



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*

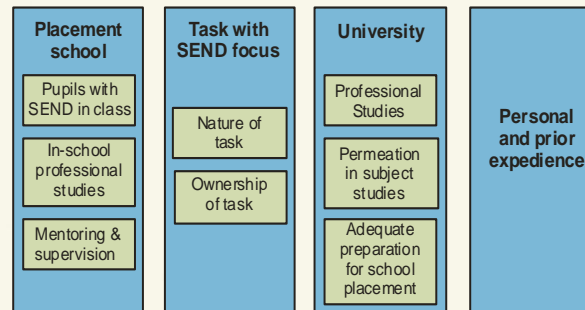
MOTIVATIONAL APPROACHES

*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'?