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**Conference or Workshop Item**

**Title:** Including children with special educational needs: how can we better prepare teachers to respond to the challenges and opportunities?

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**Example citation:** Garner, P. (2013) Including children with special educational needs: how can we better prepare teachers to respond to the challenges and opportunities? Invited Keynote presented to: *Educational Leadership & Management in Special Education (ELMIS) International Congress on Special Education, Necmettin Erbakan University, Aksehir, Turkey, 19-21 June 2013.*

**Version:** Presented version

<http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/5716/>



# Including children with special educational needs: how can we better prepare teachers to respond to the challenges and opportunities

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Keynote Presentation  
International Congress on Special Education (ELMIS)  
Necmettin Erbakan University, Turkey (19-21 June, 2013)



# What makes inclusion work?

- a climate of **acceptance** of all pupils;
- careful preparation of **placements** for SEN pupils;
- availability of sufficient suitable teaching and personal **support**;
- widespread **awareness** among staff of the particular needs of SEN pupils and an understanding of the practical ways of meeting these needs in the classroom;
- sensitive allocation to **teaching groups** and careful curriculum modification, timetables and social arrangements;
- availability of **appropriate materials** and teaching aids and adapted accommodation



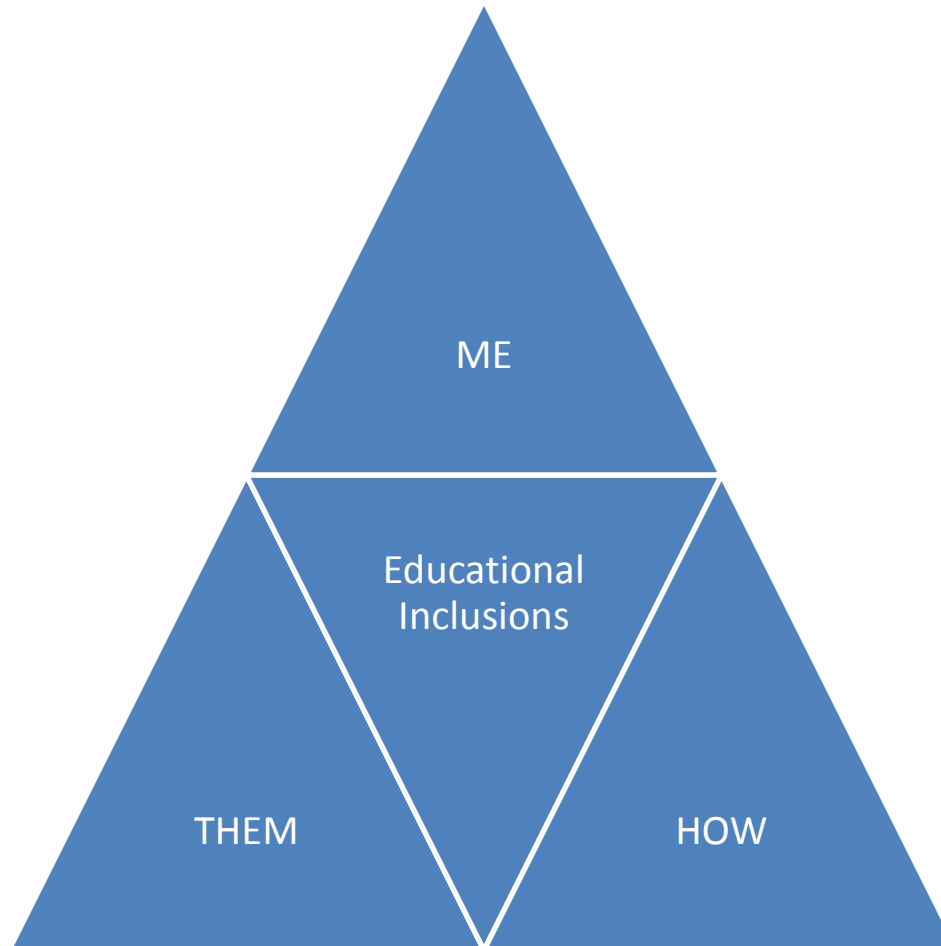
‘... one of the greatest barriers to inclusion is that teachers feel that they are not trained to deal with inclusion, diversity, behaviour and SEN. Teacher education, therefore, has to be reformed so that teachers are better prepared to work in inclusive ways. This has to apply to all teachers, not just some’

(Rouse, 2010)

Attitudes of practitioners are viewed as crucial (Forlin & Bamford, 2005).

Considerable discrepancy between classroom-based teachers, school leaders and education administrators.

International research has indicated the benefits to all learners & teachers of developing inclusive practices (Wedell, 2008; Gillinson & Green, 2008);





## Knowing Me (Personal development)

- beliefs
- self-actualisation
- soft-skills & aptitudes

## Emotions & relationships...

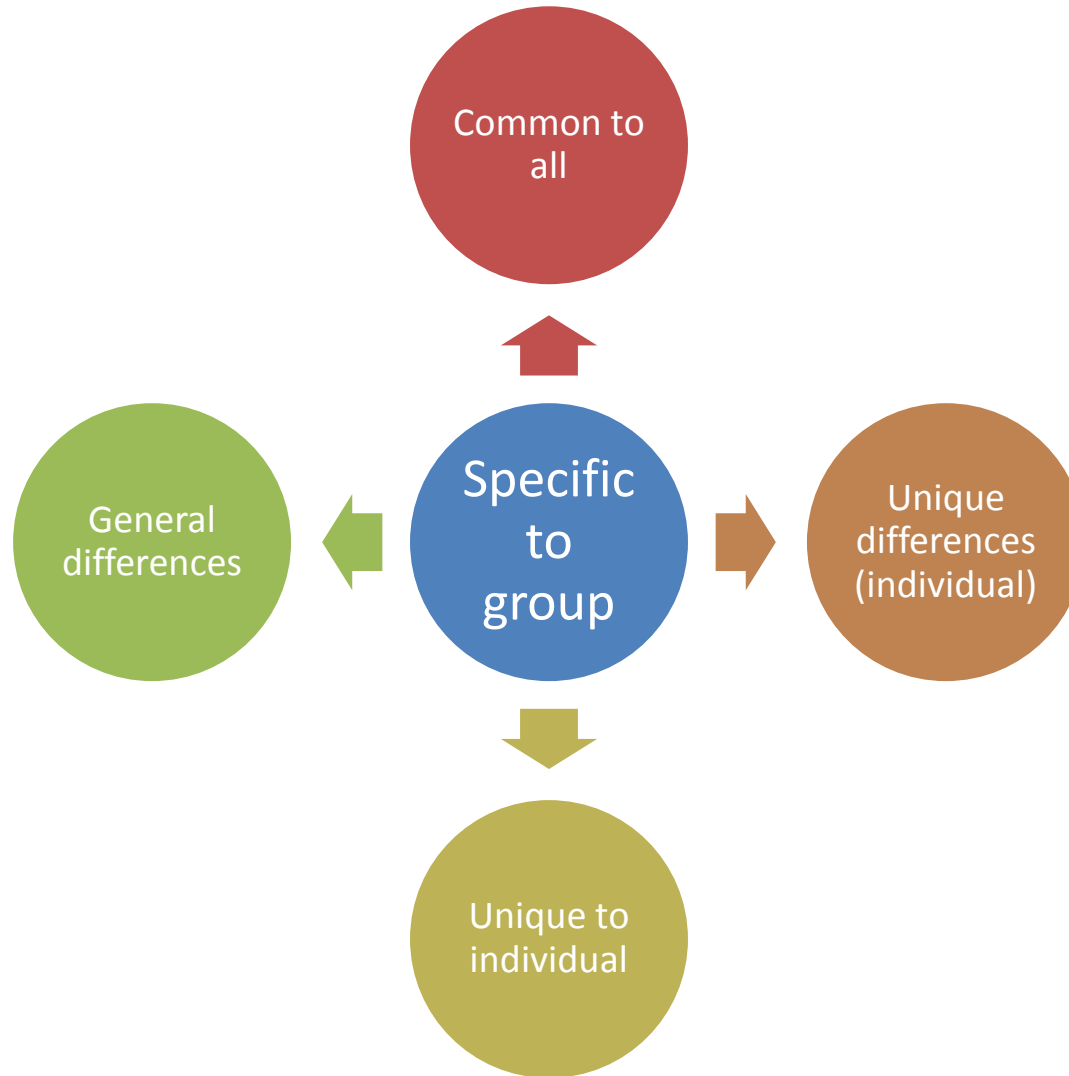
“Emotions are central to human life. They are part of every thought, decision and response”

Caine, R. (2005) *Brain/Mind Learning Principles in Action*. Thousand Oaks:  
Corwin Press

## Knowing Them

- understanding cause
- relationship-building
- children as mirrors / voices

## CsAsRs orientations



## Knowing How

- child development
- outsider knowledge
- supported interventions

## Knowing How: securing an equilibrium



### **ACADEMIC**

Language  
Reading  
Mathematics  
Science  
etc.



### **DEVELOPMEN TAL**

Physical/motor  
Communication  
Sensory  
Etc.



### **SOCIAL**

Behaviour  
Relationships  
Cooperation  
Etc.

## Leadership imperatives: recent theorising and research

- Motivation: encourage, trust and value colleagues to do well.
- Use of positive affirmations: overt and directed in the use of praise and encouragement
- Modelling positive behaviour: leading by example, especially in teaching and learning.
- Recognition of personal strengths and capabilities: secure in self-knowledge (including recognising areas for development)





## Educational inclusion requires a leadership focus on:

- willingness among all staff to play an active part in inclusion;
- knowing and understanding the barriers to learning encountered by pupils
- recognising pupils' preferred learning styles (VAK)
- utilising a range of teaching approaches to remove barriers to achievement
- ensuring pupils have opportunities to work in pairs, groups, as a whole class, and individually
- clarity about the role and expectations of all support staff
- utilising positive praise with pupils, and enable them to make responsible choices in relation to behaviour and learning
- creating an appropriate emotionally literate classroom climate & a positive learning environment

Effective inclusion does not entirely rely on specialist skills and resources. It requires:

- strong leadership from the head-teacher in promoting inclusion;
- positive attitudes towards children who face difficulties in school;
- a greater responsiveness to meeting individual needs;
- a willingness among all staff to play an active part in inclusion;
- the creation of a positive learning environment.

Never underestimating the potential of any child is the starting point. Every child is good at something.

“The welfare and education of children with disabilities cannot develop unless a school has personnel who are specifically trained; more than that, all of the staff – whether they deal directly with children with learning difficulties or not – need to establish and develop positive attitudes to these children...inclusion cannot flourish without this”

(Head teacher, China 2013)

‘A curriculum for students with diverse SENs and disabilities should be like a sapling: new and full of life, but able to develop and thrive in spite of external pressures. It should bend with the wind in order to survive. In the end it might not look like a tree at all ’

(Head teacher, England – 2011)



*Thank you  
for listening*

Written and presented  
by Professor Philip Garner

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