Austria), student teachers are prepared to teach diverse learners:

- Each student teacher has an obligation to graduate with inclusive pedagogical competences.

- Common study facilitates responsibility for all children, pedagogical knowledge and skills for different needs.

- The extension of the period of study increases the opportunity for in-depth analysis of contents.

- Student teachers develop a different professional understanding.

In primary and secondary study, inclusive content is now added to each subject. Inclusive pedagogy is also a scientific field.

Compared with the current system of teacher education (independent/separate study for primary, secondary and special education), the changes are designed to have an impact on the attitudes, knowledge and skills of prospective teachers. Despite the fact that it is early in the implementation phase, an evaluation is planned to assess the impact of the inclusive study programme.

As can be seen from these discussions of country practice, a number of countries have recently reviewed their teacher education provision and, in most cases, are moving to increase the length of ITE and ensure input on inclusive education. Other countries are already implementing such changes. It is evident, however, that the thinking – and language – around the concept of inclusive education still varies – from a focus primarily on SEN and disability, to a much broader approach. Even for

the countries taking a broader focus on inclusion, there is still a dilemma around the extent to which 'specialist' content is required and, if this is the case, how such content can be integrated to avoid the suggestion that teaching learners with diverse needs requires specialist approaches. It should also be noted that the need to develop good subject knowledge remains. As Coe et al. (2014) highlight, there is a significant relationship between measures of a teacher's content knowledge and gains made by learners. It is clear, however, that there is growing acceptance of the need to prepare teachers for the diversity of today's classrooms – and some evidence of the best ways to achieve this, including the competences needed. This will be the focus of the next section.

5.3 Competences for inclusive teachers

The definition of competences and recent European level work in this area are discussed in the literature review (section 5). The review notes that there appears to be some consensus across Europe about the competences needed for teaching in general including, among others, awareness of diversity issues. The *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012a) is also beginning to have an impact. The *Profile* sets out the following areas of competence:

- *Valuing learner diversity – learner difference is considered as 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 and teachers take responsibility for their lifelong learning* (ibid., p. 7).

In addition to country developments (e.g. Austria and Ireland), a recent publication by the European Union and Council of Europe (Hollenweger et al., 2015) uses the four areas of competence from the *Profile* to link to four visions or goals in a model of inclusive practice designed to support teacher education (please also refer to the final paragraph of section 7.2).

In UK (Wales), a recent report on teacher education (Furlong, 2015) notes that, in the current standards, there are behaviourally-based competences setting out what newly qualified teachers must know and do. The report calls for teacher learning to be seen in a developmental way, with more formal links to practising teacher standards, and for long-term professional learning. In addition, the report notes the key role played by research and critical reflection, with teachers being seen as active professionals and leaders of children's learning.

In Norway, an expert committee recently evaluated and reported on special needs education and on research conducted in this area to consider the question: 'What are the future needs for competence and research in Norway'? (Rognhaug, 2014). The committee concluded that teacher education programmes and institutions should increase the emphasis on inclusion and that there is a need for teachers to undertake CPD in special needs education.

A report on the reform of teacher education in UK (Scotland), *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Donaldson, 2010), highlighted the need to better prepare teachers to work in today's schools – working with other adults as well as young people. The General Teaching Council's newly revised professional standards for teacher registration emphasise career-long professional learning and leadership and management and make it clear that inclusive approaches are 'core business' for all in Scotland's schools.

A critical part of any ITE programme is the school experience that brings together theory and practice. This is discussed in more detail in the next section.

5.4 School practice and inclusive teaching approaches

The literature review (section 5) highlights the fact that little research has been undertaken recently into the development of inclusive teaching approaches. However, a notable exception is the work on 'inclusive pedagogy' – an approach that requires teachers to provide 'rich learning opportunities for everyone' without needing to mark out some as 'different' (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011, p. 14).

Work on the inclusive practice project at the University of Aberdeen (described in the 'Underpinning principles for ITE' example in section 5.2) formed the foundation for more recent work, based on the understanding that inclusion and standards are 'not mutually exclusive but mutually beneficial' (Florian and Rouse, 2009, cited in Mintz et al., 2015 p. 14) and that teachers need to be given pedagogical strategies which show them how it is possible to support the learning of all learners.

Given the vital importance of school practice, there may be limitations to relying solely on schools to plan, provide and monitor experiences for ITE students – as, like the schools themselves – these experiences may vary widely and – whether positive or negative – can have a lasting impact on the practice of new teachers. This may be overcome to some extent by placing groups of teachers in a smaller number of schools, as suggested by the recent review in UK (Northern Ireland) (Sahlberg et al., 2014).

Careful attention needs to be paid to how the elements of college-based ITE and school practice link together. Research in Norway (Finne et al., 2014) shows that there is a great potential for better coherence between the theory learned in

teacher education and the practical experience provided in the classroom. All stakeholders involved in the study (teacher educators, students and principals) identified the need for better co-operation between teacher education and schools.

The following example shows how effective collaboration can support both teacher education and school development.

A collaborative approach to inclusive ITE

The Arbeitsstelle für Diversität und Unterrichtsentwicklung – Didaktische Werkstatt is a co-operation between the Institute for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion, the Institute for Primary Education, and the Ministry of Culture and Education in Hessen, Germany. It aims to support teacher education and professional development, as well as research in inclusive education, literacy, numeracy, natural sciences, and school and curriculum development in primary and secondary school.

The Didaktische Werkstatt facilitates exchange and mutual learning by providing professional development workshops, counselling, and advanced training for practising teachers in the domains of reading, writing, numeracy and science in inclusive education and on cross-curricular issues, such as working with heterogeneous student groups and the construction of individual learning plans.

In special projects ('Praxisprojekte'), student teachers at Goethe University provide special educational support to small groups of learners in schools around Frankfurt in reading, writing or early mathematics twice a week for one school year. These projects are integrated into the university teacher education programme with special preparatory classes and are evaluated on a regular basis. The projects receive financial support from several foundations around Frankfurt and the partner schools are able to integrate the project into their own school development plans (required by the Federal State of Hessen).

In a constant exchange during theory-based classes and practical implementation, student teachers learn how to perform individual assessments, use this information to construct an individual curriculum, implement an individual education plan, and assess the progress of each participating learner. Within the university classes, students have the opportunity to share ideas on teaching and to critically evaluate each other. In this way, the professional development of student teachers is closely monitored.

In examining international trends in teacher education as part of a study for the Department of Employment and Learning in UK (Northern Ireland), Sahlberg et al. considered effective ways to develop 'research informed clinical practice' (2013, p. 9). They suggested that ITE institutions could work closely with chosen schools to

support them to 'become places for clinical teaching practice similar to teaching hospitals that are part of faculties of medicine in many countries' (ibid.).

In 2013, the Teaching Council in Ireland prepared *Guidelines on School Placement* in partnership with stakeholders. The *Guidelines* provide a structure for school placement and aim at promoting collaboration and a balance of responsibility between programme providers and schools.

A different approach, taken in UK (England), includes using placements in special schools and has been shown to be successful in raising awareness of SEN. There is a risk, however, that it could reinforce the idea that specialist skills are needed to work with certain groups and, depending on the school specialism, it may provide experience of only a narrow range of diverse needs.

The following example illustrates how one college in Belgium uses school placement to develop teachers' competences to work with diverse learners.

Developing inclusive competences through school practice

During the advanced Bachelor (Special Educational Needs) Course at University College Leuven-Limburg, students undertake a two-day per week internship for 15 weeks in an inclusive setting. As the college is aware that not every context gives a 'mature' example of inclusive education, guidelines are provided for students, schools and mentors/teacher educators, focusing on the attitudes, knowledge and skills required for inclusive education.

The placement aims to develop critical examination of beliefs and attitudes to teaching in inclusive settings; to find ways to identify and address barriers to learning and the implications of these for teaching; and to co-teach and work in flexible teams. Mentors/teacher educators provide support to ensure that student teachers recognise that they can become good teachers for ALL learners.

When talking about inclusive practice in schools, the diversity of the teacher workforce is also important. Teachers from diverse backgrounds, with different strengths and talents, are needed to connect to students and their families and to reduce stereotyping and provide positive role models. This is discussed further in the following section.

5.5 Increasing diversity among teacher candidates

In Norway, efforts are being made to address the issue of gender balance (as most student teachers are women) and to recruit more students with minority language backgrounds. However, the gender imbalance remains and many students from minority backgrounds who achieve the grades needed for admission to teaching seem to prefer to enter professions such as law, medicine and engineering. This

highlights the need to take steps to make the teaching professions more attractive – not only through increased pay (which is not a ministry responsibility) and other incentives, but by increasing the status of teachers in society. Arguably, making entry to and qualification for teaching more demanding will contribute towards this goal.

To encourage students with disabilities to enter teaching, the law in Norway secures access to higher education for students with physical challenges, stating that, 'as far as possible and reasonable, the physical working environment shall be designed in accordance with the principles of universal design'. The learning environment should also be adapted for students with special needs, as long as the adaptation does not lead to a reduction in the academic requirements. However, few students with disabilities have so far chosen to enter the teaching profession.

In Cyprus, the Hiring of People with Disabilities in the Greater Public Sector Act of 2009 requires that 10% of staff hired for the greater public sector be disabled people. This act applies to teacher recruitment. According to the *Annual Report* of the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (2013), up to 2013, 123 persons were assessed and 50 were considered as people who could be appointed, according to the law. Of these 50 people, only 11 were finally hired (seven as teachers and four as public servants).

The University of Helsinki in Finland has introduced a multicultural teacher education route and students from ethnic minority backgrounds are often recruited. This approach aims to strengthen the multicultural workforce in schools, especially in areas where the population is becoming more diverse.

The Qualititätsoffensive Lehererbildung in Germany supports projects to develop quality teacher education in all phases (from 2014 to 2023), focusing on practically-oriented education. Some measures, such as the promotion of teachers without a teaching qualification, are one among many that should support the recruitment of a more diverse teacher population.

Ireland has made specific efforts to improve access to college and universities through the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE). This admissions scheme offers places on reduced points to school leavers with disabilities and has been set up by a number of colleges and universities for school leavers under the age of 23, who have the ability to benefit from higher education, but who may not be able to meet the entry points for their preferred course due to the impact of a disability or on-going illness. The ten providers of post-primary ITE joined the DARE scheme before 2012, while the five state-funded providers of primary ITE have joined more recently.

The Hochschulzugangsverordnung (University Entrance Regulations) in Austria intend to change the legislation that regulates access to and enables study for people with disabilities, migrant backgrounds and other first languages. From 2015, students with disabilities will be allowed to become trainee teachers. Currently, the number of students with a migrant background is increasing, while the number of students with disabilities is still extremely limited. However, there are co-ordinated efforts to change this situation at national level.

The next section will consider issues around evaluation and quality assurance.

5.6 Evaluation and quality assurance

The Empowering Teachers Literature Review (section 5) highlights the fact that, despite increased attention to evaluation and quality assurance in higher education, there is still considerable work to be done. Regarding evaluation and quality assurance of CPD, the picture is more complex due to the diversity of such opportunities. It is also clear that there is scope for further development, in particular of processes or tools that focus on teachers' preparedness for the diversity of today's classrooms.

In Ireland, the National Council for Special Education recently commissioned a two-year research study, which will examine ITE programmes for student teachers and support for newly qualified teachers (National Council for Special Education, 2015). The study aims to address the question: Do the recent changes to ITE prepare newly qualified teachers to be inclusive, as identified by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education *Profile of Inclusive Teachers*? The study will also consider impact on outcomes for learners and gaps to be addressed in ITE programmes.

5.7 Critical issues for initial teacher education

- A number of countries are working to increase the focus on issues around inclusion and diversity. However, further work is needed to ensure that such content is 'core learning' for all students preparing to teach learners of any age, studying any subject. Inclusive principles are fundamental for all those preparing to teach – not an optional extra. Courses should be based on evidence about teacher professional learning, as well as content, and should provide models of inclusive teaching and assessment.

- The key role of school experience in linking theory and practice and developing inclusive teaching approaches should be further explored. Student teachers need a clear conceptual framework in order to develop their own 'professional working theory'.

- As the key role played by teachers is recognised and, in many countries, standards required for admission to ITE are rising, there should be a parallel increase in status and pay, as well as on-going support to improve retention rates. As efforts focus on recruiting candidates with high academic qualifications, consideration should also be given to the values, attitudes and broader competences deemed to be critical in inclusive teachers.

- While there are efforts in some countries to increase diversity in the teacher workforce, further work is required to explore the impact of flexible entry and different training routes, as well as other incentives.

- Greater collaboration is required within courses, between courses and across institutions (universities/colleges and schools) to ensure co-ordinated provision and a consistent approach to key messages about inclusion and diversity. There is a need to recognise that teacher education is developmental – and that ITE is the start of a continuum requiring strong links in learning between career phases.

- Indicators of effective ITE require further development to ensure that quality assurance is appropriately focused and in line with inclusive principles and the development of the areas of competence for inclusive teachers. Feedback from newly qualified teachers should inform reflection and further development.

The following section discusses the important role of teacher educators – those working in higher education institutions and in local authorities/municipalities and schools.

6. TEACHER EDUCATORS

In the Agency report, *Teacher Education for Inclusion across Europe* (European Agency, 2011) teacher educators were referred to as the 'hidden profession' (European Commission, 2010, p. 1). As the Empowering Teachers Literature Review suggests, the profile of teacher educators has since been raised, although there has been little specific work on inclusive practice.

As ideas about teacher education for inclusion differ widely, and teacher educators form a disparate group with multiple identities, there is also no agreement about the requirements for recruiting teacher educators who can perform this role. The picture across countries is currently fragmented, with teacher educators holding many different qualifications, with different backgrounds and experience. The literature review (section 6) contains more information about European level work on teacher educators.

In many countries, there is no formal induction and few opportunities for development of teacher educators, and levels of involvement in research vary. Some may pay little attention to diversity and lack experience in inclusive schools. However, there are some promising developments in a number of Agency member countries.

The Norwegian National Graduate School in Teacher Education (NAFOL) is a national school offering specialised education and training in the thematic fields of pre-school, school and teacher education. It was established in 2010 to strengthen a research-based perspective in the fields mentioned. Regarding professional development of teacher educators in schools, the 'practice teachers' are experienced teachers, who provide guidance to student teachers during periods of school practice, which is an integral part of teacher education programmes. The practice teacher may also be formally qualified as a mentor. Practice teachers are offered supervisor training by teacher education institutions, although this is not obligatory.

Similarly, mentors working with newly qualified teachers are also considered to be teacher educators. These mentors are also offered supervisor training by teacher education institutions. The supervisor training for both mentors of newly qualified teachers and for practice teachers partly overlaps and is normally two modules of 15 ECTS.

In UK (Wales), the recent Furlong (2015) report notes that standards affect who universities recruit to teach on teacher education programmes and how these people are developed. If universities are assessed on the extent to which they are able to prepare student teachers for practical day-to-day classroom practice, the best staff will be those with recent classroom experience. It also stresses that

teacher educators should be required to develop as 'research active' lecturers (ibid., p. 13).

The reform of higher education institutions in Portugal, however, has established that teacher educators in HE must now have a PhD degree or a specialist title.

At recruitment, the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) in Ireland seeks teachers with an understanding and an appreciation of inclusive education. PDST provides training and development in all areas relating to inclusion as part of internal CPD, using in-house and external personnel to provide relevant policy updates of key changes and advice on leading practice. It also provides training and development to staff of other support services and to staff of ITE/HE institutions with regard to inclusion-related areas.

The *Inclusive Practice Project Final Report* (Rouse and Florian, 2012) made an inductive analysis of the professional development needs of teacher educators in UK (Scotland) by reviewing data to identify themes. These included different understandings of inclusion, the search for common ground, and uncertainty about evidencing inclusive practice. Bridges were built between subject teacher educators and inclusion specialists when agreement was found on important issues, such as the primacy of belonging and the responsibility that teachers have to care as well as teach. The common ground centred on the belief that all children could learn and that there are common teaching approaches across all phases of education. The report suggests that it is helpful to 'suspend judgments about practices linked to other, perhaps less inclusive approaches, rather than seeing them as problems' (ibid., p. 38).

The findings state that teacher educators need to reflect on assumptions about human abilities and diversity and consider how these beliefs are communicated in ITE and CPD programmes. As teacher educators may not have worked in inclusive settings and may not be comfortable with working in this way, the report concludes that professional development for teacher educators is required.

Such professional development is also likely to be required if teacher educators, working in all settings, are to be able to effectively model inclusive teaching approaches and use these as an integral part of their work. The *Overview of International Trends in Teacher Education* conducted for UK (Northern Ireland) suggests that:

> … *formal lectures are supplemented by small group sessions such as seminars, tutorials, workgroups, paired-learning, micro-teaching and problem-solving groups. In addition, training and facilitation in the use of a repertoire of information and communication technologies are essential to the equipping of student teachers for the modern classroom* (Sahlberg et al., 2013, p. 8).

In Germany, most teacher educators are teachers or former teachers and many are linked to ITE courses at universities. Later, they may also be involved in advanced training courses. This school-university collaboration is considered to be crucial in ensuring that teacher educators have experience in inclusive practice and are informed about scientific results and research – especially in their subject and in the field of inclusive education.

6.1 Critical issues for the developing role of teacher educators

The role of teacher educators is now receiving more attention, but is still diverse and fragmented with little agreement about the qualifications, experience and competences required. Further work is needed to establish the most effective approaches to professional development and on-going support for people working in this key role with a particular focus on:

- involvement in research, both to develop evidence-based programmes for teacher education and to support new teachers to engage in and use research in their own inclusive practice;

- ensuring that teacher educators gain recent classroom experience in inclusive schools to develop the necessary understanding of inclusion, diversity and the rights agenda (as opposed to the needs of specific groups) and the ability to model inclusive teaching approaches.

In the following section, CPD and on-going support will be discussed, with a particular focus on increasing the capacity of schools and empowering teachers to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

7. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

The Empowering Teachers Literature Review (section 7) shows the need for clear and coherent links between ITE, induction and CPD to form a continuum of development. The 'disconnect' between teacher effectiveness research and professional learning programmes should be addressed, with a focus on improving outcomes for all learners.

7.1 Induction of new teachers

There is evidence internationally that effective induction is needed to build on ITE and to ensure that newly qualified teachers receive appropriate support, not only to further their skills, knowledge and understanding – and attitudes and beliefs – but also to build the mind-set that they should continue the process of professional learning throughout their careers.

The *Overview of International Trends in Teacher Education* carried out in UK (Northern Ireland) stresses this point:

> *Effective programmes of initial teacher education can be set at nought if they are not built upon in ways that take teachers' professional understanding and skill further forward in a structured way well beyond the point of induction* (Sahlberg et al., 2013, p. 9).

However, as for other 'stages' of teacher education, there is little explicit reference to diversity/inclusion in research or country documentation regarding the induction of new teachers.

In UK (Wales) a Master's in Educational Practice (MEP) was developed in 2012 to enhance and support the teaching practice and professional development of newly qualified teachers. The course is a mix of direct teaching and distance (online) learning, school-based work and mentoring by experienced professionals. Modules include: behaviour management, literacy, numeracy, reducing the impact of poverty on attainment, additional learning needs, child development, reflective practice, leading learning, and action enquiry.

A recent review of teacher education (Furlong, 2015) noted the need to ensure that teachers' professional learning can be supported systematically throughout their careers, with more systematic links between CPD providers, local authority consortia and teacher education centres in universities.

In Norway, an arrangement for mentoring newly qualified teachers has existed since 2010. Newly qualified teachers who start a teaching career are generally offered mentoring by an experienced teacher in the same, or a neighbouring, school. The experienced teacher may also be formally qualified as a mentor, although this

formal qualification is not a requirement. The aim is to give professional and practical support on a one-to-one basis and help newcomers build confidence through access to the collective competence and experience of the school community.

This critical area needs further attention, as the early experience in school and the quality of mentors are highly influential in any teacher's early development.

7.2 National initiatives in continuing professional development

With regard to on-going professional development, in-service opportunities for teachers are becoming increasingly diverse (European Commission, 2015c). There is a move away from formal 'courses', often delivered in a top-down model, towards greater collaboration and use of terms such as 'joint practice development' and 'professional learning'. Among such a range of provision for CPD, the focus on diversity and SEN issues varies widely.

While it is hard to distinguish between more formal CPD (such as accredited courses) and school-based development, the following examples are primarily central initiatives, often organised in response to changes in national policy or centrally identified priorities. Section 7.3 includes examples of more informal, school- or local area-based opportunities.

The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute organise training seminars for pre-primary and primary school teachers at the beginning of each school year. Teachers are expected to attend one such seminar each year. Schools are also expected to organise a seminar on a topic of interest, and to invite academics or other experts to give a lecture/workshop. The topics of inclusive education and collaborative teaching between the mainstream class teacher and the special education teacher to promote inclusion have been included in the programme of seminars for the last three years. Academics specialising in inclusive education issues conducted the seminars.

In Latvia, as more children with identified special needs are included in mainstream education, there is recognition that teachers need CPD. Teachers working in mainstream schools receive new professional development courses, lectures and practical seminars about learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders, behavioural problems, etc. Some higher educational institutions offer a course 'Introduction to special needs education', where knowledge, some professional skills and attitudes towards diversity in schools are formed.

In UK (England), ten Teaching Schools are working with other schools and their ITT partnerships to provide quality training and development and enhance prospective

teachers' skills and knowledge of SEND. The outcomes of these test and learn projects will be reported on at the end of 2016.

The Teaching Schools are just one of a number of providers and, in order to avoid CPD becoming fragmented, UK (England) has developed a range of specialist resources through the National College for Teaching and Learning (NCTL), including advanced-level online modules on areas including autism and speech and language needs to enhance teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills. The National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN, 2014) SEND Gateway was launched in May 2014 and offers a free universal range of SEN CPD for teachers, from early years to post-16. The Gateway enables every teacher to access a package of online learning which takes an enquiry-based learning approach to effectively identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.

In addition, between 2009 and 2014, almost 11,000 new SEN Co-ordinators (SENCOs) were funded to undertake the master's-level National Award for SEN Co-ordination and further contracts were awarded to sector specialists including the Autism Trust, the Communications Trust, the Dyslexia SpLD Trust and the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) to support the implementation of SEN reforms in England and provide consistent information to schools and teachers.

The government is also supporting the charity Achievement for All (AfA3As) to extend the whole-school support currently provided to around 2,000 schools, in order to improve outcomes for learners with SEN and disabilities. Leadership support under the same programme is reaching an additional 1,200 schools, helping them to plan and manage the impact of the SEND reforms in England, as well as to close the gap for children and young people with SEND.

As stated previously, research has indicated the need for a 'continuum of development' and, if single or 'one-off' courses are organised, it should be clear how they fit into such a continuum and link with other development opportunities. In some countries, although flexibility is needed to respond to national priorities, provision is often funded only in the short term with few, if any, opportunities for follow-up and is not therefore likely to be sustainable or to change practice in the classroom.

A strategy for competence and diversity

A more strategic approach is taken in Norway, where in response to recent events, a main goal has been to strengthen teachers' qualifications in migrant education. This has been done through several measures, including prioritising Norwegian as a second language in the national education strategy and introducing a five-year strategy 'Competence and Diversity' (2013–2017) to

In addition to the teacher education provided by higher education schools and training centres, in Portugal in 2012, the Ministry of Education organised in-service teacher education according to identified needs: early childhood intervention, ICT, Braille, orientation and mobility, and written Portuguese as a second language for deaf students. The Ministry of Education is currently organising a plan for 2015–2020 that aims to support the professional development of in-service teachers with regard to inclusive practices, again taking a longer-term approach.

In Finland too, professional development has been planned in response to the new national core curriculum to be introduced in 2016. This emphasises inclusion and participation, as differences in learning and student diversity have to be taken into account in all school subjects. The new curriculum is based on phenomena instead of traditional 'subjects', which makes a more comprehensive approach possible and is likely to support more diverse learning and teaching styles. This development has led municipalities (with teacher education and universities) to start in-service training for all teachers. In a bottom-up process, the teachers have had their say about the core curriculum. The municipalities and schools have to renew their curricula according to the national core curriculum guidelines, and teachers and other school professionals have to think about the implications for teaching practices. The emphasis on inclusion (already in 2014 documents) will now be refined with the whole content of the core curriculum (not just the former *special education* part) taken into account.

An important part of CPD in Finland is the 'Kasvatustieteen päivät' (educational conference for teachers and teaching researchers), which has theme groups relating to inclusive practices. In vocational teacher education, a *Handbook for Special Education Teacher Education* has been produced, which (despite the title)

emphasises inclusion and uses the Agency's *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012a) as a reference. This approach, involving teachers in the planning process, seems more likely to engage teachers and therefore have a greater impact than training planned to meet 'top-down' priorities.

The wide variety of approaches taken to CPD raises issues around quality assurance, which is lacking in many countries, with little or no follow-up or means of learning about the success – or otherwise – of development opportunities and the impact on learners.

This is not the case in Ireland where, in October 2014, the Teaching Council embarked on a consultation process with teachers to learn about their experience of professional learning. The goal was to enhance the Council's understanding of their learning journey, so as to better inform a national framework for teachers' learning. The feedback was analysed and a first draft of the framework, *Cosán*, was developed (Teaching Council, 2015). The draft framework is rooted in the core values that underpin all of the Council's work: shared professional responsibility, professionally-led regulation and collective professional confidence. A second phase of consultation is now taking place and the final phase involves a series of workshops for teachers in October/November 2015.

A suite of professional standards in UK (Scotland) underpins teachers' practice and provides the benchmark for entry into the teaching profession, standards for career-long learning and for leadership and management. These standards support teachers to critically reflect on their practice and plan professional learning throughout their careers. Every teacher should have a professional learning action plan and areas include: pedagogy; learning and knowledge of subject area; curriculum and assessment; enquiry and research; educational contexts and current debates in policy, education and practice; sustaining and developing professional learning; and learning for sustainability. The principles of career-long professional learning include: reflection on practice, experiential learning, collaborative learning, and cognitive development. Different routes can be taken – from personal reading to formal study – and professional learning should be assessed in light of the impact on learning/teaching processes and the well-being and achievement of learners.

The Scottish Teacher Education Committee has also developed a National Framework for Inclusion in education (revised in 2014). This gives attention to teachers' attitudes and beliefs, developing skills and knowledge, and focuses on actions in the classroom and school. It is the result of collaboration between seven universities and sets out key questions for consideration at every stage of a teacher's career – from student teachers and teachers to advanced professionals and teacher educators.

Finally, work by Hollenweger et al. (2015) provides a framework for the development of inclusive practices that seeks to facilitate dialogue between teacher education providers and schools. They have developed a 'tool' to identify gaps and learning needs and serve as a basis for reflection, for the formation of partnerships and for giving/receiving feedback. It can also be used as a self-review by schools and to support ITE and CPD for teachers, mentors and teacher educators. The tool is based on the four areas of competence identified in the Agency's *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012a) and these have been expanded to provide a focus on practice, including access, participation, learning and achievement (learner focus – valuing learner diversity); transforming learning capacity (curriculum focus – supporting all learners); enabling social and physical environments (contextual focus – working with others); and competent inclusive practitioners (teacher focus – taking responsibility for lifelong learning).

7.3 School-based professional development

The Empowering Teachers Literature Review provides evidence (for example: Cordingley and Bell, 2012; Walter and Briggs, 2012) that the best CPD is collaborative, sustained over time, connects practice to theory and focuses on learner outcomes. It should involve teachers in a choice of activities, provide opportunities for mentoring and coaching and be supported by the school leadership, as well as by external expertise.

All these characteristics point to CPD that provides on-going support, so it follows that efforts should be made to ensure that all teachers receive such support in ways that contribute to their career-long professional development. It appears, as noted previously, that there has been an increase in such teacher-driven, collaborative CPD in recent years.

However, for such development to be effective, the role of school leaders is critical and leaders also need support to identify teacher needs and source (and/or organise in-house) quality opportunities to meet those needs in a way that will impact on learner outcomes. School leaders also need to have mechanisms in place for the evaluation of professional development in all its forms, to ensure that feedback informs and further improves CPD practice.

Examples of such support can be seen in the reports written following visits undertaken for the Agency Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education project in 2013 (please refer to: http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/organisation-of-provision).

At Nossebro School in Sweden, class/subject teachers were paired with special education teachers. This helped general teachers to realise that there is no 'quick fix' for many of the difficulties that learners encounter and that they often had the

necessary strategies in their repertoire. Following conversations with colleagues, they found that they were able to adapt to new situations and make best use of their own competences. The teachers found this type of support concrete and geared towards the learners in the classroom and stated that 'co-operative teaching is the best form of competence training' (European Agency, 2013b, p. 19). At the same school, research played a key role in developing practice – collaboratively, connecting learning to the teachers' own experience. It also helped to develop a common language to use when discussing difficult ideas.

In the Waldschule in Flensburg, Germany (European Agency, 2013c), team teaching was also considered to be a strength, with regular teachers meeting to discuss problems and how to solve them. Teachers felt that they had time to reflect and address issues as a team. Again, research informed the development process and there was a link with a local university.

The report on the Inklusive Mittelschule in Vienna reports on the process of coaching used in particular with new teachers in this inclusive school. One teacher noted:

> *It is very important to know that there is always a person I can ask questions. I feel safe. I have learned that this school provides the space for learning for all learners* (European Agency, 2013d, p. 21).

In all these examples, strong and supportive leadership was a factor: being open to new ideas and helping staff to be innovative in response to the challenges faced in ensuring the full participation of all learners in the learning process.

As the example from Sweden shows, a key task for leaders is enabling teachers to work together to share complementary experience and expertise in order to benefit all learners. The *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* (European Agency, 2012a) also notes that collaboration and teamwork are essential approaches for inclusive education. The following example illustrates the effectiveness of peer learning as teacher professional development.

Team teaching as professional development

In Ireland, team teaching is increasingly used as a means of promoting inclusive learning among teachers, thereby providing professional development for teachers at all career stages, including support for instructional leadership.

Effective team teaching supports teachers to enact chosen methodologies. As well as positive outcomes for learners, teachers involved in effective partnerships report their appreciation of the opportunity to learn in real time in real classrooms. They also experience an enhanced sense of professional belonging, develop new professional relationships and learn new methodologies, while also

> returning to forgotten good practice. This approach also helps teachers to reflect during lessons to gain a greater insight into how students learn or are prevented from learning. They feel empowered by having more choice in the ways in which they respond to students that, in turn, builds confidence and competence.
>
> Emerging evidence from Ireland suggests that team teaching has the potential to be a key driver in promoting inclusive learning among students and workplace learning among teachers.
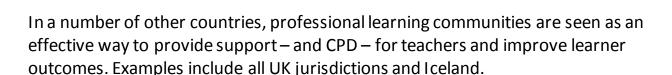> (http://www.cocorkvec.ie/index.cfm/page/teamteaching).

Some countries are attempting to develop support services with a clear remit that can provide a consistent approach – and consistent quality of support. Ireland's national in-service provision for teachers is designed and delivered jointly by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and the Inclusion Support Service (please also refer to the 'Targeting resources to build school capacity' example in section 4.2). This service aims to:

- facilitate effective capacity building among the teaching community and provide local support, in association with other services;

- provide CPD and support to teachers in the area of SEN, with a focus on learning and teaching;

- target and access best practice and create a database of expertise within the teaching profession in association with other agencies/providers;

- provide feedback to a range of national and local stakeholders.

A key component of PDST's professional development is in-service and school-based support for those teaching learners with English as an additional language and also exceptional ability. PDST designs and delivers CPD modules on team teaching to promote the use of inclusive teaching and learning methodologies in the classroom. It also ensures that schools participating in the 'Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools' programme, the national educational initiative for tackling educational disadvantage, are prioritised for CPD support in a range of intervention programmes.

In Austria, support is provided for the compulsory school development process 'SQA' (Schulqualität und Allgemeinbildung), which requires all authorities in the school system to make development plans, which are monitored and focused through asking different questions (e.g. about the pathway to inclusion, individualisation and differentiation, etc.). Austria also expects a change in the professional role of the teacher for inclusive education and special needs. The new role will focus on supporting and counselling schools in their development as inclusive schools and working as counsellors in support centres.

In a number of other countries, professional learning communities are seen as an effective way to provide support – and CPD – for teachers and improve learner outcomes. Examples include all UK jurisdictions and Iceland.

7.4 Critical issues for continuing professional development and support

- There is a need to address the gap between teacher effectiveness research and professional learning and develop more effective quality assurance mechanisms and appropriate indicators to monitor the effectiveness of CPD and support in schools (what works, in what situations and why), empower teachers and increase school capacity/capability for inclusive practice.

- The importance of induction for new teachers is increasingly recognised, but this needs to build on ITE as part of a continuum – and include the systematic development of competences for inclusive practice. While some flexibility is required to enable countries to respond to new situations (e.g. arrival of refugees), an adequately resourced, strategic approach is required, underpinned by a clear conceptual framework to support sustainability.

- Support for school leaders is needed to enable them to organise in-house collaborative opportunities according to context and teacher development needs in an outward-looking strategy that also includes links to research and use of external expertise.

In the final section, all of the critical issues raised in the study will be considered and prioritised to focus on implications for future work.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

This case study considers current issues raised by examples of wider education policy, ITE and CPD practice in 17 Agency member countries across Europe. The work has focused on empowering teachers to meet the diverse needs of all learners. This section will draw together the critical issues raised in each section and consider the implications for future work in this area.

8.1 Drivers for change

Change in the education system is widely considered to be necessary in order to take account of the increasing diversity of today's classrooms. The need for change is also being 'driven' by the rapid development of the knowledge society and ICT and the uncertain needs of the future labour market. As Hargreaves and Shirley say:

> *Educational standardization has dumbed down our curriculum, burdened our schools with bigger government and overbearing bureaucracy, and has not enabled us to adapt flexibly for the future. These Old Ways … are ill suited to the fast, flexible and vulnerable, New World of the 21st century* (2009, Preface, p. X).

Clearly, maintaining the status quo is not an option.

At international level, the UNCRC and the UNCRPD require a move to a rights-based approach in education that, in turn, demands a change in the relationship between teachers and their students. Teachers are no longer required to merely transmit knowledge, but need to work more closely in partnership with young people as facilitators of learning.

At European level, ensuring the participation of all learners in education is increasingly seen as way to combat racism and discrimination and to cultivate mutual respect as a foundation for active citizenship and social cohesion. The European Commission stresses the critical role of education and training in the new agenda outlined previously. It also notes that 'inequality is at its highest level in 30 years in most European and OECD countries' and that this 'has a negative impact on educational outcomes, since education systems tend to reproduce existing patterns of socioeconomic status' (European Commission, 2015b, p. 28).

In order to break this inter-generational cycle of low achievement and bring about greater equality, teachers again play a key role, along with school leaders, teacher educators and other key professionals. All young people must be given equitable access to a high-quality education that will impact on their longer-term opportunities. This will not be achieved if the education – and quality – of teachers varies widely throughout countries, regions and even within individual schools. While the effect of attending different schools is relatively small (Wiliam, 2013),

research shows that teacher effectiveness can vary widely (Hanushek, 2011). In both primary schools (Hamre and Pianta, 2005) and secondary schools (Slater et al., 2009), effective teachers were found to provide greater benefits to lower achievers – so increasing teacher quality can also help to close the gap in attainment and support the move towards a more equitable system.

8.2 Implications for wider policy development

As has been shown in this study, **a clear vision is needed to support work towards country level legislation and policy that sees inclusive education as the responsibility of all policy-makers and all stakeholders in education**.

An agreed vision and, importantly, underpinning values are the key to ensuring the alignment of policies that impact on the organisation of provision, curriculum, assessment and pedagogy and systems of accountability. A cohesive system that supports the participation of all learners and attends to their well-being is the best way to raise achievement for all learners – but requires teachers to be empowered through a strategic approach to effective initial education and on-going professional development and support. **Countries should consider the competences needed at all stages of teacher education to ensure consistency in ITE and CPD at national level – and in particular to ensure that diversity is at the core of every programme.**

Jan Truszczyński, former Director-General for Education and Culture at the European Commission, recognises that education policies alone cannot tackle inter-generational cycles of deprivation and educational disadvantage and notes the need for cross-sectoral approaches to link education and training policies with employment, finance, youth, health, housing, welfare and other services. He states that:

> … *a multi-faceted response to vulnerability on and around schools, the only universal service where the well-being of children and young people can be regularly monitored, would seem a wise step to achieving universal active inclusion* (Edwards and Downes, 2013, p. 7).

As shown in the conceptual framework for this study, political support is required to provide an appropriate policy context for ITE and CPD and also to support the development of the inclusive school system that is critical to enabling student teachers to experience effective inclusive practice during their programmes.

Finally, **politicians and education leaders should also develop systems of accountability that trust teachers to make decisions about their day-to-day work and their own professional learning so that they are further empowered to impact positively on outcomes for all learners.**
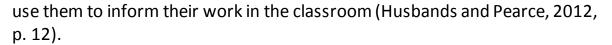
8.3 Implications for teacher education and professional development

This study recognises the need for countries to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession. While there is also a need to make sure that the most suitable candidates are selected (including students from diverse backgrounds and with wider experience beyond education), a key factor is that new entrants not only have high academic qualifications, but that they have 'a personal passion for what is to be taught and for the aspirations of learners' (Husbands and Pearce, 2012, p. 12).

Wiliam (2013) notes that merely raising the bar for entry into teaching would take too long and is likely to meet with only modest success. **Alongside changes to ITE, therefore, a strategy is also required for parallel – and consistent – developments in CPD for all serving teachers.**

Drawing on recent research and the practice examined in this study, it is clear that countries need to work to agreed areas of competence for the whole continuum of teacher education. The following eight key considerations are common to ITE, induction and CPD and should form the basis of a strategic approach to the career-long development of all teachers.

1. Support should be given to all teachers to enable them to confront their attitudes and beliefs and recognise that diversity is the 'norm' in schools. They should accept that all learners – many of whom may require support for different reasons, at different times – are their responsibility.

2. In accepting responsibility for all learners, teachers must then be empowered to provide support, in particular to learners vulnerable to marginalisation. This should be an integral part of their daily practice, rather than an 'additional' task. Flexible national and local curriculum and assessment frameworks should enable teachers to provide high-quality and relevant learning opportunities for all learners.

3. Support and feedback (for example: through coaching and mentoring) should be provided for all teachers and school leaders in order to increase the capacity and capability of schools concerning learner diversity and to facilitate early intervention rather than later 'compensatory' measures.

4. Teachers no longer work in isolation. As outlined previously, there is increasingly a need to work with colleagues in schools – and beyond – to provide for learners in the most effective way. In particular, teachers need to work in partnership with learners and their families and listen to their views.

5. Teachers need to engage with research and take a reflective approach to their own practice, individually and with colleagues, to develop a 'working theory'. Teachers need to make 'active connections' between ideas from research and

use them to inform their work in the classroom (Husbands and Pearce, 2012, p. 12).

6. All teachers require a period of induction, but then further attention to on-going development. Research shows that, after the first two or three years of teaching, improvement tends to slow (Rivkin et al., 2005). There is a need to 'create environments in which all teachers embrace the idea of continuous improvement' (Wiliam, 2013, p. 55), recognising the impact that they have on young people and their life chances. This, in turn, requires a culture of trust and professionalism developed through effective self-evaluation.

7. On-going professional development may involve using resources in different ways and, in particular, drawing on the social capital that already exists within schools, between schools and in wider communities. Ainscow points out that such an approach creates 'pathways through which expertise and lessons from innovations can be spread' (2015, p. 2). Peer learning and strategies, such as co-teaching, using complementary expertise, and support from appropriate external sources, are valuable – and often more personalised – forms of professional development.

8. Support and advice is also needed for school leaders to ensure a focus on learning and action to increase the capability of the whole school staff. A recent study found that leadership is one of the main drivers of the quality of teaching (Barber et al., 2010, p. 5). It is also important to consider the development of leadership skills in teachers and middle managers to share or 'distribute' leadership tasks and ensure sustainability.

In order to address the aforementioned points, countries may wish to draw on the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* developed by the Agency in 2012 (please refer to section 5.3 for details). Further work may be required to develop effective and consistent teacher assessment mechanisms across all forms of teacher education.

In order to bring about sustainable change, attention should also be paid to on-going evaluation and quality assurance of ITE and CPD. Both short- and longer-term follow-up with teachers and school leaders is necessary and outcomes should be used to inform future development so that programmes are based around content and methodology that have demonstrated impact on teacher competences and, ultimately, learner outcomes.

8.4 Implications for teacher educators

Countries need to further increase the profile of and attention to the role of teacher educators and develop a clear idea of the competences needed for them to contribute effectively to the development of inclusive teachers. This will include

the underpinning values and beliefs that support inclusive practice, knowledge and experience of diversity in the classroom and different approaches to pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. All teacher education and professional development programmes should reflect these values and model appropriate inclusive practice. Teacher educators should also develop research skills and be able to support teachers to engage with ideas from research, as well as to use research methodology as a means of evaluating and improving their own practice. Similarly, teacher educators should regularly update their skills in ICT and be familiar with its use in the classroom to improve access to learning.

Coaching and mentoring skills are also likely to improve the effectiveness of the on-going feedback and support that teacher educators provide to teachers throughout the continuum. **Countries therefore also need to take a strategic approach to the recruitment and on-going development of teacher educators in higher education institutions and other professionals, including school leaders, with responsibility for CPD in schools.**

If appropriately qualified and experienced teacher educators are in-post at higher education institutions, links between these institutions and schools should be improved to provide input on recent research, to support the development of teachers' own research skills and to provide on-going support to both teachers and school leaders regarding pedagogy and, in particular, inclusive practice.

8.5 Concluding remarks

OECD notes that the challenges for education systems are likely to intensify and that, in order to address them, countries will need:

> to create 'knowledge-rich' evidence-based education systems, in which school leaders and teachers act as a professional community and have the authority to act, the necessary information to do so wisely, and the access to effective support systems to assist them in implementing change (2009, p. 26).

This study has outlined some ways forward for countries to consider in developing such systems, recognising the major part played by teachers and the overriding need to empower them through on-going support and opportunities for personal and professional development. Although this study has primarily drawn on information from European countries, the issues outlined previously will have wider application and underpin the development and implementation of policy and practice for inclusive education and, in particular, teacher education, regardless of the country's stage of development. It is only through such policy and practice that education systems will meet the aim expressed by Barber et al. – that, in order to challenge inequality, every child is 'on the agenda always' (2012, p. 57).

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