Inclusive Learning in Practice

Validation: London Southbank University LLU+
Final award: Level 7 (MA)
Duration: 36 weeks

Module overview
To meet the challenges and changes of 21st century Britain, the UK Government is reforming and raising the status of teaching by transforming teaching into a postgraduate profession. The target is that by 2018 all practising teachers will have a Master level qualification.

The Inclusive Learning in Practice module has been specifically designed to address this requirement and fits within the London South Bank University MA Framework for Teaching and Learning Skills. The module will provide educational professionals with an opportunity to critically engage with theory and practice with academic and practical vigour such that inclusive pedagogy is embedded.

Module focus
The module is framed within the social model of disability and focuses on inclusive learning, professional practice, neuro-diversity and is bespoke for your context. We will explore teaching and learning theories and practices to examine the ways in which values and processes form part of the transformative process of widening participation. You will also reflect upon your teaching through the study of a range of social, historical, cultural and policy-making discourses that have shaped practices in your institution.

Module aims
The module aims to give you the opportunity to:
• Critically and analytically understand and integrate theory and practice within your own context
• Effectively bring together knowledge from current theoretical thinking, discourses of learning differences and neuro-diversity to improve your own professional practice
• Develop your knowledge of cognitive thinking processes
• Understand multi-sensory classroom teaching practice to support a whole institutional inclusive approach
• Engage in collaborative learning through peer learning, discursive assessment and online discussion activities
• Identify issues and bring about change in your own work setting through the design and implementation of action research
• Develop professional and personal skills for higher/lifelong learning, such as critical analysis, reflection, action planning and evaluation

Developed and delivered by
AchieveAbility
London South Bank University
Module structure

The module consists of a series of twelve taught sessions each critically exploring a particular theme. Each theme is built upon theoretical and practice-based analysis designed to provide a framework for personal reflection and self-directed activities. At each stage, you will be guided towards key texts to stimulate your critical thinking. The reading and your examination of your own practice will lead to the consideration of these perceptions and perspectives in developing inclusive approaches to pedagogy. Discussions with peers will enable you to critique and develop your understanding of inclusive learning in practice in relation to neuro-diversity and contribute towards the final stage and assessment - the task of planning and conducting a small scale action research project to implement change towards inclusive teaching and learning.

Critical thinking: Social model

The social model of disability moves away from the deficit focused approach to disability where the differences of the individual are seen as personal inadequacy or abnormality. The social model places a greater emphasis on how individuals are disabled by the actions of people and institutions. The social model of disability proposes that systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society (purposely or inadvertently) are the ultimate factors defining who is disabled in a particular society. It recognises that while some people have physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychological differences, which may sometimes cause individual functional limitation or impairments, these do not have to lead to disability, unless society fails to take account of and include people regardless of their individual differences. The model does not deny that some individual differences lead to individual limitations or impairments, but rather that these are not the cause of individuals being excluded. For more information see Oliver, M (1990) or Cooper, R. (2006)

Setting the scene ~ 21st century education

In recent times, change has been a constant feature of education. A major reason for this is the desire to increase participation and achievement in the UK education system to better respond to the demands of a global economy.

As Ball, S. (2008:1) notes:

“Education is now seen as a crucial factor in ensuring economic productivity and competitiveness in the context of ‘informational capitalism’…”

As Ball argues, the general political consensus appears to be that continued economic success is dependent upon harnessing the skills and abilities of the nation within a high skills equilibrium.

Continued economic success in an ever-changing and technologically advanced economy requires those both within and outside the labour market to engage in a constant reformulation of their employability profile through a process of constant re-engagement in education and training. This need for a flexible labour force has opened challenges of constant up-skilling and retraining of the workforce. This agenda which requires schools to produce lifelong learners.

To achieve the goal of a high-value, high-skilled economy, the UK Government has set a target of 50% participation rate of 18 - 30 years old in Higher Education by 2015.
However, recent Government findings show that there are high rates of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). This is a concern for the education system, arguably representing its failure and an intellectual loss (May, Helen 2006) to society and economic wellbeing for the future.

As such, the role of teachers is concerned with harnessing intellectual skills and talents to ensure that all young people engage with learning as a lifelong journey. This requires educational professionals to make changes which address the underlying features of a system which has traditionally seen sections of the population under-represented in terms of success and over-represented in terms of failure.

The English education system has residual practice:
- In the sorting and sifting of learners
- With relatively low levels of learner participation beyond the minimum school leaving age
- A growing culture of failure with negative attitudes towards higher learning further study by particular groups.

Changes to the practices, processes and structure of the education system are not merely accommodations to involve a wider cohort, but are changes to unlock and engage the intellectual resources that this extra participation represents and harness that for economic survival in an increasingly competitive world market.

Not only is education and training required to meet the higher demands in terms of learner achievement, but schools and colleges are also required to improve levels of learner engagement in education. These are monitored through the introduction of rigorous inspection procedures, with poorly performing schools under the constant threat of being taken into ‘special measures’ or even closed. Private finance has been linked to the state education system by transforming some schools, often those deemed to be ‘failing’ and in economically disadvantaged areas.

Further segmentation of the system is created by different funding systems for schools and Further Education, different pathways, different methods of assessment and course delivery, and different bodies responsible for the strategic direction.

Widening participation is a major structural challenge for the education system because it requires higher rates of achievement and active involvement by those who have traditionally been under-represented. Widening participations demands an approach to education which addresses the very barriers to participation and achievement which have caused particular groups of Learners to not progress and succeed. Widening participation in education and society recognises that groups of learners have suffered from prejudicial barriers and thereby have not achieved their true potential.

The 1981 Education Act opened the way for wider participation in mainstream education of disabled children and those described as having ‘special educational needs’. An inclusive system of education with wide participation made up of individuals sharing the aspiration to reach higher standards of skills and learning to unlock their abilities is perceived across the political spectrum as a feature of a successful economy and a much more stable society.

Participation in all aspects of the democratic process requires relatively high levels of skills and abilities. Consequently, widening participation and continued engagement in education is linked to social justice and the development of communities. The National Curriculum was introduced in 1988 to which all children and young people are entitled regardless of disability or difference, or linguistic and cultural background. Although the role of education has been linked very much to economic success, it is also about active participation in society and social cohesion. An education system therefore has to be inclusive in the broadest sense ensuring that every learner belongs, has their voice heard and is provided with the knowledge and skills to take ownership of their future.
As you progress through the module and the critical themes and questions, you will critically reflect upon the complex nature and contentious relationship between policy and practice that affects your professional practice and inclusion.

**Critical themes and thinking questions**

1) **Inclusion:** What do we mean by inclusion and especially in relation to your immediate context?

*Quote:* “Inclusion is a never-ending process, working towards an ideal when all exclusionary pressures within education and society are removed.” Booth, T (2003:2)

**Activity 1a**

**Consider what is meant by the term inclusion and record your response.**

**What does inclusion mean to your institution?**

During the pilot phase, prior to the development of this module, when asked this question, teachers responses were very wide ranging with some defining it as equal opportunities in all areas of life, other teachers quoted from policy documents such as Every Child Matters and some said that inclusion underpins the need to overcome inequities. The full set of responses can be found in Byford (2009:4).

This question also expects you to investigate meanings of the term in relation to the place where you work.

*Why should you do this?* In the first instance, you may find it of interest to note the degree of convergence and divergence between the two. This is not only important now to mark the beginning of this learning journey but, also, later, for you to refer to when you engage in action based research. To know where you are at the beginning is a significant act and reflecting on your own assumptions inevitably leads to further questions. This internal dialogue, and its importance for deeper learning, is something we will consider later on.

**Critical thinking discussion:** As the Tomlinson Report (2004) states, we too “believe that learning can only be fully effective if it is inclusive”.

The process of reflective enquiry begins by examining your own institutional and professional practices. The starting point is for you to consider what the term ‘inclusion’ means to you. After doing this, you will be asked to consider how the term is understood and applied by those within your immediate context.

A significant feature of belonging to and being a member of a professional group within an institution is that we largely take for granted like the values, priorities, and practices that are a part of our daily experiences and shared understandings. Schools and colleges operate around certain structures and routines that reinforce identities and meanings through the daily practices and the values enshrined in those practices.

**Critical thinking supplemental question:**

Who is the dominant voice, the institution or the individual?

Clear role definitions are reinforced by expected behaviours, in turn these are often further reinforced by rewards and sanctions within a corporate identity. As such, dominant ways of thinking and behaving become part of the infrastructure and are perceived as normal and non-problematic. It is therefore important for you to separate what you consider is meant by the term in relation to your role and function, from what inclusion means to you.

**Critical thinking supplemental question:**

If as Booth and Ainscow claim, “Inclusion in education is concerned with breaking down barriers to learning and increasing participation for all students, treating all learners on the basis of equality and non-discrimination.” (CSIE) (Booth and Ainscow, 2000)

Then, one would expect institutions to have critically examined their taken-for-granted processes and procedures in order to identify the barriers?
2) The Teacher: How would I define the role of the teacher?

As teachers in the classroom, we can be seen to be enacting a drama with distinct roles ascribed to all the players - The script is the lesson plan and schemes of work in which we describe our intentions. In that drama, we carry around ideals about education, our personal theories of learning and beliefs about the role/s of the teacher. These ideas are important because without necessarily consciously referring to them, they guide our actions and affect the way that we critically assess our role.

In regard to your role as teacher,

• you may feel that you have developed a very pragmatic approach, doing what you feel works within the constraints of the job.

• you may feel more idealistic, believing that a teacher’s job is to address the inequalities in society and unlocking potential by nurturing ability rather like a gardener nurturing flowers.

• you may feel more utilitarian, drawn to the apparent certainties of target driven teaching practices in the classroom, with the role of raising attainment in terms of performance in examinations.

• Equally, you may be a pastoralist, holding a set of beliefs enshrined in a vision of a ‘golden age’ in which all learners have equal access to learning opportunities, which have now been taken away.

Activity 1b

In terms of your school or college:

• How does it express itself in relation to inclusion?

• Where is the school in this process?

• Does every child matter?

• Do all children matter equally?

• How do you feel that this question is answered in relation to the school as a corporate identity?

Inevitably, in this process, you become a researcher as you focus on your particular school or community – and begin to analyse policies and processes relating to exclusion and inclusion. Possibly, you may feel the need to widen and adjust your field of vision and develop a broader schema.

As you reflect upon these questions, other questions may arise such as:

• What is the Local Authority (LA) policy in terms of actively promoting inclusion – or does the LA support schools which are highly selective and/or inaccessible?

• Does the school or college you are focusing on have active policies on equal opportunities which challenge racism, sexism, bullying and discriminatory practices of all kinds and what action does the school take when these policies are disregarded by pupils or staff?

• What is the relationship between the school and the wider community, including minority groups?

• Does the school welcome children and young people seeking asylum?

• How is learning facilitated for students who do not speak English well?

• What is the economic and social history of the area surrounding the school?

• Are there any special schools in the area?

Activity 2a

Choose an image or a short descriptive passage which best describes the role of a teacher as you see it.

What do you think that this choice tells you about your own view of what a teacher, and education, is all about?
3) Learning: What is my definition of learning?

From your training and professional practice you will have encountered a range of learning theories, for example:

- Multiple intelligences (Gardner, H. 1993)
- Taxonomy of Learning (Bloom B. S. 1956)
- Experiential Learning (Dennison, B. & Kirk, R. 1990)
- Social constructivist theory (Vygotsky, L. 1962)
- “Scaffolding” or Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, L.S. (1978)
- Developmental Theory (Piaget, J. 1952)
- Social Learning Theory (Bandura, A. 1977)
- Learning Cycles (Kolb 1983)

Learning is a complex activity. At least 15% of learners learn in a different way than they are generally taught. Learners whose cognition involves processing of information and methods of learning that are different from the ‘traditional’ teaching and learning methods are disadvantaged in education if an inclusive approach to pedagogy is not adopted.

AchieveAbility has also noted that learners with different approaches to learning report problems with their education and schooling. For some of these learners, the process of education becomes a process of rejection. As identified by Crabtree, D. and Maguire, D (2008:3)

“No three quarters reported that school life was negative with a school history of incremental marginalisation”.

Critical thinking supplemental question: What theories of learning influence your professional practice?

Learning is a complex activity. At least 15% of learners learn in a different way than they are generally taught. Learners whose cognition involves processing of information and methods of learning that are different from the ‘traditional’ teaching and learning methods are disadvantaged in education if an inclusive approach to pedagogy is not adopted.

AchieveAbility has also noted that learners with different approaches to learning report problems with their education and schooling. For some of these learners, the process of education becomes a process of rejection. As identified by Crabtree, D. and Maguire, D (2008:3)

“No three quarters reported that school life was negative with a school history of incremental marginalisation”.

Critical thinking supplemental question: What theories of learning influence your professional practice?

Learning is a complex activity. At least 15% of learners learn in a different way than they are generally taught. Learners whose cognition involves processing of information and methods of learning that are different from the ‘traditional’ teaching and learning methods are disadvantaged in education if an inclusive approach to pedagogy is not adopted.

AchieveAbility has also noted that learners with different approaches to learning report problems with their education and schooling. For some of these learners, the process of education becomes a process of rejection. As identified by Crabtree, D. and Maguire, D (2008:3)

“No three quarters reported that school life was negative with a school history of incremental marginalisation”.

Critical thinking supplemental question: What theories of learning influence your professional practice?

Learning is a complex activity. At least 15% of learners learn in a different way than they are generally taught. Learners whose cognition involves processing of information and methods of learning that are different from the ‘traditional’ teaching and learning methods are disadvantaged in education if an inclusive approach to pedagogy is not adopted.

AchieveAbility has also noted that learners with different approaches to learning report problems with their education and schooling. For some of these learners, the process of education becomes a process of rejection. As identified by Crabtree, D. and Maguire, D (2008:3)

“No three quarters reported that school life was negative with a school history of incremental marginalisation”.

Critical thinking supplemental question: What theories of learning influence your professional practice?

Learning is a complex activity. At least 15% of learners learn in a different way than they are generally taught. Learners whose cognition involves processing of information and methods of learning that are different from the ‘traditional’ teaching and learning methods are disadvantaged in education if an inclusive approach to pedagogy is not adopted.

Critical thinking supplemental question: What theories of learning influence your professional practice?

Learning is a complex activity. At least 15% of learners learn in a different way than they are generally taught. Learners whose cognition involves processing of information and methods of learning that are different from the ‘traditional’ teaching and learning methods are disadvantaged in education if an inclusive approach to pedagogy is not adopted.

Critical thinking supplemental question: What theories of learning influence your professional practice?

Learning is a complex activity. At least 15% of learners learn in a different way than they are generally taught. Learners whose cognition involves processing of information and methods of learning that are different from the ‘traditional’ teaching and learning methods are disadvantaged in education if an inclusive approach to pedagogy is not adopted.

Critical thinking supplemental question: What theories of learning influence your professional practice?

Learning is a complex activity. At least 15% of learners learn in a different way than they are generally taught. Learners whose cognition involves processing of information and methods of learning that are different from the ‘traditional’ teaching and learning methods are disadvantaged in education if an inclusive approach to pedagogy is not adopted.

Critical thinking supplemental question: What theories of learning influence your professional practice?

Learning is a complex activity. At least 15% of learners learn in a different way than they are generally taught. Learners whose cognition involves processing of information and methods of learning that are different from the ‘traditional’ teaching and learning methods are disadvantaged in education if an inclusive approach to pedagogy is not adopted.

Critical thinking supplemental question: What theories of learning influence your professional practice?
For those who learn easily in a classroom comes the reward of educational success; those who do not learn easily in a classroom are less likely to achieve educationally and consequentially, more likely to develop a range of behavioural and attitudinal problems. The difference between these two realities is often attributed to intelligence, motivated aptitude and other characteristics. However, intelligence is a contested area and developments such as The Open University have demonstrated that individuals who have not succeeded in the classroom can succeed academically.

The view that educational achievement is solely based upon innate characteristics within one child compared to another, has, at its roots, the concept of individual causal factors. Seeking reasons within the child, diagnosing the problem and then recommending remedies places the child as the problem. In this way, the solution to the problem of a child who finds learning in the classroom problematic is to suggest that the child needs to change and adapt to circumstances (if they can). There is generally little attention paid to the view that the educational context around the child needs to change.

Learning happens internally in the brain, but is heavily dependent upon environmental factors. Consequently, any approach to understanding cognition and learning that seeks to explain this process in a deterministic and universal manner is unlikely to be a sufficiently comprehensive to explain the reality of learning across the whole population. In other words, there will be cognitive processes involved in learning and these differ from individual to individual. These internal cognitive processes are affected by, and are in a dynamic relationship with the social and environmental factors and meanings that individuals place upon all aspects of this context.

### Case study: An Extract from the Ravensbourne College Staff Handbook – David Grant

“My dyslexia goes to bed with me, gets up with me, goes on holiday with me and to the toilet.” NW, 2005

Being dyslexic is a way of life. It shapes and colours a wide range of everyday experiences and behaviours. It is far more than an unexpected difficulty with reading and spelling. Through becoming aware of the everyday signs of dyslexia it is possible to recognise dyslexic-type behaviours in a wide variety of settings...

Being dyslexic is a way of life. A surprisingly high number of students have gone through primary and secondary education without their dyslexia being picked up and have often significantly under-achieved as a result. By being aware of the many soft signs of dyslexia and their causes, you have an opportunity to do two significant things: firstly, to refer on for screening a student you suspect of being dyslexic; secondly, to adjust your teaching style to better accommodate the needs of dyslexic students.

*(Taken from Hewlett, K. and Crabtree, D. 2005)*

### Activity 3

This activity requires you to become either a passive listener or, for you to cast your mind back over conversations that you have heard in an educational setting relating to pupil progress. When listening to colleagues talking about learner’s achievements, what are the sorts of comments used to describe the underlying reasons for learner progress, or, and in particular, lack of progress. This could be for any learner/s, in any context and for any part of their programme be it a subject, a module or even one lesson or one set of lessons.

Record the pupil/s, year group, class or informal group who are being discussed. Make a note of the context in terms of the learning situation i.e. is it one lesson, one subject, one module, one whole academic year, etc. Draw up a list of the phrases and descriptions that are put forward to explain progress.

Do this for more than one event and then make a note about what you have noticed.
Learners with specific learning differences (SpLD) such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia under achieve in education. The accepted figure for SpLD within the overall school population is 10% yet nowhere near this number are being recognised during their school career (Hewlett, K., Crabtree, D. and Taylor, S. 2008:13). Yet, members of this same group, when provided with approaches to teaching and learning appropriate to their needs or/and in those parts of the curriculum which make best use of their strengths, succeed both in educational and in societal terms.

A number of objectives are met by focusing professional practice on those learners who learn differently. First, we learn about learning itself by understanding how learners who learn differently learn, we perceive approaches to learning which we may not have previously recognised and begin to develop a comparative framework with different points of reference to then study the key phenomena central to education.

Secondly, by including approaches to teaching and learning which play to the strengths of these learners and enable learners who ordinarily find learning difficult to become successful, we become more able to support all learners. By removing obstacles to learning for those who find learning most difficult, we open pathways for all learners and, in that process, develop a broader range of strategies and develop professional expertise.

Thirdly, we make our teaching more engaging and thereby begin to reduce disaffection. In such a way, the process of educating becomes more inclusive, supports widening participation and raises achievement.

Case study 2:
The research centre based at Cass Business School (2009), found that 20% of entrepreneurs (business owners employing at least one person) had dyslexia, whereas employed managers (those who supervise at least one person) reflected the UK national dyslexia incidence level of 4%. The second stage of the research also found that 70% of dyslexic entrepreneurs did not succeed at school. http://www.cass.city.ac.uk/media/stories/Dyslexia.html
### Four orientations to learning (after Merriam and Caffarella 1991: 138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Behaviourist</th>
<th>Cognitivist</th>
<th>Humanist</th>
<th>Social and situational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning theorists</strong></td>
<td>Thorndike, Pavlov, Watson, Guthrie, Hull, Tolman, Skinner</td>
<td>Koffka, Kohler, Lewin, Piaget, Ausubel, Bruner, Gagne</td>
<td>Maslow, Rogers</td>
<td>Bandura, Lave and Wenger, Salomon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>View of the learning process</strong></td>
<td>Change in behaviour</td>
<td>Internal mental process (including insight, information processing, memory, perception)</td>
<td>A personal act to fulfil potential</td>
<td>Interaction / observation in social contexts. Movement from the periphery to the centre of a community of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locus of learning</strong></td>
<td>Stimuli in external environment</td>
<td>Internal cognitive structuring</td>
<td>Affective and cognitive needs</td>
<td>Learning is in relationship between people and environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose in education</strong></td>
<td>Produce behavioural change in desired direction</td>
<td>Develop capacity and skills to learn better</td>
<td>Become self-actualized, autonomous</td>
<td>Full participation in communities of practice and utilization of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educator’s role</strong></td>
<td>Arranges environment to elicit desired response</td>
<td>Structures content of learning activity</td>
<td>Facilitates development of the whole person</td>
<td>Works to establish communities of practice in which conversation and participation can occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manifestations in adult learning</strong></td>
<td>• Behavioural objectives</td>
<td>• Cognitive development</td>
<td>• Andragogy</td>
<td>• Social participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Competency-based education</td>
<td>• Intelligence, learning and memory as a function of age</td>
<td>• Self-directed learning</td>
<td>• Socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Skill development and training</td>
<td>• Learning how to learn</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Associationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Conversation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inclusive Learning in Practice 11
4) Teaching and Learning: How does my definition of learning impact on how I structure my teaching and learning?

The DCSF National Strategy Supporting Pedagogy states that the choice of appropriate teaching and learning model (or combination of models) is determined by the nature of the learning objective.

- Direct interactive teaching is effective in helping young people to learn new skills and procedures and acquire academic knowledge. This includes modeling and explicit teaching sequences. For example, in teaching children reading or writing.
- Cognitive teaching and learning models help learners to process information, build concepts and rules, generate and test hypotheses and think creatively. These models include enquiry, inductive learning and teaching through analogy and metaphor.
- Social models require learners to collaborate and learn together; they help learners construct new knowledge and understand concepts. These models include constructivism and group problem solving. (DCSF)

There have been major advances in our understanding about how the brain operates and the process of cognition in the past ten years which, if education is about learning, possibly should feature very strongly as important underpinning knowledge necessary for anyone working in a school, college or a related area. Much of this knowledge has been gained in areas of research, development or in professional practices not directly related to education e.g. rehabilitation after traumatic brain injury.

**Activity 4a**

Using the diagram below take a little time to quickly note your ideas about learning and what you already know.

Once you have done this, consider the diagram and then write a short narrative that explains the cognitive processes involved in learning.

- Are there any theories of learning or ideas relating to education in general, which we can draw on to help us develop understanding about our own teaching practices and attitudes?
- You may have some ideas about this question based on your own prior learning and experience. How much of this knowledge do you currently use to inform your own planning of teaching and learning?

Give two or three concrete examples from practice.

As well as considering cognition and learning, this question asks you to broaden your understanding and raise critical questions concerning pedagogy and curriculum through an exploration of different teaching and learning contexts.
As such, we explore through reflecting upon our own practice, the professional knowledge of teachers and the skills and techniques that we bring to the classroom. These are an essential part of a much wider set of conditions necessary to bring about real change in terms of enhancing and sustaining the overall experience of education and learning for all students.

Teachers are expected to exhibit a conscious and visible commitment to fostering and promoting inclusive values in all aspects of life. We need therefore to think about the values and processes involved in pedagogy and to measure these against the principles of inclusion.

Teachers often associate the experience of teaching with the bureaucracy involved in assessment and recording requirements that the profession regard as imposed on schools by central government. There has been a strengthening of a market-led culture with an emphasis on performance through the framing of what goes on in schools as concerned primarily with ‘effectiveness’ in terms of measurable outcomes. As such, learning is perceived as the measurable outcomes that contribute towards targets. This view of the purpose of education is linked to narrow notions of ‘efficiency’ in the use of resources and to the goal of providing a workforce which can compete successfully in the global economy (Apple, 2001, Ozga, 2000, Whitty, 2002).

Against the backdrop of staged tests and learning measured in terms of value-added, individual learners are ascribed values often expressed as quotients. Learning becomes the trajectory through education in terms of measured progress against notions of expectation. Inevitably, the idea of a norm of development and expected progress leads to some learners being perceived in a negative way. Furthermore, terms associated with particular learner traits gain new meanings and become part of a powerful lexicon of labels directed towards children and young people based on deficit categories associated with impairment or other perceived differences or categories of difference. Labels such as ‘severe learning difficulties’, ‘deprived’, ‘special educational needs’ or ‘asylum seeker’, possibly contribute to a culture of repudiation, separation and denial of the individuality of human beings.

Activity 4 b

Activity 3 required you to consider the labels used to explain individuals learning differences. Refer to these now and consider the impact the application of these labels to individual learners has when planning teaching and learning in relation to particular student groups?

The question of inclusive pedagogy needs to be viewed in the wider context of the culture of teaching generally. This, then, both places the issues in relation to all teachers and raises again the central importance of understanding the contextual barriers and possibilities for inclusive pedagogy and practice within schools and education generally.

Reflective practice requires educational professionals to notice not only that something works well, but be able to understand why something works. Having a competent grasp of the underlying mechanisms and processes involved with cognition provides teachers with an increased ability to predict what may work and then measure their assumptions against what actually happens. Specialist teachers of students with SpLD are trained and assessed in their knowledge of learning so that they can recognise the processing and cognitive and learning differences at play. This knowledge about learning is often perceived as knowledge only relevant to Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia and other neuro-diversities. This is not the case. It is a misrepresentation brought about by the process of perceiving a minority as sufficiently different to lie outside the professional expertise of subject teachers. By studying learning and the processes at play in learning, then applying this knowledge to learners who learn differently, we are able to more fully understand learning itself.

5) Learning Characteristics: What do I understand as the characteristics of learning?
Inclusive Learning in Practice

Often learning is presented as a process by which information, in whatever format, passes through various cognitive stages in our brain to enter into long term memory and thereby is stored in a form which we have made on our own so that we can then retrieve it and make use of as necessary. In such a way, cognition becomes perceived and explained as something sequential and cumulative. Putting things into sequences, assigning types and categories, providing names and titles becomes a function of the process of learning. Within this model, chunking information into manageable sizes and spicing it up with zingy things to make it palatable helps this process of ingestion of knowledge.

Learning differences particularly to do with spelling in this simple processor model can be explained by problems within a particular channel, for instance the auditory channel. Accordingly, learners who find phonetics problematic have their difficulties with words and spelling put down to inefficient matching between what actually is and what is perceived by the brain resulting in a poor auditory store of templates with which to compare one phoneme with another. A possible solution thereby becomes more rigid ingestion of the templates.

In the social-interactive model (Cooper, R. 2006), dyslexia is a social construct; we are all neuro-diverse. The social context determines whether or not the specific nature of the neuro-diversity is perceived as a disability.

Activity 5a
Consider the process by which you learn something that you find difficult? How do you begin?
When you are teaching something to yourself you are both a learner and a teacher. How do you approach this and what does it tell you about the way you learn and the way that you teach yourself?
What assumptions did you make about your own approaches to learning in relation to what you were going to learn? How did you act upon these assumptions?
Compare your approach to teaching yourself, and your approach to you as a learner with a colleague. What do you notice?

There have been very few definitions or descriptions of dyslexia from the social model of disability perspective (Riddick 2001). Dr. Ross Cooper (2006) has argued that:

“We challenge the deficits models of dyslexia in favour of a social model that maintains that we are not ‘disabled’ by our dyslexia, but by the expectations of the world we live in. There is nothing ‘wrong’ with being dyslexic per se.

We would argue that dyslexia is an experience that arises out of natural human diversity on the one hand and a world on the other, where the early learning of literacy, and good personal organisation and working memory is mistakenly used as a marker of ‘intelligence’. The problem here is seeing difference incorrectly as ‘deficit’ ”

Such an approach demands that we recognise the diverse ways in which we learn and recognises the need for educationalists not to disable their learners by the act of perceiving a difference as a deficiency. Inevitably, an inclusive approach to neuro-diversity requires professionals to be knowledgeable about learning either through insights or/and appropriate training.

“The underlying premise is that teaching and learning aimed at supporting learners with Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs) benefits all learners in the class. The AchieveAbility pilot project which developed the materials, demonstrated that by adopting strategies proven to be successful with SpLD learners, teachers can have a big impact upon the achievement of all learners. Furthermore, they can improve the educational experience of SpLD learners to enable them to bring their strengths to the classroom.” (Hewlett, K., Crabtree, D. and Taylor, S. 2008:13)

The problem for many educationalists is that such an approach seems to challenge their view of the homogenous learner group i.e. teaching a whole class. The view divides learners into whole class teaching in one sphere and learners requiring support in another separate sphere i.e. ‘normal’ learners, whose needs can be met in a class all experiencing the ‘same learning diet’, and those learners, (a minority), whose requirements can only be met by specialists and be given a ‘special’ diet.
6) Curriculum: What do I mean by the curriculum and where does knowledge come from?

According to the Government’s National Curriculum there are “two principal aims and four purposes” for the National Curriculum:

**Aim 1:** The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve.

**Aim 2:** The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

**Purpose 1:** To establish an entitlement

**Purpose 2:** To establish standards

**Purpose 3:** To promote continuity and coherence

**Purpose 4:** To promote public understanding (www.curriculum.qcda.gov.uk)

The documentation goes on to provide a statutory inclusion statement setting out three principles for the development of an inclusive curriculum that schools must do:

- set suitable learning challenges
- respond to pupils’ diverse learning needs, by
- creating effective learning environments, securing their motivation and concentration, providing equality of opportunity through teaching approaches, using appropriate assessment approaches, setting targets for learning.
- overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils. (www.curriculum.qcda.gov.uk)

A starting point for exploring planning for and developing an inclusive curriculum could be to consider your own school’s Disability Action Plan, Race Equality Plan and other national equality policies.

Inclusive values will take on different meanings in a mono-cultural, bi-cultural or a multi-cultural setting – although even these descriptors are too simplistic to encompass the complexities and heterogeneities which make up any ‘community’. Similarly the concept of inclusion will have particular meanings in contexts such as nurseries, special schools, young offender’s institutions, inner city schools and rural community colleges. To suggest that ‘inclusion’ only has meaning in the context of ordinary schools which welcome all members of the community regardless of difference is, in the present social and political context, to marginalize other settings in which some teachers, support staff, children and young people may find themselves. The implication of this would be to exclude some of the most marginalized groups in society from the wider struggle for inclusion which, by definition, has to encompass all members of society, regardless of the particular settings they attend, or are assigned to.

The government promotes a vision of a society in which all members understand common values and beliefs, and are able to share a “British” perspective on global developments. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion. It states

“Education that develops cultural understanding and recognises diversity is crucial for the future wellbeing of our society. Schools have a duty – not least for community cohesion – to ensure learners in every school gain a broad understanding of the country they are growing up in, how it has evolved to be as it is and how they are able to contribute to its future development. Ultimately they should be able to comprehend the values of the United Kingdom in a global context and understand UK society from a variety of viewpoints.” (www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion/)
7) Learning Resistance: What do I understand by learning resistance?

Educators have adopted the use of the term ‘learning ready’ to describe a necessary prerequisite of students in class in order for them to engage in learning. Learning ready, or similar terms such as ‘motivated’, ‘well-behaved’, and ‘receptive’ all have their provenance in the idea that learning is either switched on, or switched off. This is not the human condition; learning is an ongoing and continuing process. Over the past twenty years education policy in the UK and internationally has become increasingly focused on ‘raising standards’ and pupil attainment. There is far less attention or discussion devoted to the question of how people learn and what kinds of policies and practices need to be developed in order to widen opportunities for learning for all students in all settings.

Activity 6
Try these three questions out on a few colleagues:
1. In which town is the oldest degree granting university?
2. In which country was the first book about algebra written?
3. Which civilization is credited with invention and use of the number zero?

Activity 6a: Critical Debate
• In a multicultural and multiethic society, is knowledge neutral?
• Who defines the knowledge and the curriculum?
• Depending upon your responses, who should define the curriculum?

Comment: Living in a culturally diverse society brings enormous richness to that society in multiple ways. However, the changing character of England and recent global events has brought a sense of alienation to some sections of the population, and some more general feelings of instability, fear and anxiety within the wider population – often encouraged by the media.

Disengagement from what is being taught in the classroom may not be a conscious act. The subject matter or methodologies may not engage the mind/s of the learner/s. Differentiation, as an activity only entered into as a means to raising standards may fail to engage the learner and, more importantly, do little to empower the learner with knowledge about their own learning. Differentiation which includes the learner in a dialogue about their own learning and learning differences and enables them to experience, reflect and comment on the differences that they experience in relation to their own learning not only empowers the learner but also enables them to transfer that knowledge to other situations.

Many notions are taken for granted in schools. The power can be perceived by the terminology with which we describe schools. For instance, with the idea of mainstream education vs. special education, what is meant and understood by mainstream? Similarly, the naming of schools or settings as ‘special’ and their designation as centres for particular ‘categories’, such as ‘social, emotional and behavioural difficulties’. In addition, the designation of schools as ‘for’ a particular category of pupil masks the bureaucratic and managerial processes which lead to a particular child or young person attending a particular school. Not only is the use of such labels potentially marginalizing in terms of the ways pupils attending particular settings are represented, but the label ‘special’ removes these schools from a common education arena in which education services and structures are seen as for all. Labels, of course, are not only used in the context of special schools; increasing numbers of labelled children and young people now make up the populations of ordinary schools.

What effect has this shift in context had on our notions of what constitutes learning and the ability required to learn?
Activity 7

Look at the case study below and decide, in your view, what is actually going on?

Pupil A is a year eight pupil with mild learning disabilities. Her form teacher, Mrs. C, has requested assistance because A’s behaviours are impeding not only her learning, but the learning of others in the classroom. Prior to meeting with the Behaviour Support Team (BST), Mrs. C and the learning support assistant, Mrs. J, put together a record review to determine if there was any information in their records and meetings with other teachers that would shed light on A’s behaviour.

At the BST team meeting, there was the PE teacher, the SENCO, Year Head, a counsellor, Mrs J the learning assistant, A’s parent, and a second year eight teacher plus Mrs. C. At the beginning of the meeting, Mrs. C gave some background information on A to the group. A’s learning disabilities are in the areas of reading. She does well in maths and any hands-on activities. She is distracted easily if an assignment involves reading and spelling. There are four other students in the form group on the special needs register with a total of 31 students in the class. A has several good friends that she plays with outside of class.

The team ask A’s parent about home life and if the parent could shed some background information on A’s life. The parent identified that A is the youngest of three girls, and that both of her sisters are much older with one in college and one at work. A does not have to do much around the house because her sisters tend to "baby” her and do her household tasks for her. Both parents work full-time in high-stress positions and the father travels frequently oversees for his business. The parent admits that mornings are very hectic with everyone going in different directions and that A’s lack of organizational skills causes her to have a “bad” morning on most mornings. The parent is willing to assist the team with any plans they devise to help A with her behaviour problems.

Mrs. C defined the behaviour problems that A was having in the classroom. At a previous BST meeting, the team had decided that it was very important to define the behaviours in measurable and observable terms. Mrs C had therefore listed the behaviours as:

**Throwing objects**
- A physical object leaves A’s hands and lands at least six inches from A.

**Disruptive outburst**
- A loud verbal sound or words come from A that disturbs the learning environment.

**Physical aggression**
- Any part of A’s body comes in contact with another person with force.

It was recorded that in a three week period, Mrs C, in discussions with other teachers had identified twelve throwing objects, eight disruptive outbursts and four acts of physical aggression. Also, that A had not completed the English assignment set two weeks earlier and had admitted losing the notes necessary to complete this important piece of work.

- What labels might be being applied here?
- By whom?
- About who?
- How typical is this situation?
- What makes it typical, or not typical?
The ‘label’ – itself a social construct of the most negative kind - becomes its own justification. After all, what is the purpose of ‘educating’ those who seem to be ‘uneducable’? In a critical examination of policy making processes in England and in France, Armstrong (2003) discusses the affects of assigning of labels, or the re-labelling of particular groups or individuals, to serve bureaucratic purposes rather than being in any way related to individual personal characteristics or identities.

The issue of inclusive education involves engaging with the question of human rights in terms of its meaning and implications for policy and practice. This is also linked to other concerns relating to the relationship between education and society and the extent to which the former contributes to social justice, individual self-worth and respect for the worth and dignity of others. Thus Rustemier (2002:23) argues,

“Making education acceptable according to human rights standards means paying attention to the purposes of education not only in terms of qualification and outcomes, but in terms of enabling all people to live together on the basis of non-discrimination and equity…”

8) Differentiation: Is differentiation the answer for learners who learn differently?

To many teachers, planned differentiation in the delivery of lessons is a critical factor for pupil achievement.

“Differentiation within the planning and delivery of teaching and learning is perceived by all teachers in the school as critical for pupil achievement and development” (Hewlett, K., Crabtree, D. and Taylor, S. 2008:13)

But what is meant by differentiation?

In the AchieveAbility Interventions: A Framework for Whole Class Learning drawn from SpLD work (Hewlett, K. and Crabtree, D. 2005) differentiation is presented as a process in which the teacher audits all aspects of lesson planning to identify and remove unnecessary barriers to learning.

Each task and activity planned in a lesson is measured for accessibility in terms of the content, the resources to be used, the outcomes, the response and the levels of support. Variations in any one, some or all of these, in response to the learning needs of a learner, is what constitutes differentiation.

The Inclusive Learning Report, a paper for the FE sector, maintained,

There is a world of difference between, on the one hand, offering courses and training and then giving some students who have learning difficulties additional human or physical aids to gain access to those courses and, on the other hand, redesigning the very processes of learning, assessment and organisation so as to fit the objectives and learning styles of the students. But only the second philosophy can claim to be inclusive, to have as its central purpose the opening of opportunity to those whose disability means that they learn differently from others. (Tomlinson, 1996:4)

The social-interactive model of disability enables us to shift our attention away from the difficulties experienced by the learner towards the difficulties that schools and colleges face in removing unnecessary barriers to learning. The current challenge is not how learners who learn differently can be supported, but how a whole institutional approach can enable all learners to learn.

“The underlying basis of this approach resides with the view that SpLD learners, who span all ability ranges, represent an intellectual loss. Low rates of identification, insufficient support and inappropriate teaching and learning strategies operate against these learners realising their true potential.”(Hewlett, K., Crabtree, D. and Taylor, S. 2008:10)
Classroom-based differentiation inevitably only covers part of the experience of the learner within the school and college. Schools and teachers over the past two decades in particular, have been the subject of an extensive range of policy changes and directives. In England these have covered such initiatives as: the introduction of a national curriculum, local management of schools, changes in assessment of pupils and in the funding of education, new forms of inspection and the publication of league tables, relationships with LEAs, the changing nature of governing bodies, parent-school relationships, policy requirements concerning race, inclusion and child protection.

The number, speed and cumulative effects of these interventions have impacted on schools and teachers in differential ways. Factors such as the socio-economic context in which schools are located, the history of the school, the biography of staff and the culture and ethos of the organisation are all-important issues that can exacerbate or minimise such impacts. Levels of stress, low morale, psychological, emotional and physical exhaustion as well as significant numbers of teachers leaving the profession, have been negative side effects of these pressures. However, we also need to remember that as Webb and Vulliamy (1996:163) note many (primary teachers) have come through these difficult times and are:

“clearer about their educational beliefs, recognising what is worth fighting for in primary education and what needs to change, more politically aware of how to go about this at the micro and macro levels and possessing more self-confidence and communication skills”

9) Change: What I need to do differently?

The current policy and philosophical framework of education requires that any response to the issues must meet key criteria. The challenge is to be able to ensure that whatever response is muted puts the needs of the learner at the heart of the process, in other words that it is learner-centred. That it ensures high levels of learner completion, is cost-effective and, importantly, within the ambit of the current policy framework. All these criteria must be met otherwise solutions are unlikely to gain the support necessary to succeed from all those involved in education.

Addressing inclusive issues is a demanding task. Nowhere is this more forcefully demonstrated than in trying to engage in and respond to the differential expectations of different groups of learners.

Different learners learn differently. So, as well as considering different groups of learners, we need also to consider each individual. The personalisation of the curriculum is the process of making what is taught and learnt and how it is taught and learnt match as closely as possible to the needs of the learner.
• **For teachers**, it means observing learners closely, recognising their strengths and areas for further development and drawing on the full repertoire of skills and strategies to meet their needs.

• **For learners** it means being engaged not just with the content of what is being taught but being involved with the learning process, understanding what they need to do to improve and taking responsibility for furthering their own progress.

• **For school leaders**, it means constantly thinking about routines and the organisation of learning for all pupils so that their welfare and their progress can be mutually supportive.”


What is the learner voice?

Responding and gaining a view on the learner voice will enable you to have a further insight whilst engaging in a simple piece of triangulation drawing upon the three key perspectives at play in education; the teacher, the institution and the learner. This process will enable us to explore the range of ways in which policies and practices relating to inclusive education are understood, implemented and experienced and identify the degree to which we are dealing with a common and shared understanding.

By examining different ‘ways of seeing’ – and, in particular, different constructions of, and responses to, difference - in unfamiliar contexts, we will be able to look back on the familiar from fresh vantage points and in the light of alternative interpretations and different values systems.

To consider the learner voice, you will need to decide where to look. Listening to the learner voice is based on the assumption that pupils have something of importance to say on teaching and learning and that there are benefits for schools, teachers and pupils where such practices and expectations are encouraged. In an analysis of what they call ‘Consulting Pupils’, Flutter and Rudduck (2004) maintain that research evidence supports the perspective, that by listening to what pupils say, teachers can more affectively understand how they learn. It is also a means of encouraging self-criticism in relation to the interests, styles and outcomes of teaching.

Another positive outcome of the practice is that pupil self-esteem, confidence and motivation to learn are enhanced in this fundamentally important process. From a research perspective, it is necessary to understand these voices by focusing on the context in which they are expressed, the content, purpose and outcomes of such voices. In relation to inclusive pedagogy this topic does raise the fundamentally important question of what and how pupils can contribute to the development and maintenance of inclusive politics and practice within schools. This, as Flutter and Rudduck contend, has implications for wider concerns of citizenship and democratic principles and values and the role schools can play in this process of change.

Students, then, have a great deal to teach practitioners and researchers about how they learn and what prevents them from learning. While this may appear to be ‘common sense’ to practitioners, it is still the case that researchers and teachers themselves are hard pushed to find time and space in which to listen to the views of pupils. We must find ways of placing the voices of students at centre stage of our enquiry into inclusive pedagogy, as a means of critically engaging with dominant values which are routinely legitimated through the curriculum, teaching and organisation of education, as well as through the media.

10) **Action:** What is the underlying theoretical basis of the action research that I am going to undertake?

Throughout the module participants are encouraged to keep a learning log to enable reflective practice and to inform critical questions 10, 11, 12. The following critical questions should be considered as part of participant personal development planning.

• What is my dialogue?
• What critical question am I going to ask myself?
• Who do I relate this to?

11) **Practice:** How will my reflective practice inform my professional practice?

12) **Future:** What is the critical question that will take me forward?
References


DCSF, National Strategy Supporting pedagogy: Teaching and learning models http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/97996


Piaget, J. (1952) The Origins Of Intelligence In Children


# General reading


Cooper, R. - Social model of dyslexia www.lsbu.ac.uk//lluplus/resources/social_model_dyslexia.shtml


DIES (2005), *A Framework for Understanding Dyslexia*.


Hannaford, C (1995) *Smart Moves – Why learning is not all in your head*, Great Ocean Publishers, USA


Krupska, Marysia and Klein, Cynthia (1995) *Demystifying Dyslexia*, LLUPlus

Kresse, G (2003), *Literacy in the New Media Age*, Routledge

Mackintosh N.J. (1998) *IQ and Human Intelligence*, Oxford University Press, Ch. 8: Verbal and Spatial Strategies


Oliver, M (1990) *The Politics of Disablement* Palgrave Macmillan


Stanovich, K.E. & Stanovich, P.J. (1997). *Further thoughts on aptitude /achievement discrepancy*. Educational Psychology in Practice, 13, 1, 3-8


Indicative reading
Fry, Ron (2004) Improve Your Memory, Delmar
Evans BJW (2001) Dyslexia and vision. Whurr
Klein, Cynthia (2003) Diagnosing Dyslexia, Basic Skills Agency

Acknowledgements
The MA Inclusive learning module is the result of excellence in collaboration across the educational sectors. As follows:
Concept: Dr Graeme Hall
Proposal: Katherine Hewlett
Validation: Dr Ross Cooper
Advisors: Digby Ingle & Katherine Hewlett
Curriculum Handbook: David Crabtree
Editor: Kate Byford
Production and design of Handbook: Kendall Bickford

Learning outcomes
Level 6 professional competence in:
1) Understanding and critically evaluating knowledge from current theoretical thinking and discourses of learning differences and neurodiversity
2) Analysing cognitive styles and processing differences and how they influence the ability to learn
3) Confidently and flexibly identifying and defining problems associated with learning differences and applying appropriate knowledge and skills to the solution

Level 7 professional competence in:
1) Synthesising and utilising knowledge from current theoretical thinking and discourses of learning differences and neuro-diversity and applying the knowledge to learning practice
2) Applying an analysis of how cognitive styles and processing differences impact on the ability to learn
3) Managing the implications of problems associated with learning differences and working proactively with others to formulate solutions

• Transferable skills
• Use of creative problem solving
• Engage in research and learning independently with minimal support
• Work effectively in groups as a member and group leader
• Reflect on own and others learning to improve practice