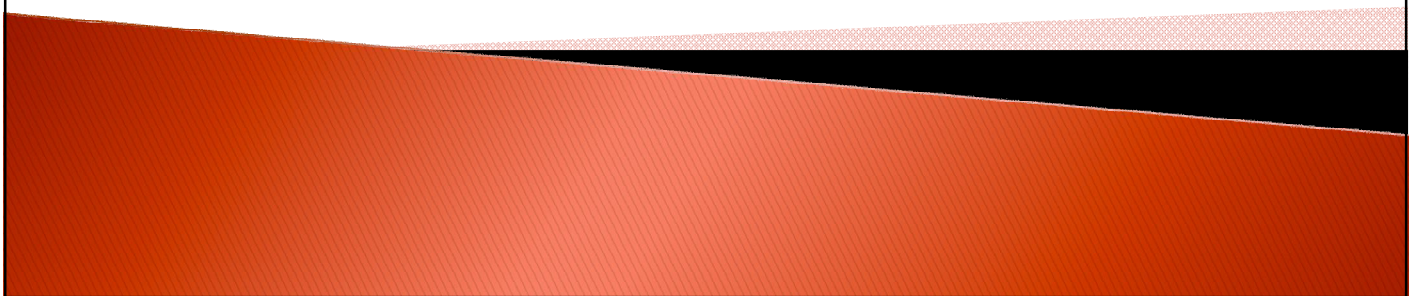


# **The Inclusive Practice Project:**


## **Key lessons for teacher education**

**Lani Florian**  
**NCSE Research Conference**  
**Dublin**

16 November 2011



# Overview

- ▶ Context – SEN and inclusion
  - ▶ Scotland's Inclusive Practice Project
  - ▶ Key findings & lessons learned
- 

## Children with Special Educational Needs – Information Booklet for Parents

*All children, including children with special educational needs, have a right to an education which is appropriate to their needs. The aims of education for pupils with special educational needs are the same as apply to all children. Education should be about enabling all children, in line with their abilities, to live full and independent lives so that they can contribute to their communities, cooperate with other people and continue to learn throughout their lives. Education is about supporting children to develop in all aspects of their lives – spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical.*

*(NCSE, September, 2011)*


## Lamb Inquiry -

*In talking with parents of disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN), we met some of the happiest parents in the country and some of the angriest. Many had children who are well-supported and making good progress. But we also met parents for whom the education system represents a battle to get the needs of their child identified and for these to be met. The crucial issue is that both experiences happen within the same system. While the aims of the SEN framework remain relevant, implementation has too often failed to live up to them.*


*(DCSF, 2009, p.2)*



## **SEN in the context of inclusion- some problems**


- ▶ Dilemma of difference
  - ▶ Variability in practice
  - ▶ Knowing what constitutes good practice
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## **SEN in the context of inclusion – the challenge**


- ▶ A change of focus is needed
  - ▶ An alternative perspective is possible
  - ▶ IPP– preparing teachers to work in new ways
- 

# Inclusive Practice Project


*Aims to develop new approaches to training ALL teachers:*

- have a greater awareness and understanding of the educational and social problems/issues that can affect children's learning;
  - have developed strategies they can use to support and deal with such difficulties.
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## **Getting started: asking questions about teacher education and inclusion**

- ▶ What do teachers in inclusive schools need to know and be able to do?
  - ▶ What stops them from doing it when they know what to do?
  - ▶ What are the tensions between what they learn in the university and what they learn in schools?
  - ▶ How might these tensions be resolved?
  - ▶ What did we do about it?
- 


## What did we do?

- ▶ Reformed the PGDE
  - ▶ Worked with our mainstream colleagues
  - ▶ Developed partnerships with schools and local authorities
  - ▶ Worked with an international reference group
  - ▶ Built on good practice from elsewhere
  - ▶ Linked with other Scottish Universities
  - ▶ Developed a programme of research
- 

## Professional Graduate Diploma in Education

- Thirty-six week course - integrated elements
  - 18 weeks in school experience placements
  - 18 weeks of university based learning
- Programme reforms
  - School staff, local authority and classroom teachers, recent course graduates

## Three Key Assumptions

- ▶ difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning;
  - ▶ teachers can be convinced that they are competent to teach all children;
  - ▶ learn new strategies for working with others
- 


## Professional Graduate Diploma in Education Core content – professional studies

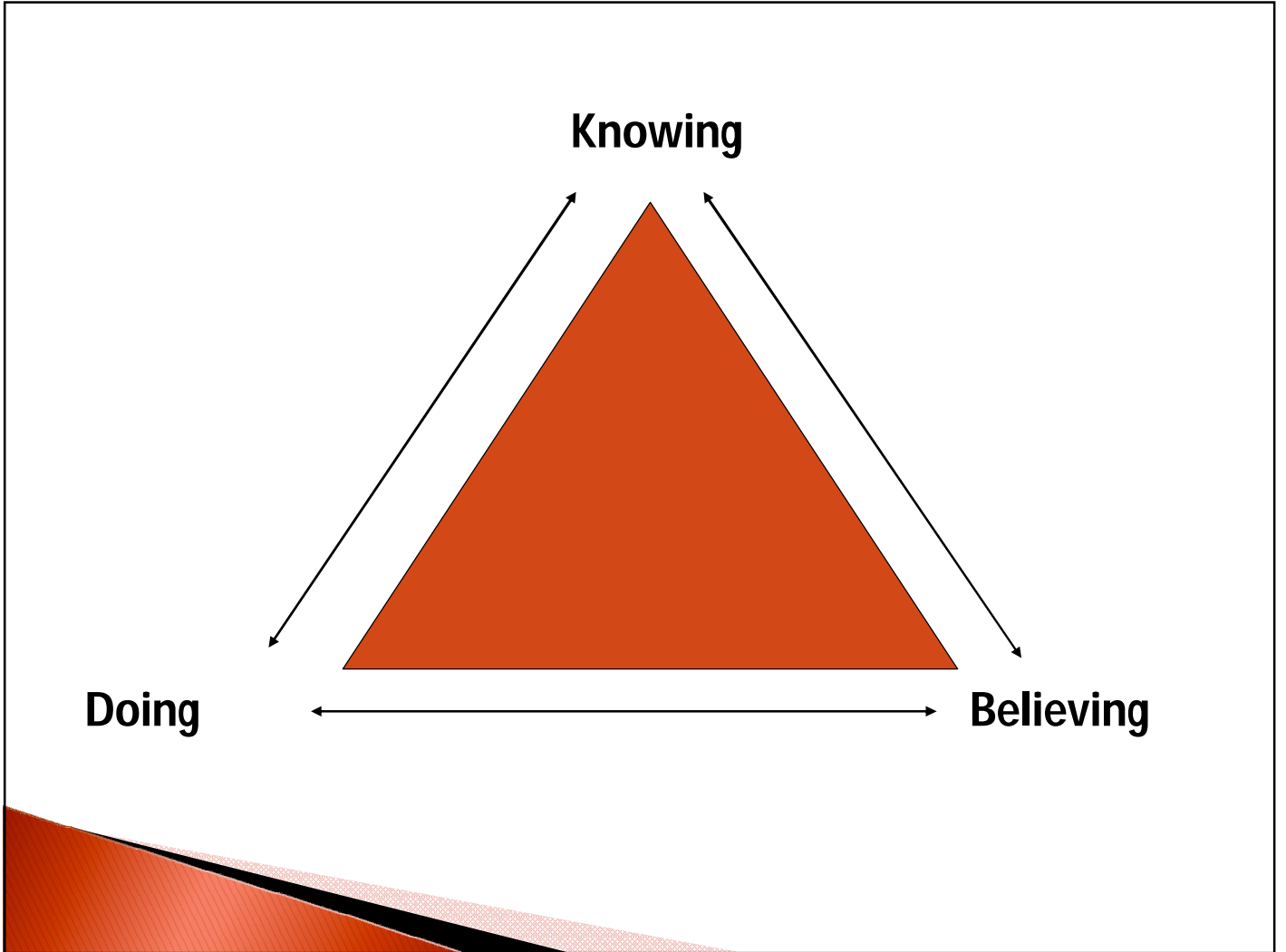
### 3 core themes – linked to key concepts of inclusive pedagogy

- ▶ Understanding Learning
  - Study of theoretical views of learning
  - Replaces 'bell-curve' thinking with the notion of 'transformability'
- ▶ Understanding Social Justice
  - Considers dilemmas of access and equity in education
  - Examines role of 'additional support'
- ▶ Becoming an Active Professional
  - The development of autonomy and resourcefulness, practical and ethical responsibility
  - Emphasises teacher responsibility to constantly look for new ways of working by working with and through others

## Curriculum reforms in the Post Graduate Diploma in Education:

### Head, Hand and Heart

- ▶ Teachers' knowledge and skills - preparing teachers to know when, why and how to respond when children experience difficulties in learning- reflective practice
  - ▶ Teachers' actions - working collaboratively with others
  - ▶ Teachers' attitudes, values and beliefs - dealing with difference as part of the human condition
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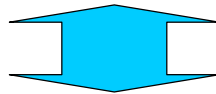


## *PGDE Programme Architecture*

*A vision of the Inclusive Practitioner - The 4 elements of inclusion integrated with the 7 design principles of 'Curriculum for Excellence'*

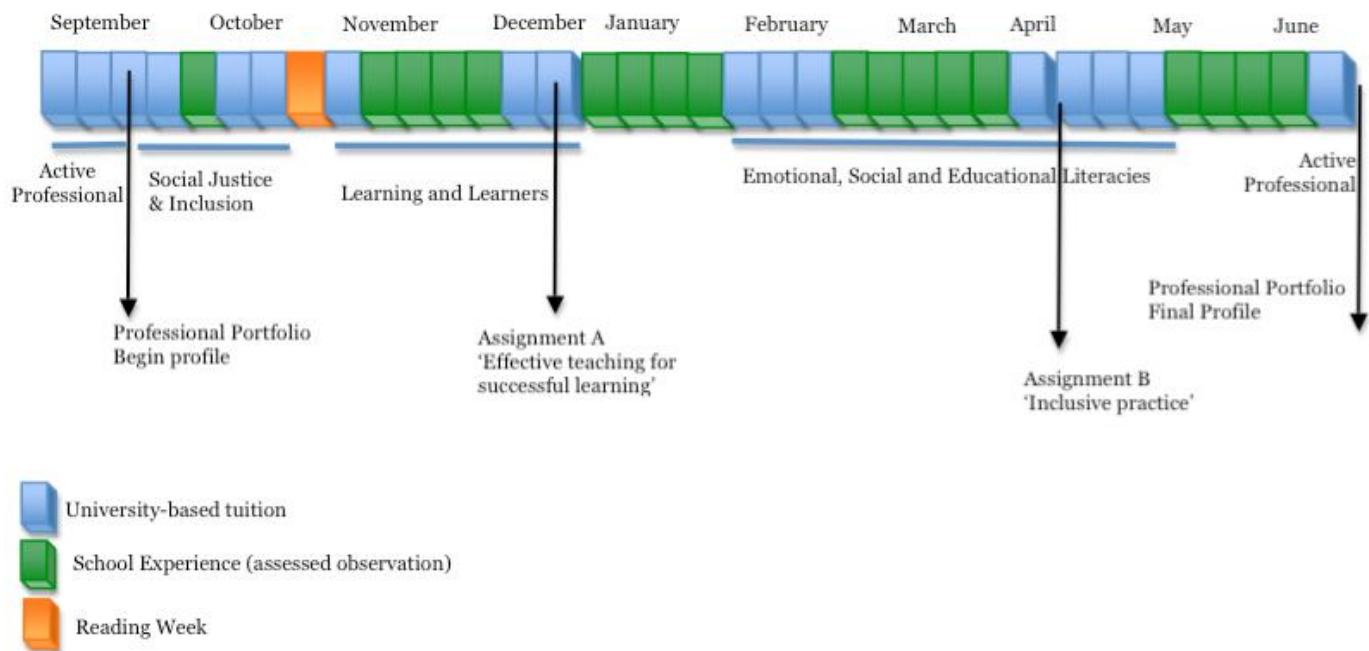
*Both aim to improve opportunities for learning, recognise the importance of learning and working together, value diversity and a wider interpretation of achievement.*

*Four elements of Inclusion: Framework for Participation - access, diversity, collaboration and achievement...enabling "increasing participation and decreasing exclusion from the culture, curricula and community of mainstream schools"*



**Aims of 'Curriculum for Excellence'** - "The purpose of the programme is to improve the learning, attainment and achievement of children and young people in Scotland. It is also about ensuring that pupils achieve on a broad front, not just in terms of examinations. It is important to ensure that children and young people are acquiring the full range of skills and abilities relevant to growing, living and working in the contemporary world. Curriculum for Excellence aims to ensure that they will enjoy greater choice and opportunity to help realise their individual talents."

## PGDE Professional Studies course overview




### The relationship between the principles of inclusive pedagogy and the PGDE core themes


Principles/ Underlying Assumptions	Associated Concepts/Actions	Key Challenges*	PGDE Course Themes	Outcome (programme graduates)
1. Difference must be accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning	Replacing deterministic views of ability with a concept of transformability	'Bell-curve thinking and notions of fixed ability still underpin the structure of schooling	Understanding Learning	Rejects deterministic views of ability Accepts that differences are part of human condition Rejects idea that the presence of some will hold back the progress of others Believes that all children can make progress ( <i>if conditions are right</i> )
2. Teachers must believe (can be convinced) they are qualified/capable of teaching all children	Demonstrating how the difficulties students experience in learning can be considered dilemmas for teaching rather than problems within students	The identification of difficulties in learning and the associated focus on what the learner <i>cannot</i> do often puts a ceiling on learning and achievement. Teachers must be disabused of the notion that some children are not their responsibility	Understanding Social Justice	Commitment to the support of all learners. Belief in own capacity to promote learning for all children
3. The profession must continually develop creative new ways of working with others	Modelling (creative new) ways of working with and through others	Changing the way we think about inclusion (from 'most' and 'some' to everybody)	Becoming an Active Professional	Willingness to work (creatively) with and through others

# Research strategy


## 4 areas of activity

- ▶ course reforms
  - ▶ PGDE students' attitude and practice
  - ▶ teacher educators' attitude and practice
  - ▶ follow up study of graduates
- 

## Key findings

- ▶ Students maintain positive attitudes
  - ▶ Course reforms are embedded  
content and delivery  
still some contradictions/tensions
  - ▶ Teacher educators may feel uncomfortable being asked to train  
teachers in ways they themselves did not work
  - ▶ Programme graduates are using an inclusive pedagogical approach  
in their practice
- 


## Lessons learned

- ▶ Theoretical developments have helped to make useful distinctions between inclusive education, practice and pedagogy.
  - ▶ Teacher education has an important role to play in ensuring that mainstream class teachers are prepared to deal with human differences in ways that include rather than exclude from the culture curricula and community of mainstream schools.
  - ▶ Teacher educators may feel uncomfortable being asked to train teachers in ways they themselves did not work – professional development for teacher educators is also needed.
  - ▶ Programme graduates are using an inclusive pedagogical approaches in their practice but structural barriers remain
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### Inclusive Pedagogy: Individualised vs. Everybody Approach

Strategy	Individualised approach to Inclusion: Most and Some	Inclusive pedagogical approach: Everybody	
<b>Work choice</b>	Classroom teacher consults with colleagues in learning support about how to differentiate learning tasks so that specific accommodations for students with special educational needs are met	Students choose how, where, when and with whom they learn.  Teachers create options and consult with each student about how they can help.	
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td> <i>Manifest in terms of inclusion:</i> All Students are working at the appropriate levels with work choices that have been pre determined and selected to respond to individual needs. One student works individually with a learning support assistant. Other students are required to complete fewer or simpler tasks.         </td> <td> <i>Manifest in terms of exclusion:</i> Students see that work is set at different levels based on student ability. They know who are smart and who are not. They see that some students cannot do the work without extra help from another adult and others are not expected to need help.             There is an assumption that the teacher has set the work at the "appropriate level", possibly putting a ceiling on expectations for some students         </td> </tr> </table>	<i>Manifest in terms of inclusion:</i> All Students are working at the appropriate levels with work choices that have been pre determined and selected to respond to individual needs. One student works individually with a learning support assistant. Other students are required to complete fewer or simpler tasks.	<i>Manifest in terms of exclusion:</i> Students see that work is set at different levels based on student ability. They know who are smart and who are not. They see that some students cannot do the work without extra help from another adult and others are not expected to need help.  There is an assumption that the teacher has set the work at the "appropriate level", possibly putting a ceiling on expectations for some students
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<b>Play zone</b>	Play zone is an area of the classroom where a range of active play choices are provided. Teachers select activities that are matched to individual student needs.	The play zone is a place where student learning is self-directed. By assessing how the student with cerebral palsy used his time in the play zone, the teacher was able to note that the student could talk when he wanted to because there was no pressure to do so. As a result of following the lead set by the student, the teacher is able to see progress that might otherwise have been obscured.	
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## Lessons learned

- ▶ The enhanced clarity with which we have been able to articulate the notion of inclusive pedagogy has strengthened the involvement of staff with the School of Education, opening up new possibilities for working collaboratively with colleagues in primary and secondary education.
  - ▶ By building on and making links with practices in school, ITE can fulfill its obligation to work in partnership with schools in ways that respect and challenge the status quo.
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## Children with Special Educational Needs – Information Booklet for Parents

*Children with special educational needs are children first and have much in common with other children of the same age. There are many aspects to a child's development that make up the whole child, including – personality, the ability to communicate (verbal and non-verbal), resilience and strength, the ability to appreciate and enjoy life and the desire to learn. Each child has individual strengths, personality and experiences so particular disabilities will impact differently on individual children. A child's special educational need should not define the whole child.*

*(NCSE, September, 2011)*

## Hallmarks of practice

- ▶ idea of EVERYBODY (not most and some)
  - ▶ Rejection of deterministic beliefs about ability and the idea that the presence of some will hold back the progress of others
  - ▶ Ways of working that respect the dignity of learners as full members of the community of the classroom
  - ▶ Commitment to continuing professional development
- 