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Special Education Today in the United Kingdom

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Special Needs Education Today in the United Kingdom

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CHAPTER OVERVEW

Understanding that the United Kingdom (UK) is made up of four separate but linked countries: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales is an essential starting point for considering Special Needs Education in the UK today. However, while the strong similarities and links between the different countries and their own educational systems often justifies grouping them for general discussion purposes, this can obscure important differences. Differences in national contexts have resulted in variations in special education policy (e.g. in the language used), and practices (e.g. types of data collected), making some direct comparisons difficult - if not impossible. In this chapter, consequently, the shared concerns that are relevant across all of the countries of the UK are discussed broadly, while differences are identified to make the distinctive nature of each country context explicit. Where data are available, some examples are provided to enable the reader to make comparisons.

The chapter will consist of 3 major sections each with a number of relevant sub-sections. The common, but mistaken, use of the term England to refer to the UK or Britain reinforces the misunderstanding that the island of Britain is one country. This error further compounds confusion about the relationships between Britain and the other devolved countries of the UK. To clarify this situation, **section 1** attempts to contextualise UK developments by, for example, describing changes in the broader UK social milieu within which education - and special needs education - are embedded. We will also discuss developments within the general school system and some of the recent educational agendas being forged within the devolved countries. **Section 2** focuses on UK developments with respect to special needs education more generally, as well as emerging trends within each of the devolved countries. With respect to special needs education, across the UK, three discursive influences can be seen to have impacted the consciousness and practice of UK educators, ie., "exclusion", "integration or assimilation" and, more recently, since the adoption and international use of the term inclusion (eg UNESCO, 1994; 2000), there has been much talk about "inclusion"

and "inclusive education". **Section 3** addresses selected current issues and challenges, then discusses some of the implications of these for UK teacher education.

At this stage it should be said that, in order to maintain consistency throughout the book, we have endeavoured to address most of the topics suggested by the editor. However, of necessity, so as to take account of the specific UK context, the writing framework may take a slightly modified form. Nevertheless, the story told in this chapter makes use of the very substantial knowledge base and practical experience of four UK[1] practitioners, academics and researchers.

SECTION 1: THE UNITED KINGDOM: AN INTRODUCTION

Essentially, the interrelated but distinct nature of the national contexts of the countries of the UK is historical. The early 18th century political union of Great Britain brought England, Scotland and Wales under a single form of government in 1707. In 1800 a further Act of Union added Ireland until it was partitioned in 1921 to become the Irish Free State. However, during this time of political change, Northern Ireland opted to remain a part of the UK, hence today references to the United Kingdom are to Great Britain and Northern Ireland, also commonly (although incorrectly) referred to as Britain.

While education in each of the four countries has many features in common, Scotland and Northern Ireland have always had separate systems. Historically Scotland's education system has served as a distinctive marker of national identity and pride; an aspect indeed of resistance to assimilation with England (Anderson, 2003). In Northern Ireland, but for different historical and political reasons, in part due to the direct rule by the Westminster Parliament, educational reforms have generally followed developments in England and Wales, which until recently, operated a unified system. However the devolution of political powers within the UK more broadly has led to the emergence of a distinct system of education in Wales since 2007 that is the responsibility of the Department for Children,

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[1] We also draw upon an earlier publication by the first three authors entitled: Education for All in the countries of the United Kingdom. In K. Mazurek & M. Winzer (Eds.). *Special education in an international perspective*, pp. 67-86 and published by Gallaudet University Press, Washington DC. Consequently, here, we record our deepest gratitude to Gallaudet University Press for written permission to make use of this earlier work.

Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) (Welsh Assembly, 2010). Devolution has also led to further distinctions in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

1.1: The Social Fabric of the UK

Like other countries in Europe, the UK has been undergoing rapid economic changes brought about in part by the decline of many traditional industries and mining. Heavy engineering (for example, iron and steel manufacturing, ship building, volume car making) has been replaced by hi-tech industries and the service sector (tourism and financial services). At the same time as these major economic changes, the UK is becoming increasingly urban and multicultural (de Blij, 2005). Government statistics estimate the population to be 63 million people (Office for National Statistics, 2012). Table 1 shows the 2011 census estimate for the main ethnic group categories. However, regional variations are substantial.

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Include Table 1 here

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The UK has a long history of immigration and identifies itself as a multicultural society with a tradition of offering opportunity to others and refuge to those escaping persecution or hardship elsewhere (Home Office, 2007). After the Second World War, the government welcomed immigrants who were needed to help rebuild Britain. From the 1950's immigrants arrived from the former British colonies in the Caribbean and South Asia, and this is reflected in the relatively large ethnic minority groups from India and Pakistan. In recent years, the enlargement of the European Union (EU) has resulted in a new wave of immigrants from the accession states of Eastern and South Eastern Europe. Additionally, an increasing number of refugees have sought asylum in the UK from conflicts elsewhere on the world.

In all countries of the UK, the majority of immigrants tend to be concentrated in urban areas, so, whilst overall numbers of some minority groups may be low, the concentration of groups within particular areas is often high. In addition, there has been an increase in East European migrants moving to rural areas to work in horticulture and farming. In recent years, many schools in these areas received non-English speaking children for the first time, while other schools in urban areas enrolled a majority of students for whom English was not their first

language. However, this is not the only language issue, as there are different dialects of English spoken throughout the UK. Many Welsh and Scottish people speak Welsh or Gaelic; Irish is also spoken in Northern. Ireland, as is the dialect Ulster Scots (Home Office, op cit).

One of the many consequences of the Second World War was public demand for the post-war world to be better than the pre-war world. As part of the post-war reconstruction, the state took the view that full citizenship demanded the social rights of employment, health, housing and education (Carr and Hartnett, 1997). It was out of these expectations and aspirations that the UK moved to establishing a welfare state, which included a new Education Act (Education Act 1944) providing secondary education for all, and a National Health Service (NHS) that was free at the point of delivery. More than sixty years after it was established, the NHS remains a crucial element of the social fabric of the UK and it continues to enjoy high levels of public approval. Nevertheless, since at least the mid 80's, many of the socially progressive policies associated with the welfare state - particularly in England - have been replaced by a post-welfarist commitment to "market democracy" and competitive individualism (Gewirtz, 2002, p 2).

1.2: The General School System

The UK has a long history of universal provision of public education. Children between the ages of 5-16 must attend school (in Northern Ireland the starting age is 4), and the majority remain in education beyond the age of 16[2]. Education is financed largely through national taxation with funds distributed through local authorities, although some schools are funded directly by government. Across the UK, primary schools generally educate both boys and girls but a small number of secondary schools are single-sex schools.

It is important to point out that in all four countries of the UK, faith schools are part of the state funded education system. Since compulsory school attendance laws were introduced in the 1870's and 1880's, the state education system developed in partnership with the mainstream Christian churches. Today around a third of maintained schools in England have a religious character (Church of England, Catholic, with a small numbers of Jewish, Hindu,

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[2] The leaving age in England is being raised to 18 by 2015.

Buddhist and Muslim schools) (Teachernet, n.d.) In Scotland, the majority of schools are effectively secular and are known as "non-denominational" schools.

Currently in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, after five years of secondary education, the majority of students take examinations in a range of subjects at the level of General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). The GCSE is a single-subject examination set and marked by independent examination boards. Students usually take up to ten (there is no upper or lower limit) GCSE examinations in different subjects, including Mathematics and English language. After taking GCSEs, students may leave secondary school or they may choose to stay on at school for two more years (years 12 and 13), or continue their education at a further education college where a range of courses are available. Students who are aiming for university normally take A-Level (short for Advanced Level) examinations. Results on GCSE and A-level examinations are not only important for individual young people, they are also used to compare schools.

Recent reports of poor performances in international tests of mathematics, reading and science made headline news across the UK. For example, the Programme for International Student Assessment Tests, administered every three years by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (PISA; OECD), indicated that the UK's recent performance has "flat-lined" while competitors had improved. The UK remained stuck among the average, middle-ranking countries; in 26th place for mathematics and 23rd for reading, broadly similar to three years ago. In science, the UK was reported to have slipped downwards, from 16th to 21st place, in a downward trend for results in the subject. In a breakdown of the UK results, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland were clustered around the average. Furthermore, the results were particularly poor for Wales which trailed behind the rest of the UK in all three subjects (BBC 3rd December, 2013).

Within all four devolved administrations of the UK, recent curriculum reforms have resulted in what might be called the official curriculum (as opposed to the planned and informal or hidden curricula) becoming a much more demand-led system of skills acquisition with in-built flexibility and responsiveness. For example, from 2008 in England, schools have had a duty to consider the potential of the National Curriculum inclusion statement to improve teaching and learning - a duty to consider the flexibilities that exist to modify or personalise the curriculum and to make it relevant to student's strengths and interests. So that teachers

can match their plans to the needs of all children, teachers must not ignore the following three principles from the English National Curriculum statutory statement on inclusion: setting suitable learning challenges; responding to student's diverse learning needs and overcoming barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups (QCA guidance issued to schools in 2007, www.qca.org.uk/ld).

1.3: Teaching-Learning Agendas within the Four Countries

There is a national curriculum in England, which consists of English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, history, geography, modern languages, music, art and design, physical education, and citizenship. In addition to these subjects are a number of other compulsory courses, such as religious education. Children also take national curriculum-based tests at age 7, 11 and 14. The school level results in England are public and are used to construct league tables of school performance (QCA, 1999).

Since May 2010, with the formation of a new right-wing-leaning coalition Government between the Conservative and the Liberal Democratic parties, schooling in England has seen further significant changes. These have included: the introduction of Higher Education tuition fees; the eradication of the Education Maintenance Grant (EMA; financial support for 16 to 18 year-olds who want to continue their education after school leaving age); the introduction of Academies and 'Free Schools' and proposals to change the National Curriculum and assessment arrangements. Academies were almost exclusively opened by the former Labour Government in areas of multiple social deprivation to replace under-performing comprehensives. They are free of local authority control, gain funding directly from the government, and head teachers (Principals) are given almost complete freedom over such issues as, for example, budgets, the curriculum, hiring staff, term times and the length of school day. Now, however, all schools can apply for academy-style freedoms and Secondary schools ranked "outstanding" by the statutory Inspection quango (Ofsted) are being fast-tracked into the programme while other schools will undergo a more rigorous screening process.

Education in Wales[3] is distinctly Welsh both in terms of the languages of education and the curriculum. Education is seen as playing a key role in the development of a bilingual country and Welsh Government policy is committed to upholding the right of all children to be educated through the medium of Welsh, if their parents so wish. There is also an expectation that the curriculum should be distinctly Welsh in terms of the opportunities learners get to develop and apply their knowledge across the curriculum. While the national curriculum initially applied to Wales, a National Curriculum Council has retained oversight of the curriculum and undertakes a 5 yearly review cycle. Recently there has been considerable investment in the development of the statutory curriculum for all 3-5 year-olds (the Foundation stage). The perception that Wales performs poorly in international comparisons of attainment with other countries of the UK has also had a major influence on recent education policy in Wales, with new literacy and numeracy frameworks and tests for 7-14 year - olds being introduced during 2012.

In 2000, the Scottish Executive of the newly created devolved Scottish Parliament set five national priorities for education. These were: achievement in attainment; a framework for learning that included supporting and developing the skills of teachers and the self-discipline of pupils; inclusion and equality to promote equity and help every pupil benefit from education; teaching values and citizenship and learning for life. Scotland is currently making the transition to a new "Curriculum for Excellence" designed to give teachers and schools more flexibility and greater curricular coherence across the 3-18 age range. The purpose of Curriculum for Excellence is encapsulated in what are called the four capacities - to enable each child or young person to be a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor (Learning and Teaching Scotland, n.d.).The assessment and examination arrangements in Scotland are the responsibility of the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA, 2006). The previous tiered system (called The Standard Grade) offered examination papers at three levels (foundation, general and credit). This system has been undergoing review and revision in light of the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, mentioned above, in order to develop a new framework of national qualifications. As a result new examination and assessment arrangements are expected to replace Standard Grades in 2014.

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[3] Thanks to Dr Jean Ware, University of Bangor, Wales, for this information on very recent educational developments in Wales.

No matter the other similarities and differences between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, educational developments in the province need to set against the back-drop of almost three decades of political violence which saw over 3,700 people killed, and tens of thousands of people injured. The declaration of ceasefires by paramilitary groups in 1994 created an opportunity for political dialogue that led, in April 1998, to the Good Friday Peace Agreement (GPA). The GPA represented an attempt at a fundamental shift within society, a shift away from a 'culture of violence' through the establishment of new democratic structures. It enshrined commitments to pluralism, equality and human rights as essential parts of the settlement. It is now 15 years since the GPA, and, whilst it represented social and political possibilities of immense significance, to imagine that NI had crossed some invisible rubicon where social conflict magically disappeared would be naïve. A realistic assessment of the present peace process suggests that reconciliation remains as yet an unfilled dream.

Segregation features in almost every aspect of life in Northern Ireland: people live, socialize, work and shop in areas where they feel safe (Leitch and Kilpatrick, 1999). Unsurprisingly, segregation also remains a distinctive characteristic of the school system. The vast majority of children and teachers attend schools that can be described as either Protestant (Controlled) or Catholic (Maintained) schools. There has been a trend towards Integrated schools that are attended in roughly equal numbers by Protestant and Catholic students, although, currently, only 7% of the student population attend such institutions (Naylor, 2003).

Northern Ireland retains a selective secondary education system as a result of transfer tests which are no longer regulated by the state because of contentious and unresolved policy changes relating to selective secondary education. This means that, at the age of 11, children in Northern Ireland are segregated at the post-primary stage by ability, and, in some cases, by gender.

Prior to 2008, Northern Ireland followed a curriculum framework similar to the English national curriculum. However, from that date, a revised "Northern Ireland Curriculum" was implemented. This aimed to provide better access to the skills and competences perceived as more relevant to a 21st Century economy, to provide a rich entitlement and greater choice and to enable teaching to be adapted more readily to meet pupils' individual needs and aspirations. The curriculum also includes the study of the Irish language in all maintained

schools and Irish is the language of instruction in a small number of Irish-medium schools (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment, n.d.).

In recent years, policy initiatives in Northern Ireland have prioritised issues of school improvement, raising standards and addressing underachievement in literacy and numeracy (Department of Education, 2008; 2009; 2011). International commitments to establish the ability to read and write as a basic human right (UNESCO, 2000) have been mirrored in Northern Ireland by concerns to raise the literacy and numeracy standards of all children and young people - concerns brought to the fore by a number of influential enquiries and reports critical of the extant situation[4].

At this point it should also be said that, there has been very little actual legislative reform affecting education in Northern Ireland in the last five years, due to the complexity of the political structures. Significant time lags between the planning and implementation stages of strategies, policies or action plans now appear to be a fact of life in the Province. For some, the peace process is now definitely just a protracted talking shop that, unfortunately, is heading into an abyss. The power-sharing arrangements resulting from the GPA are viewed as only serving to perpetuate the sectarian divide, leaving no room for progressive and reforming voices to be heard. Furthermore, as suggested by O' Donnell (2013), it is the case that the NI Executive was framed specifically to suit the post-conflict situation and that it was indeed a strange and limited democratic construct.

Others take a more positive and longer view, pointing to the inevitability of slow progress in the context of transitional societies, and, despite resolution, point to the significant amount of policy consultation and discussion that has occurred. Some academics also point to the work of conflict transformation theories and theorists, such as Lederach (1995; 1997), to help contextualize slow progress and lacunae in decision-making within societies emerging from violent conflict.

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[4] All countries in the UK have school systems that produce very high academic attainments for some pupils, but, there is concern in all countries, not just Northern Ireland, about the long tail of under-achievement for the lowest performing 20 per-cent (OECD, 2007) and the steep rise in the numbers of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET).

SECTION 2: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

2.1: General Developments

As in many other countries, there is a long-standing tradition of special school provision in the UK and many such schools were established during the twentieth century to educate children with disabilities. Although the numbers varied in different parts of the UK, about 2 per-cent of children attended special schools. In addition, until the 1970's a very small number of children were in hospitals or attended 'junior training centres' run by health authorities. The 1970 Education Act in England and Wales, followed by similar legislation in Scotland in 1974 (MacKay and McLarty, 2003) and Northern Ireland in 1984 (The Education Order (NI) 1984; implemented from January, 1986), ended the longstanding practice of classifying a small minority of children as uneducable, and put a stop to the arrangements for classifying children suffering from a disability of mind as children unsuitable for education at school. It also took away the power of health authorities and relocated responsibility to education authorities. For the first time in UK history, 100 per-cent of school-age children were entitled to education (Vaughn, 2002).

In the 1970's the government established a Committee of Inquiry, chaired by the philosopher (now Baroness) Mary Warnock to undertake a review of special education policy and provision. Further policy developments followed the recommendations of the Committee report, commonly referred to as the Warnock Report (DES, 1978), and its associated Education Acts (1980 in Scotland; 1981 in England and Wales, 1986 in Northern Ireland). These Acts were informed by Warnock recommendations that stressed the non-categorical nature of disability and an ecological or interactive view of special need (SEN) which suggested that up to 20 per-cent of students may have special educational needs at some point in their educational careers.

The idea that up to 20 per-cent of all children might experience difficulty in learning at some time in their school careers required a definition of special educational need that was flexible and sensitive to the range and type of individual differences that make up the school-aged population. Subsequently, children with special educational needs were defined as having significantly greater difficulty in learning than other children of similar age, or having a disability preventing or hindering the child from making use of mainstream educational

facilities, but the term has been problematic. For example, a student with a medical diagnosis or disability does not necessarily have a special educational need, unless special educational provision is needed to access the curriculum. Equally, a child with a special educational need does not necessarily have a disability.

The original intent of a flexible, non-categorical approach to SEN provision was to enable support to be provided to children experiencing difficulties in learning *without* the delay and expense of multi-disciplinary assessment or the stigma of a label. It shifted the focus of special education away from the comfortable certainty of categorical handicaps towards a consideration of learning needs. Not-withstanding the efforts that had been made to replace individual categories of difficulty with one overarching category, this has proved very difficult in practice, for a variety of reasons. Riddell, Weedon and Harris (2012) for example, noted that parents of children with particular types of difficulty, such as autistic spectrum disorder, and voluntary organizations representing these groups, have campaigned for official recognition of specific categories. Government have also found it useful to request local authorities to audit the incidence of particular types of difficulty, partly as an accountability mechanism, but also to inform funding decisions. In England, the practice of gathering data by type of difficulty, which was abandoned following the Warnock Report, was reinstated in the 1990s. More recently, in response to concerns about the lack of specificity in SEN data, the English government has begun to collect data from schools to include 11 categories of SEN (Specific Learning Disability (SpLD), Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD), Emotional and Behavioral Difficulty (EBD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), Hearing Impairment (HI), Visual Impairment (VI), Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI), Physical Difficulty (PD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and other (OTH). However, such data are not collected consistently across the UK. In Northern Ireland, and Wales different categorical data are collected. In Scotland, local authorities provide information to the government on the numbers of children with particular types of difficulty (Riddell, Weedon and Harris, 2012).

Despite the acknowledgement of the interactive nature of special educational needs, the administrative procedures which have been set out to ensure that children are appropriately supported when they experience difficulty are based on an individual needs approach to provision. Commentators, such as Dyson (1991) have also argued that, in emphasising the

requirement that children and young people should be educated within the least restrictive environment (Frederickson and Cline, 2009), the view of pluralism in practice actually underpinning the Warnock Report, and its associated Education Acts, represented more of an "integrationist" (assimilationist) than inclusionist impulse. In other words, that children and young people appeared welcome in mainstream schooling as long as they could be accommodated with additional resourcing without having to change the regular curriculum. This integration discourse was, as Slee (2001) remarked, little more than the calculus of equity, concerned with measuring the extent of a student's disability with a view to calculating the resource loading to accompany the student into school.

All of the UK countries use a variation of a staged assessment and intervention process that is specified in governmental guidance, called a *Code of Practice*. In the table below, the staged assessment procedure followed in Northern Ireland is outlined.

Insert Table 2 here

England and Wales follow a similar approach but stages of action are simplified and refer to School Action (Stage 1 & 2), or School Action Plus (Stage 3 & 4), and Statement. In Scotland, a particular staged intervention model is not specified but local education authorities are encouraged to use a wide range of approaches that 'are built around discrete stages of intervention which seek to resolve difficulties as early as possible and with the least intrusive course of action (Scottish Government, 2005 §25).

As can be seen in Table 2, children with complex needs can be referred for what is known in the UK as 'statutory assessment' by a multi-professional team. Such an assessment might lead to a 'Statement of Special Educational Needs being issued (except in Scotland which issues a Co-ordinated Support Plan, or CSP; see below). Requests for such assessment may be initiated by the school or by the parents and the Statement is reviewed at least annually. As in other countries, following an individual needs approach to SEN provision, there are guidelines to ensure parents' and children's views are included in this planning process. The

Statement and CSP are statutory documents that specify the educational and other provision that is required to meet complex needs.

As in other countries, the relational definition of special needs education as that which is 'additional to' or 'different from' that provided to others of similar age characterizes the legal definitions of special or additional support needs in the UK. As a result, there are many forms of provision in mainstream and special schools, some of which is categorical and some of which is not. Provision may be made in special schools, special units attached to mainstream schools or in mainstream classes. Many mainstream schools offer 'resourced provision' or special 'bases' for children with particular difficulties, but the majority of children with special or additional support needs are educated full-time in mainstream classes, bringing in specialist support as required. Schools in Northern Ireland, England and Wales have a designated SENCo (a special educational needs coordinator) responsible for managing provision for students with SEN. In Scotland, teachers who provide specialist support are referred to as Support for Learning Co-ordinators.

As suggested above, during the post-war period, and following the Warnock Report (HMSO, 1978) special needs education across the UK developed along broadly parallel lines. Following the prominence given to the concept of inclusion in education with, for example, the UNESCO Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), the language of inclusion started to become assimilated within UK legislation. Within England, Wales and Scotland for example, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), amended Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) enhancing the rights of disabled children and their parents by prohibiting discrimination against disabled pupils and prospective pupils. Discrimination was defined as failure to make reasonable adjustments or the provision of less favourable treatment for a reason relating to the pupil's disability. Similar legislation was introduced in Northern Ireland through the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005.

2.2: Early Years Provision

In the UK there is a long-standing tradition of early years education, and care for children under the age of 5 is provided by a wide range of professionals. Childminders, private day care, voluntary sector playgroups, and local authority nursery classes and (in England) all are

considered part of early years provision. For children under age 5, publicly-funded nurseries and pre-schools are available for a limited number of hours each week. Providers of early years education vary enormously in terms of their qualifications and training. While trained teachers will be working in all classes based in school settings (reception and nursery classes) this is unlikely in private day nurseries or voluntary sector playgroups. In these settings staff are likely to have qualifications relating to the care of young children, rather than a teaching qualification.

All of the countries of the UK make provision for children with disabilities and complex needs from birth. The Codes of Practice that accompany special education legislation outline a framework for the provision of services to children from birth through the school years. While the referral for services may be initiated by anyone, in many cases it is the early years practitioners who begin the process of identifying children with special or additional needs. It is common for practitioners to liaise (often through parents/carers) with other agencies - particularly medical - if children have been identified with an impairment of any kind. In these cases, families may be in receipt of disability living allowance, and additional funds will be available to settings and families to fund additional support in addition to access to specialist provision (e.g. speech therapy and physiotherapy). Children with statements of special educational need are given privileged access to settings offering specialist provision/ provision that is considered particularly suitable. In some cases this may mean that a child attends a setting outside of the catchment schools their peers would be expected to attend. In such cases additional funding for transport is provided.

2.3: Contemporary Developments within the Four Countries
ENGLAND

In England and Wales such inclusive policy developments have also existed alongside a broader set of educational reforms having very different policy intent. *The 1988 Education Act* introduced a national curriculum (which specified content), and a national assessment (which specified standards), along with a series of other changes designed to align the schooling system with the methods, cultures and ethical systems of private sector organisations. Ball (2003) described the processes and effects of this post-welfarist social policy realignment as the terrors of performativity. Privileged within performative cultures were outputs rather than beliefs, values or authentic relationships, and conformity to very narrowly defined attainment targets and performance criteria (Wrigley, 2005).

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Initial optimism that the consumerism, marketisation and manageralism pursued during the the late 1980's across the English public sector in general would be moderated during the thirteen year period of the New Labour Government (1997 - 2010) was soon dampened. A plethora of educational policies were introduced during this period targeting special needs education, social, and educational inclusion (including SENDA; see above). Indeed, as Norwich (2013) suggested, because social inclusion became a central pillar of social, economic and educational policy, the conditions for inclusive education were probably at their optimal during this time. Despite this, critical commentaries on the actual inclusive impact of what became known as New Labour's "Third-Way," make uncomfortable reading. In terms of inclusive education, Dyson (2005) argued that wider post-welfarist social policy developments in England had contained inherent contradictions and ambiguities that changed very little in practice. Indeed, despite its laudable aims, he argued that the most disadvantaged children and young people - who traditionally make up the largest proportion of children identified as having special educational needs - continued to be at the greatest risk of impoverished educational experiences, low achievement and limited life chances. Children living in poverty, and/or those with special educational needs, had been made more vulnerable as schools serving areas of deprivation struggled to compete in the educational market (see also, McLaughlin and Rouse 2000; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000).

In May 2010, a Coalition between the Conservative and Liberal Democrats parties came to power with a manifesto dedicated to opposing the previous Government's "bias to inclusion,"[5] as well as legislate for a more choice-based approach to provision for children with disabilities and difficulties in English schools (Norwich, 2013a). In March 2011, a Green Paper laid out the government's vision for a new system to support children and young people identified as having special educational needs and disabilities. Following consultation, the government set out its next stage towards new legislation in the form of a Children and Families Bill (2013). This had its first reading in the House of Commons in February 2013 and covered six key areas of reform. The key measures with regard to special needs education included:

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[5] As Norwich (2013, p, 98) remarked ... " what the Government really meant by bias towards inclusion was more about the previous Government's inclusive-oriented policy initiatives, rather than extensive inclusion practices and developments."

- A single assessment process (0-25) axing the current system of "School Action" and "School Action Plus" assessments, and replacing them with a single stage called "SEN Support";
- An Education, Health and Care plan (EHC) to replace the Statement;
- An offer of a personal budget for families with an Education, Health and Care plan;
- A requirement for local authorities and health services to jointly plan and commission services;
- A requirement on local authorities to publish a local offer indicating the support available to those with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

(Friswell and Petersen, 2013, pps14-15)

The general direction taken by this government has attracted criticism from many educators. Far from creating greater equality, some changes are anticipated to perpetuate inequalities both in schools and higher education (Bhopal and Maylor, 2014). With regard to special educational needs, inclusion is viewed narrowly in terms of school placement and is seen as a private as opposed to a public policy matter. However, whether this "SEN market" will lead to better provision and services, or becomes a recipe for chaos, remains as yet to be seen. What however is not in dispute, as Norwich (2013b) suggested, is that the policy was not grounded in policy analysis. Though the Government had initiated pilot developments across the country to test out its broad ideas, legislation is going ahead before lessons have been learned from these pilots (Norwich, 2013).

Data collated in 2012 by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE)[6] indicated that there were 7,504,300 children and young people in publicly funded schools in England. Approximately 18 per-cent of these were categorised as having an SEN, whilst an additional 2.7 per-cent - representing those with the greatest physical or mental health needs - held a statement of SEN. Overall the proportion of children in English special schools reduced from about 1.8 per-cent of the school population in 1983 to about 1.3 per-cent in the year 2000 (Norwich, 2002). Since then, depending on the formula used, the proportion in special schools has remained largely unchanged at about 1.1 per-cent (Ofsted, 2010; cited in Norwich, 2013). The most prevalent type of SEN were those children and

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[6] The agency SNE data collection is a biennial exercise with data provided by the representatives of the agency. In all cases this data is from official Ministerial sources.

young people identified as having moderate learning difficulties (MLD), and the second largest group consisted of those identified as having behavioural, social and emotional difficulties (BSED).

SCOTLAND

Scotland did not adopt the same market-based reforms as England and continues to have a largely comprehensive system of education. Until fairly recently, special needs education in Scotland was governed by a legal framework established within the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended by the 1981 Act (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009). However, in the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004 and 2009 (The ASL Act), the language of special education was dropped and replaced with the arguably more inclusive terminology of 'additional support needs' (ASN). The inclusiveness of the ASN term, and its differentiation from SEN, was explicated in a summary handout provided by the Scottish Executive Education Department (2004). This indicated that ASN referred to any child or young person who would benefit from extra help in order to overcome barriers to their learning (SEED, 2004). The Act stipulated that an ASN might arise from any factor which caused a barrier to learning, whether that factor related to social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, disability, or family and care circumstances. For example, additional support needs might be required for a child or young person who: was being bullied; was identified as having behavioural difficulties; had a sensory of mobility impairment; was at risk; or was bereaved (SEED, 2004). The legislation put into place a raft of additional measures to increase parental rights and local authority accountability. It abolished the Record of Needs and established a new document called the Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP) to record the needs of children with multiple, complex and enduring difficulties requiring significant multi-agency support (Riddell, Weedon and Harris, 2012). Finally, as Riddell et al (2012) noted, the ASL Act put in place a number of new dispute-resolution mechanisms, outlined in a new Code of Practice (Scottish Executive, 2005).

Data collected by EADSNE indicated that, in January 2012, there were 585,289 children and young people in publicly funded schools (369,093 in primary schools, 216,196 in secondary schools and 5,595 in special schools) in Scotland. The proportion of children in special schools was approximately 1 per-cent. A larger number of categories of difficulty are used in Scotland (18 in total) for monitoring purposes. The largest category (learning disability) accounted for about a fifth of all pupils with ASN, while the second largest category (social

emotional and behavioural difficulties), accounted for just over 15 per-cent. Together, these two included just over one-third of the ASN population (Riddell, Weedon and Harris, 2012).

WALES

The organisation of special needs education in Wales, and the definition of SEN, are exactly the same as those to be found in England (Hodkinson and Vickerman, 2009). As suggested above, Wales does have its own Code of Practice and the legal provision of special education is governed by the Education (SEN) (Wales) Regulations 2002[7]. However, at the present time, the Welsh Government is consulting on a new legislative framework having many elements in common with the English Children and Families Bill (2013)[8]. For example, the new legislation proposes:

- As part of a policy to make the field more inclusive of other children who have additional needs - but not disabilities/impairments - to replace the SEN terminology and give a statutory footing to the concept of Additional Learning Needs (AN);
- To replace SEN statements with new integrated Individual Development Plans (IDP);
- For those with severe and/or complex needs, extend multi-agency arrangements from birth to twenty-five;
- Set out the duties to be imposed on relevant bodies such as local authorities and the National Health Service (NHS);
- Shift the emphasis away from dealing with disputes and complaints from parents/carers, towards a strategy of prevention and early resolution of concerns and disagreements;
- Impose a duty on the Welsh Ministers to issue a code of practice in relation to the new statutory framework for AN;
- Impose a duty on relevant bodies to collaborate in respect of AN provision.

(Welsh Government, 2012, p 4).

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[7] In January, 2012 there were there were 363,765 young people in publicly funded schools in Wales (EADSNE, 2012). This involved 193, 374 in primary schools, 170,391 in secondary schools, and 3,005 in special schools. The proportion of children in special schools was approximately 1 per-cent.
[8] There are, however, some notable diffferences such as little mention of individual budgets.

According to Ware (2013), the scale and diversity of the legislative changes currently underway in Wales, combined with the bilingual nature of Wales and a demographic that is quite distinct from England,[9] makes it difficult to predict their overall effects on special needs education. There are none-the-less some concerns over the impact of certain of these changes including the cost of the Welsh Language/ Welsh Medium Education Strategy and the problem of distinguishing whether initial difficulties with the curriculum are as a consequence of being educated through a second language or of learning difficulties. Differences between Welsh Medium (W-M) and English Medium (E-M) schools have also been reported. For example, the former are reported to have: less diverse populations than E-M schools; a lower proportion of children with statements (2 per-cent in W-M and 3 per-cent in E-M) and significantly fewer children having free-school meals[10] (Ware, 2013).

NORTHERN IRELAND (NI)

As described in section 1, as a result of direct rule, the philosophy underpinning educational special needs legislation and guidance in Northern Ireland has historically closely mirrored developments in England. Indeed, the present framework, as implemented by the Education Order (NI) 1984, was effectively outlined by the Warnock Report (DES, 1978). However, shortly after devolved powers were restored to a Northern Ireland Assembly (October, 2009), the new NI Minister of Education initiated a process of public consultation on the policy text entitled: *Every School a Good School: The Way Forward for Special Needs Education and Inclusion in Northern Ireland*.[11] Uniquely in the history of N. Irish educational policy-making, this policy text was initially conceived under direct rule from the English Parliament at Westminster (April, 2006), and consulted upon at a time when devolved powers had been restored to a Northern Ireland Assembly.

The consultation document presented an extremely comprehensive set of 26 policy proposals (see table 3), with the stated intention of operationalising ... "a new, stronger, more comprehensive, more robust, inclusive framework for meeting a wide diversity of educational need, based on the broader inclusive concept of additional educational needs" (2006, p 3).

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[9] Demographic differences between Wales and the rest of the UK include the following: it is a small country of 3,000,000 people representing less than 5 per-cent of UK population; it has two official languages (Cymraeg/ Welsh & English); it is very rural with sixty-per-cent of the country sparsely populated and 1 in 3 primary school children attend a school with fewer than ninety pupils; it has a lower average salary than any other UK region and 1 in 5 children live in poverty (Ware, 2013).

[10] A commonly accepted indicator of social disadvantage.

[11] Locally referred to as the ..."Fundamental Review."

Insert Table 3 here

Whilst the reasons for the fundamental review were overwhelmingly framed in instrumental terms, not dissimilar to some of those related to English and Welsh proposed reforms (eg., the bureaucracy of the current SEN framework, inconsistencies and delays in assessment and provision, the steeply rising cost of the provision for SEN, the year on year increase in the number of children issued with statements and the need for clear accountability on resource utilisation[12]), there were some value-driven proposals that provided much encouragement to N. Irish practitioners and researchers who had long advocated for a genuine "re-visioning" of the SEN task. For example, on the occasion of the introduction of the Code of Practice in NI, some 25 years earlier, just such a re-visioning had been recommended by Dyson and Millward, (1998) as part of their DENI commission to baseline the introduction of the SEN Code of Practice. At that time, Dyson and his team intimated that policy and practice in many N. Irish schools was based on a model which was not fully aligned with the model implied by the Code. Discerning practitioners read this comment as suggesting that extant practice was underpinned by a deficit model of SEN including: a narrow conception of SEN (relating principally to difficulties in literacy and numeracy); a tendency to respond to those difficulties outside the mainstream class (in withdrawal groups or "bottom" sets) and undeveloped ideas of how children identified with a wide range of SEN could be supported throughout the school.

The Fundamental Review spoke to the aim of setting in place a dynamic programme of transformation of Special Needs Education in Northern Ireland. However, seven years further on, the final text has yet to see the light of day. On the other hand, during April, 2012, the Minister of Education presented his recommendations, or "direction for travel" to the NI Education Committee. From this it appeared that only 3 of the original 26 policy targets will

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[12] Northern Ireland has a school population of 313,600 children and young people. There are 4,600 pupils in 40 special schools and this comprises 1.4 per-cent of the population. Special school enrolments have remained relatively static since 2003-2004. Twenty-one per-cent of children and young people in mainstream schools are placed on the SEN register (3.3 per-cent having statements and 18 per-cent at Code of Practice stages 1-4 (EADSNE, 2012).

form part of the new framework[13]; that is, Personal Learning Plans will replace individualised learning plans; SENCo's will be called Learning Support Coordinators (LSC's); there will be a 3 phase SEN framework instead of 5, and some Statements will be set out in the form of a Coordinated Support Plan or CSP (DENI, 2012b).

For a number of years, one of the co-authors of this chapter has undertaken research designed to illuminate the way in which Special Needs Education policy is made and implemented in Northern Ireland (see, for example, Smith and Barr, 2008; Barr and Smith, 2009). Drawing mostly upon critical policy analysis (see, for example, Ball, 1994; Ball, 2003; Ball, 2008 and Ozga, 2000), he has undertaken a probing case study of the text and trajectory of the Fundamental Review. While his analysis tells a fascinating story of Special Needs Education in Northern Ireland (Smith, 2013), his conclusions are extremely disappointing from the perspective of progressing an inclusive special needs education that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners. He persuasively demonstrates that very little of a fundamental or transformatory nature has actually occurred as a consequence of this protracted policy cycle; apart from the strengthening and formalising of procedures chiefly as a means of regulating the contents around identification and resource allocation. The transformative nature of these proposals were initially breached below the waterline by some extremely confusing and contradictory messages related to the key concepts of "additional educational needs", "inclusion" and "barriers to learning". Then, during policy discussions, further eroded as these incoherent messages were variously interpreted and misinterpreted by competing interests. For example, from the perspective of inclusive education understood in terms of access, equity and quality education for all, the "barriers to learning" concept refers specifically to features of the school and classroom context that discriminate and exclude. However, this was clearly not what the concept meant within this policy text. With its frequent use of language that referred to "children with barriers to learning" and "children's difficulties," little if any progress appears to have been made in moving away from conceptualizing educational difficulties in terms of individual pathologies. The maintenance of a highly individualized needs-orientated view of resourcing within these proposals was the logical outcome of the highly individualistic gaze adopted. The vision of inclusion had retained some very traditional approaches towards special needs education, and for this

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[13] On the other hand, as part of a new statutory Code of Practice, the Minister has recommended a number of minor amendments and revisions to the Education Committee.

reason, reinforced some less enlightening views of children who experienced difficulties or disabilities (see also, Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, I. 2011).

Finally, Smith (2013) demonstrated interesting discursive continuities with New Labour views on inclusive education. Whilst these continuities tallied with English SEN discourse at the time of its inception, it was their implications for the trajectory of inclusive education in Northern Ireland that fuelled concern. Here, the author was particularly anxious not to leave unchallenged the way in which a human capital notion of economic development might destabilize the development of a more local and relevant model of inclusion. Embracing as it does the moral and ontological primacy of the person over claims of social collectivity, post-welfarist policy developments in England provided an inappropriate worldview for advancing the sorts of transformations in human relationships required for a society emerging from 30 years of violent ethnopolitical conflict. As Bottery (2000) starkly remarked, the first part of the Third-Way agenda involved accepting the reality of the market, whilst the second part meant devising policies that … "brought the loosers along" (Bottery, 2000, p, 33).

SECTION 3: SELECTED CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR INCLUSIVE TEACHER EDUCATION

As contemporary societies become more heterogeneous, and, as inclusive education reforms gain currency across the world, educational systems are being challenged to address some very fundamental questions related to the accommodation of difference. In tandem with the demographic developments described in section 1, there has been a growing recognition across the UK that the field of special needs education required to change in response to 21st Century concerns about the problems of access to, and equity in, education for all children. For example, in 2006, a House of Commons Report into Special Educational Needs in England suggested that the Warnock framework for supporting pupils identified as having special educational needs was based on an outdated model of society and was now ... "not fit for purpose." (HCESC, 2006 p,12). It recommended a thoroughgoing examination of provision for special educational needs (Warnock, Norwich, and Terzi, 2010). In 2009, the Lamb Inquiry on Special Educational Needs and Parental Confidence in England reported that securing appropriate educational support could be a battle for some families. Furthermore, whilst almost all students (98-99%) were now educated in mainstream schools, and many were indeed well supported and made good progress, too many others had a far

less positive experience (DCSF, 2009). As Kilpatrick and Hunter noted, albeit with reference to the situation in Northern Ireland, a great deal remained to be done before school systems could be said to be … *inclusive* (cited in Donnelly, McKeown and Osborne, 2006).

While subsequent legislative changes have indeed been considerable, our analysis in section 2 leaves us rather circumspect about the potential of a number of these policy innovations to encourage successful implementation and actual change on the ground. The way in which inclusive values work out in practice is extremely complex, messy and problematic (Dyson, 2005). They need to be seen as embedded within wider national social, economic and political processes and the prevailing meaning structures, values and range of pedagogies and curricula within these wider political contexts (Clarke, Dyson, Millward and Skidmore, 1997). We intimated, for example that messy, contradictory, confused and unclear policy discourses, as well as the effects of competing reforms (especially those geared towards school's performance and measurable outcomes), left the practice of inclusion open to interpretation and distortion (see also, Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2011). Slee (2011) argued that policy discourses should always be interrogated in order to determine whether they connoted a signing on to an agenda for cultural work, or liberal assimilation. His warning to never underestimate the resilience of the traditional forms of thinking to appropriate new turf appeared to us to be extremely prescient. As Thomas (2013, p 474) suggested: "inclusion has to be conceived with many surfaces, disability certainly, and social justice no less, but now other facets of life at school: community, social capital, equality, and respect". The emphasis in relation to inclusion was now on looking to the classroom and school context for barriers to learning, and ensuring that provision for the majority of students was sufficiently flexible to accommodate students who caused concern.

Despite this, and despite the fact that special educational needs within the UK are not actually defined in law by child characteristics (see section 2), limited concrete progress appears to have been made in moving away from deficit views and beliefs about children and young people whose school progress causes concern. Furthermore, limited movement away from a highly individualized needs-orientated view of resourcing. The dominant model of SEN in policy texts seems to have remained firmly focused on viewing difference as an individual deviance, problem or pathology.

Throughout this period, a number of attitudes and practices derived from the difference as individual deviance viewpoint have remained central to the discursive consciousness of teachers, such that that they continue into the 21st Century as taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning practice. For example, when learning differences are viewed as having arisen from pupil shortcomings, then this all too easily translates into an acceptance that such children require provision that is "different from" or "additional to" that which is ordinarily available in classrooms (Florian, 2009). Despite the scarce empirical evidence to substantiate a specific pedagogical distinction for pupils labelled as having SEN, the latter continue to be seen by mainstream teachers as requiring to be dealt with by experts; in other words, seen to be 'someone else's problem' (Avramidis, E. Bayliss, P. & Burden, R, 2002). This "ideology of expertism" serves to relieve mainstream schools of the pressure to respond to diverse students and consequently perpetuates and even strengthens a divisive ideology that impinges upon efforts to create more inclusive schooling environments (Troyna & Vincent, 1996 p 385). The research programme undertaken by Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden (2002) in primary and secondary settings identified a culture where teachers, pressurised by the "standards agenda," felt that they were only responsible for the learning outcomes of 80 per - cent of the children in their classes, the remaining 20 per-cent being the responsibility of the SEN teacher. Finally, there is evidence that dominant models of assessment associated with deficit models of SEN are discriminatory to a diverse range of groups and neglectful of areas such as ethnicity, gender and class (eg., Fernando, 2012). As Thomas (2013) noted, statistics reveal that it is minority populations of various kinds who were (and still are) identified as having learning or behaviour difficulties, and who were (and still are) disproportionately selected for special provision (eg., Tomlinson, 1982).

Today, across the UK, there is a conflict between the protection offered by the individual needs approach to meeting special educational needs as operationalised by Statements or CSP's and the resources that accompany them, and contemporary views of good practice in educating all students. For example research on teaching assistants (TAs) (Farrell, Balshaw and Polat, 1999) urges a shift away from the one-to-one allocation of TAs to individual pupils with Statements in favour of model whereby TAs work alongside teachers in support of learning for all pupils. But problems occur when Statements specify resource allocations (such as a fixed number of hours of adult support) that are at odds with good practice. Ironically the manner by which Statements specify resources for children may not support their learning. That there is a conflict between contemporary knowledge of good practice and

Statements, a tool developed twenty years ago when a different view of provision prevailed is not surprising. Statements were designed to ensure that resources followed children. Today's challenge is to separate the protection offered by the Statement from the means by which that protection is offered.

3.1: Teacher Education for Inclusion

The effective preparation of teachers through Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and the further development of teachers through career long professional development (CLPL), are two crucial (and challenging) spaces through which education can try to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners (Beck, 2014). Calls for reform in teacher education (TE) are increasingly made in response to dissatisfaction with student performance and poor outcomes, particularly relating to the "long-tail of underachievement" of specific groups such as students from ethnic majorities, those living in poverty, or those who may have additional needs associated with disability or language.

In 1988 separate training of special education teachers at pre-service level was ended, in part, because such separate training had created a group of teachers who were themselves segregated and were seen as a barrier to inclusion. Currently, most initial teacher education modules, courses or inputs on additional needs, multicultural education, and "inclusion" are offered as optional extras, available to only some students. Even in cases where these options are required, courses tend to focus on the characteristics of particular kinds of learners, how they should be identified and specialist teaching strategies; that is, a Grey's Anatomy approach to special education where they are … "instructed in the pathology of human differences and defects" (Slee, 2011, p155). As Florian (2013) noted, the main problem here is that the content knowledge of such courses is often not well integrated into the broader curriculum and pedagogical practices of mainstream classroom settings. On courses where input on inclusion is "infused" across all course elements, the coverage is limited, and tends to reinforce the view that the education of students identified as having difficulties in learning is the primary responsibility of specialists rather than class teachers with the support of specialists (Florian and Pantic, 2013). Smith (2010) found that a popular approach to infusion within subject disciplines was the intuitively appealing, but fundamentally deterministic and limiting approach focused on matching teaching to the apparent deficit characteristics or attributes of categorised groups of learners. Not only this, despite the research evidence

demonstrating that the judgements teachers make about students' learning ability limited what was possible for students to achieve (see, for example, Ball, 1981; Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre, D 2004; Boaler, William and Brown, 2000), he found that ability grouping and ability labelling held very high associations amongst student teachers in Northern Ireland at the end of their course as a strategy for meeting special educational needs.

However, over the past few years, the authors of this chapter have witnessed how innovative inclusive teacher education can help prepare teachers to respond to diversity without relying on different kind of programmes, and transform deficit thinking about ability and disability. Limitations of space here permit only a cursory mention of three very innovative UK Research and Development Projects.

SCOTLAND'S INCLUSIVE PRACTICE PROJECT (IPP: 2006 - 2011).

The IPP was funded by the Scottish Government and aimed at preparing primary and secondary teachers to enter a profession in which they took responsibility for the learning and achievement of all learners. The IPP adopted an approach to initial teacher education based on the idea that a child's capacity to learn was not fixed, but could be enhanced based on what teachers did today. The project Directors (Professors Lani Florian and Martyn Rouse, then at the University of Aberdeen, School of Education) began with the view that there was a need to change current thinking about inclusive education as providing something 'additional to' or 'different from' that which was 'otherwise available' to others of similar age in mainstream schools. A key aspect of this approach was to think of inclusive teaching as making a range of opportunities available to everyone in the classroom so that all children could participate in learning activities. In this way, individual needs could be catered for but individual pupils were not singled out as being 'less able' or different. This position was based on the view that the central task in preparing new teachers was not to defend the need to accommodate learner differences, but to challenge assumptions about the adequacy of what was 'otherwise available' to the majority of learners. The follow up study of programme graduates confirmed that the approach was helpful to newly qualified teachers. Programme graduates reported that the course provided a framework for supporting the development of inclusive practice in the classroom. Observations of their practice supported this claim (also see, for example: Rouse & Florian, 2012; Florian, 2013; Florian, 2012; Florian and Black-Hawkins 2011; Florian and Linklater, 2010; Rouse and Florian, 2012).

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSION (SCOTLAND)

The Scottish Government recognized that inclusive education was of high priority and that teachers needed to be well prepared and appropriately supported throughout their careers if they were to succeed in developing and sustaining inclusive practices. With the support of the Government, the Scottish Teacher Education Committee (STEC, 2009) set up a working group in order to develop a National Framework for Inclusion. This group consisted of course Directors and inclusion specialists representing all seven universities involved in initial teacher education. Their remit was to develop a framework which would identify what was to be expected of student teachers and of qualified teachers at whatever stage of their careers, ie., values and beliefs; professional knowledge and understanding; and skills and abilities. The Framework (STEC, 2009), highlights the principles of inclusive practice; social justice, inclusion and learning and teaching, in the context of current policy and legislation. It adopts a broad definition of inclusion covering additional support needs, poverty, culture and language and is informed by relevant aspects of UK Government's new Equality Bill (Government Equalities Office, 2010). It attempts to promote inclusion as being the responsibility of all teachers, in all schools and builds upon existing innovative practice within the universities of Scotland, to provide a secure basis for planning courses in teacher education and professional learning.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN ONE -YEAR POSTGRADUATE TEACHING PROGRAMMES (PGCE) IN ENGLAND

During 2007-2008, evaluative research was carried out by the PGCE Tutor Team at Exeter University (Lawson and Nash, 2010) on the idea of requiring student teachers, during one of their practicums or Teaching Practices (TP's), to undertake a piece of assessment and teaching with one pupil whose name was on the school's SEN register, or had a Statement of SEN). As reported by Lawson & Nash (2010), this intensive and extensive evaluation led to further developments and improvements which, in turn, led to the type of task becoming promoted by the TDA for use across all English PGCE Programmes (see, TDA, 2009 a & b). The specific aims of the task were to help student teachers: develop their practical knowledge, skills and positive attitudes by teaching a pupil identified as having learning difficulties; extend their knowledge and understanding of this aspect of inclusive teaching and learning, and learn to cooperate and relate effectively with other staff in school having

responsibilities related to SEN, for example the Special Educational Needs Coordinator or SENCo.

Recently, Lawson, Nash and Norwich (2013) disseminated the results of their most recent research into the contribution of planned activities in PGCE programmes and what student teachers learned about teaching pupils with special educational needs/disabilities in their school-based placements. Three kinds of school-based approaches were compared:

1. A personalised teaching task involving student teachers working with a pupil identified as having SEN over 6-8 hours, carried out in-class or through withdrawal;

2. An alternative non-teaching pupil-focused SEND task, for example, a classroom pupil observation around inclusion or a pupil pursuit study;

3. No specific pupil-focused SEND task other than class teaching practice.

Lawson et al (2013) reported that, what trainees learned about teaching pupils identified as having special educational needs was strongly interlinked with what they learned about teaching in general. A planned pupil-focused SEN task, when carried out in favourable conditions, could make a contribution to their pedagogic knowledge, especially in understanding personal learning needs. This was something that was less likely to be achieved from whole-class teaching experience. The value of the planned pupil-focused task was that it enabled student teachers to become aware of individual pupils' perspectives and learning needs that went beyond differentiation in terms of sub-groups. Paradoxically, in many ways, in spending specific time focusing on a pupil, the student teacher learned about the interactive nature of the teacher-learner relationship and the importance of planning appropriate learning processes. This enabled them to understand greater pedagogic complexity beyond what could often be regarded as a 'mechanistic and piecemeal' curriculum coverage approach (Lawson, Nash & Norwich, 2013).

THE MAINSEN PROJECT IN NORTHERN IRELAND 2010-2013 (THE POST-PRIMARY PGCE IN MAIN SUBJECT, *with* SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION *and* INCLUSION)

In 2010, the Department of Education in Northern Ireland funded Queen's University, Belfast (QUB) and the University of Ulster (UU), to research and develop new ways of ensuring that all student teachers approached the task of creating inclusive classroom contexts with confidence and skill. The Universities were required to collaborate in order to develop an approach to Initial Teacher Education that enabled student teachers to:

- Develop a range of practical teaching strategies with an emphasis on the development of literacy;
- Develop their assessment for learning skills e.g. make an assessment of what learners do best, what they find difficult, and then plan a programme of learning and teaching to meet these needs within a whole-class situation;
- Develop their language of learning;
- Develop their understanding of the importance of pupil meta-learning, i.e. pupil self-awareness and learning about learning;

The MAINSEN Project was underpinned and informed by a cluster of ideas that linked and overlapped, such as contemporary UK research on the question of whether some children required specialist teaching methods (see, for example, Lewis and Norwich, 2005), and contemporary currents of thinking on learning, identity and belonging. The coordinating lecturers were greatly influenced by the Scottish IPP. Indeed, the Directors of the latter very kindly acted as critical friends to the Northern Ireland Project. Consistent with the IPP approach, the MAINSEN Project set out to challenge the idea that classroom teachers did not have the necessary skills to teach pupils identified as having special educational needs. Salient educational differences were considered to be found in learners' responses to tasks and activities, rather than in the diagnostic criteria used to categorise them in order to determine eligibility for additional support - and thereby render them beyond the responsibility of the class teacher (Florian, 2010a; 2010b). The project also developed strong links with a small, international, collaborative network of teacher educators - the Inclusive International Teacher Education Research Forum (IITERF) - who are interested in addressing questions of access and equity in relation to diversity education.

The MAINSEN was both a development and also research project. Over the three-year project period, much evidence was gathered about the ability of the MAINSEN approach to engage teachers with new paradigm thinking in the field of Special Needs Education (see, for example: ETI, 2012; Bell, Bradley, Dennison, Duke, Elliott, Johnston, Lowry and Smith, 2012; Smith, 2014).

3.2: CODA

Schools across the UK are becoming much more diverse. Throughout the four nations of the UK, the demographics of schooling are changing, for example, the growth in cultural and linguistic diversity, the movement towards increased inclusion of children and young people with more diverse support needs (Florian, 2012), and the growth in disadvantage arising from poverty (McKinney, Hall, Lowden, McClung and Cameron, 2012). As a result of devolution, the policy context of the UK is changing rapidly. No doubt further policy developments will continue to mark the distinctive approach each country is adopting. Of immediate relevance here is the forthcoming independence referendum in Scotland (September, 2014), when the Scottish electorate will have the opportunity of voting either "yes" or "no" to remaining part of the United Kingdom. As said previously, it remains to be seen whether, to what extent, and how, current and future policy options will affect outcomes for students identified as having special educational needs (England and Northern Ireland), additional support needs (Scotland), or additional learning needs (Wales). What is not in doubt however is that, across the UK, we presently live in a time of unprecedented change and, as a consequence, in relation to special needs education, find ourselves in an ever changing landscape (see also, Hallett and Hallett, 2010, p 9).

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Table 1
The 2011 census estimate for the main ethnic group categories

Ethnic group	2011 population	2011 %
White	55,010,359	87.1
White: Irish Traveller	63,193	0.1
Asian or Asian British: Indian	*1,451,862*	*2.3*
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	*1,173,892*	*1.9*
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	*451,529*	*0.7*
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	*433,150*	*0.7*
Asian or Asian British: Asian Other	*861,815*	*1.4*
Asian or Asian British: Total	4,373,339	7.0
Black or Black British	1,904,684	3.0
British Mixed	1,250,229	2.0
Other: Total	580,374	0.9
Total	63,182,178	100

(source: Office for National Statistics, 2012).

Table 2

Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs: Northern Ireland

Stage 1	teachers identify and register a child's special educational needs and, consulting the school's SEN co-ordinator, take initial action.
Stage 2	the SEN co-ordinator takes lead responsibility for collecting and recording information and for co-ordinating the child's special educational provision, working with the child's teachers.
Stage 3	teachers and the SEN co-ordinator are supported by specialists from outside the school.
Stage 4	the Board (similar to Local Education Authority in England & Wales) considers the need for a statutory assessment and, if appropriate, makes a multi-disciplinary assessment.
Stage 5	the Board considers the need for a statement of special educational needs; if appropriate, it makes a statement and arranges, monitors and reviews provision.

(source: Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) (1998). *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs,* Belfast: DENI)

Table 3
Outline of Main Proposals in the DENI Fundamental Review of SEN and Inclusion

1. Inclusion – Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Model
2. Inclusion - Role of Special Schools
3. Early Identification and Intervention Framework
4. Early Identification and Intervention - Personal Learning Plans
5. Pre-School settings- PEAGs settings within revised SEN framework
6. Pre-school settings – Pupil support services in PEAGs settings
7. Pre-school settings – Early Identification Officers
8. Training and Development – Initial Teacher Education
9. Training and Development – INSET /capacity building
10. SENCo - Name change to Learning Support Co-ordinator
11. Learning Support Co-ordinator – Career Pathway
12. The Learning Support Co-ordinator - Diagnostic Testing
13. Stages of the SEN Framework
14. Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs)
15. Co-ordinated Support Plans – Complex and Multiple Needs Criteria
16. Co-ordinated Support Plans - Annual Reviews of CSPs
17. Transition Points – Access to transitions support services
18. Developing Effective Partnerships - between education and
health and social care
19. Multi-disciplinary Groups (MGs)
20. Effective Partnerships with Parents and Carers
21. Effective Partnerships with Children and Young People
22. Resolution and Appeals Mechanism – Dispute Avoidance and
Resolution Services (DARS)
23. Resolution and Appeals Mechanism - Special Educational Needs and
Disability Tribunal
24. Funding – local management of schools
25. Introduction of CSPs - transitional arrangements
26. Introduction of CSPs - transitional arrangements