



## RESEARCH DISSEMINATION

What trainees learn about teaching pupils with special educational needs / disabilities in their school based work: the contribution of planned activities in PGCE programmes.

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## BACKGROUND CONCERNS

*Changing context of partnership model between ITE providers.*  
**DfE 2011**

*Trainee teachers express dissatisfaction with SEN input in their ITE courses.*  
**Winter 2006**

*On-going concerns around the education and training of teachers.*  
**OFSTED 2009**

*SEN inadequately covered.*  
**Garner 2001**

## STUDY AIMS

1. To examine how and what one-year PGCE trainee teachers learn about teaching pupils with SEND in their placement schools.
2. To compare three kinds of school based approaches:
  - i. a personalised SEND teaching task: trainees working with a pupil with SEND over 6-8 hours, carried out in-class or through withdrawal.
  - ii. an alternative non-teaching pupil-focused SEND task, for example, a classroom pupil observations around inclusion or a pupil pursuit study.
  - iii. where there was no specific pupil-focused SEND task other than class teaching practice.

## GENERAL FINDINGS

What trainees learn about teaching pupils with SEND is strongly interlinked with what they learn about teaching in general.

**A planned pupil-focused SEND task, when carried out in favourable conditions, can make a contribution to pedagogic knowledge, especially in understanding personal learning needs. This is something that was less likely to be learned from only whole class teaching experience.**

Trainee experience around SEND is variable in school based work depending on:

- the values and ethos of the school;
- organisational practices: pupil grouping, deployment of TAs, lesson planning templates;
- attitudes of individual staff members;
- the presence of pupils with SEND in teaching practice classes;
- the nature of supervision – best where it is carried out by a teacher who teaches the same class/es as the trainee and has ‘good practice’ in teaching pupils with SEND.

## FINDINGS: What trainees learned about teaching pupils with SEND

### TASK DESIGN

*Reduce demands  
Break whole down  
into smaller tasks  
Provide templates &  
concrete supports  
Alternative recording*

### LEARNING MODES

*Visual modes and  
physical activities  
Games formats &  
variety of  
media/modes*

### PUPIL GROUPING

*Pairing  
Grouping  
Social mixing and  
support*

### ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

*Ways of checking  
understanding  
Starter activities  
Feedback*

### BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

*Class organisation - group dynamics  
Positive ways to gain attention and settle class  
Use of warnings and consequences  
Pupil choice and responsibility*

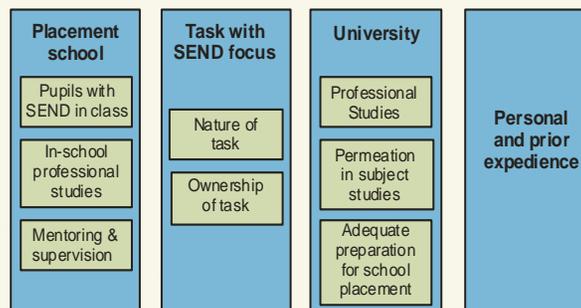
#### MOTIVATIONAL APPROACHES

*Start of lesson engagement activity  
Pupil interest and choice  
Variation in activity  
Lesson pace  
Pupil task self-management*

### TEACHER-PUPIL INTERACTION

*Clarity of expectations -consider questioning  
Check understanding of concepts  
Balance of teacher talk*

## FINDINGS: How trainees learned about teaching pupils with SEND



## FINDINGS: Value of planned pupil-focused tasks

The value of the planned pupil-focused tasks was that they enabled trainees to become aware of individual pupils' perspectives and learning needs that goes beyond differentiation in terms of sub-groups.

In spending specific time focusing on a pupil, the trainee may be better introduced to the interactive nature of the teacher-learner relationship and to the importance of planning appropriate learning processes.

This enables them to understand greater pedagogic complexity beyond what can often be regarded as a 'mechanistic and piecemeal' curriculum coverage approach.

## QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

### For ITE providers

#### How do they:

- formulate the practical principles and procedures about inclusion and teaching pupils with identified SEND in their programmes?
- also design and support planned school-based activities relevant to learning to teach pupils with SEND?

### For placement schools

#### How do they:

- take an active part in allocating trainees to classes that takes account of their future learning about SEND?
- ensure that trainees work with a range of pupils with SEND?
- provide appropriate supervision of class teaching with respect to pupils with SEND?
- ensure opportunities for reflection on teaching pupils with SEND?

### For planned school-based SEND tasks

#### How can tasks be designed:

- which enable trainees to learn about pupils' perspectives and needs in terms of observation, reflection and planning of teaching?
- that are seen as relevant and integral to the school and university programme, as 'joint work'?