Economic and Social Research Council
and
Cadbury Trust

Policy Options for Special Educational Needs in the 1990s

Seminar Paper 3

TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Special Educational Needs Policy Options Group

Paper by

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POLICY OPTIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN THE 1990s

Teacher Education for Special Educational Needs

This book is the third in a series of six which will deal with central policy issues in the field of special educational needs. The need for a series of national policy seminars and papers arose from widely felt concerns about the future of special educational provision in the wake of the fundamental changes which are currently occurring in the education services.

It is over a decade since the 1981 Education Act on special needs came into operation. Some of the momentum generated and enthusiasm awakened for improving this aspect of education has been dampened by the far reaching legislative measures introduced under the Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988.

The Education Reform Act has taken little account of SEN interests in introducing a National Curriculum with regular testing, powers for schools to become grant maintained (GM) outside LEAs and the local management of schools.

The effect has been to engender anxiety that recent developments would be undermined and confusion over the future of the education of children and young people with SEN. This confusion has arisen in part from new policies and practices, which though including some positive elements have introduced a system which makes a minority even more vulnerable to majority interests in a context of tight financial resources. At the time of writing new legislation concerned with promoting GM schools and the setting up of a funding agency for schools (FAS) has just gone through Parliament.

This includes some basic changes to the 1981 Education Act which raise significant issues about the future of statutory assessment and special educational provision.

A steering committee (see members on page 5) with a national and diverse overview including headteachers, administrators, voluntary and professional associations, research and academic perspectives formed itself to arrange this policy seminar series.

The **ESRC** and **Cadbury Trust** have funded the seminar series.

Seminars take the form of a presentation by a leading person on the topic area with a critical response from two discussants. A small group of participants with widely differing perspectives on special needs education are invited - MPs, local authority councillors, LEA officers, DFE and OFSTED representatives, heads of voluntary bodies, headteachers, teachers, psychologists, professionals from health and social services, researchers and academics.

Plans are being made for the subsequent seminars and policy books for the next year. Our aim is that these books will bring to a wider audience the outcomes of the ideas and discussions which take place at these seminars. In doing so we seek to contribute to the on-going debate and policy formulation in the area of special educational needs.

Published Policy Papers

Paper 1 :

Bucking the Market : LEAs and Special Needs

Paper by Peter Housden, Director of Education Nottinghamshire LEA

Discussants - Paul Vevers, Senior Manager Audit Commission

- John Moore, Senior Inspector Kent LEA

Paper 2 :

Towards Effective Schools for All

Paper by Mel Ainscow, Senior Lecturer, University of Cambridge, Institute of Education

Discussants - Tony Kerr, Head of Direct Education Services, Harrow LEA

- Brahm Norwich, Senior Lecturer, London University, Institute of Education.

Disclaimer:

The views in this document are those of the contributors and may not represent those of their employers or the National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN).

The document has been edited on behalf of the Steering Committee by Brahm Norwich.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education for special educational needs

This book considers some of the issues of teacher education from a special educational needs perspective. Professor Peter Mittler assessed the state of teacher education and outlines some principles for progress at the seminar which was held on June 23 1993. Carol Ouvry, Headteacher of Jack Taylor special school for severe learning difficulties and Chris Marshall, of OFSTED then reply as discussants. The discussion which then followed is summarised by Dee Palmer-Jones and Brahm Norwich completes the book with some concluding comments.

TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

by Professor Peter Mittler

CRISIS OR CROSS-ROADS ?

Political and Policy Contexts

In the first of the policy option papers in this series, Housden (1993) stated that 'no one argues about whether there is a crisis in special needs: the only debate concerns which particular crisis is being referred to'. To the five crisis areas identified by him, it seems necessary to add a sixth: the education and professional development of teachers.

If education is in crisis, then teacher education must also be in crisis. Policy and practice in teacher education are inseparable from policy and practice in the field of education as a whole. No amount of training can compensate for the absence of effective policies for education as a whole. The days of 'train and hope' are over.

Unfortunately, the cataclysmic changes which have taken place over the past six years have not been matched by anything like adequate attention to the training and professional needs of the very teachers whose task it will be to implement these changes in the classroom. Although large sums of money have been spent on training, we still lack coherent and strategic staff development policies which match the needs of individuals and institutions.

Since every teacher is by definition working with pupils with special educational needs, the professional development needs of such teachers are by definition inseparable from those of all teachers. Taking our cue from the needs of children, we should think in terms of a continuum of professional needs and avoid categorisation and segregation. While all teachers will need adequate preparation and continuing support in working with pupils with special educational needs, some will need more and different types of training 'beyond that which is generally available'. We have to meet the individual needs of teachers, as well as those of the schools and services within which they work.

Despite all the uncertainties created by the avalanche of new legislation, the constant changes of direction and the crisis of confidence between teachers and government, we should recognise that some of the new developments provide opportunities for a reappraisal of policy and practice in special needs education and professional development.

Teachers' response to the national curriculum

The response of special needs teachers to the challenge of the national curriculum has been exemplary. Teachers saw the national curriculum as an entitlement, however critical they may have been of individual elements or of the inappropriateness of a ten subject curriculum to many of their pupils. If there was indeed to be both a national curriculum and a 'curriculum for all', every effort needed to be made to ensure that it was accessible and relevant to all pupils, even to those whose needs had never entered the minds of those who devised it. It was in this spirit that teachers have so far adamantly refused to disapply their

pupils either from the curriculum or from the assessment arrangements - at least until the latter were 'slimmed down' to totally inappropriate paper and pencil tests. Innumerable working parties were set up in teachers' own time to devise innovative and imaginative ways in which their pupils could access the programmes of study and the attainment targets as they appeared in statutory orders.

A number of official and unofficial guidance documents appeared which arose from the work of teachers in special and ordinary schools (eg National Curriculum Council 1989, 1992a, 1992b; School Examination and Assessment Council, 1992); Sebba, Byers and Rose, 1993; Tilstone, 1991; Ashdown, Carpenter and Bovair, 1991; the Manchester Milestones series (e.g. Fagg, Aherne, Skelton and Thornber 1990). These documented examples of good practice and provided much encouragement to teachers. By 1992, most teachers in special schools were implementing as much as they could of the national curriculum and adapting it to the needs of the children in their schools for whom it was never designed.

Even so, many teachers who are in support of the broad principles underlying a national curriculum still feel ill-equipped to implement it, partly because of lack of training and partly because of the many other constraints under which they are working. This is probably particularly true in the field of special needs provision, since the needs of children and teachers in this sector were overlooked in the rush to introduce innovation. Time and again, words like 'afterthought', 'bolt-on' and 'tokenism' have been used in relation to the needs of children and young people with special educational needs. Added to this is mounting despair that special needs issues are conceptualised by the government largely in relation to the needs of pupils in special schools or those with statements in ordinary schools, rather than the much larger group of children who are experiencing learning or behaviour difficulties in ordinary schools.

The needs of this last group of children overlap with that of an even broader group of 'low achieving' or 'under-achieving' children, many of whom come from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. These children enter school at five with significantly lower average levels of language and cognitive functioning. As they go through school, the gap between them and children from more advantaged backgrounds becomes greater rather than smaller (Fogelmann, 1983; Mittler, 1993).

Despite clear evidence of the association between socio-economic background and educational attainment, the government has steadfastly refused to make any allowance for this in the publication of school results, nor are they willing to concede that a record of progress over a period of time is more important than the snapshot result at any given moment required by the publication of league tables. There are now glimmers of hope that the concept of 'value-added' may not be as politically incorrect as it has been. Nowhere is such a concept more relevant than with children with special educational needs whose progress cannot be assessed by means of crude assignments of levels.

More fundamentally, teachers have struggled to reconcile the demands of the national curriculum with the individual needs of their pupils. For some, this may include the teaching of basic self-care and communication skills which have a greater priority than the demands of a curriculum delivered in ten discrete subjects. In this context, it has been suggested that personal and social education might provide a starting point for a curriculum which would include the national curriculum but would go beyond it in the direction of a richer and more inclusive framework of experiences (Sebba, Byers and Rose 1993). Attempts have also been

made to examine in some depth what is meant by the concept of a 'broad and balanced curriculum which is relevant to the needs of the individual child' (eg Fagg, Skelton, Aherne and Thornber 1990) and to which all children are now entitled in law (DES 1989a). Unfortunately, training courses rarely have time to be concerned with these wider issues and have to concentrate for the most part on immediate priorities arising from the constant changes to the curriculum and assessment arrangements.

Reviews of Teacher Education

Special needs teacher education is in crisis because teacher education is also in crisis. The whole basis of initial teacher education is being questioned by ministers and a wide range of proposals for radical change is being canvassed.

Initial Teacher Education

Initial teacher education has been under scrutiny by HMI for some time and has had to follow increasingly stringent but constantly changing criteria for accreditation set by the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (1992) and by the Department for Education (DFE 1992). The reform of secondary training is already under way and primary education is not far behind.

In essence, schools are assuming a greater degree of responsibility for the training of teachers. New forms of partnership with Higher Education are evolving in which each define their distinctive roles and responsibilities and also agree on areas for partnership and collaboration. Higher Education now has to pay schools for their services, although they are not funded to do so.

Many of these developments are not in themselves controversial and represent extensions of good practice which were already being developed. Other suggested changes are based on ideologies and assumptions which are not based on evidence and which could fundamentally undermine the foundations of professional practice.

The most extreme suggestion involves the abolition of the graduate requirement for entry into teaching for teachers of nursery and infant children and the proposal for a one year training for teachers working with this age group. Even more radical is the pilot scheme already announced as a harbinger of things to come which would allow schools to bid for £4000 to take the entire responsibility for initial training without any necessary involvement of higher education.

One wonders how long it will be before Ministers announce that as children in some special schools need only 'tender loving care' and since they are in any case comparable to other children at Key Stage 1, professional qualifications will no longer be needed in special schools and that classroom assistants can be placed in charge of classes 'to put them on an equal footing with colleagues in Infant schools'? In case this seems far-fetched, we should remind ourselves that as long ago as 1985, the government without consultation and in one paragraph of *Better Schools* (DES 1985) abolished all specialist initial teacher education for teachers of children with severe learning difficulties and for those with sensory impairments without proper consultation and before a new system of post-experience training was put in place. The initial recommendation to abolish the mandatory qualification for teaching hearing and visually impaired children was withdrawn after a deluge of protest from parents, teachers and MPs.

Continuing professional development

It is not only initial teacher education but the whole field of in-service education and continuing professional development which is undergoing radical change. The organisation and delivery of in-service courses has increasingly been left to the schools themselves. This movement started in the mid-1980s but has now been completed by the transfer of most of the LEAs' training budget to schools who have power to determine their own priorities. The Department for Education provides increasing sums to LEAs under GEST (Grants for Educational Support and Training) and identifies a number of priority areas on which training budgets are to be spent. The total sum available for 1993/1994 is £320 million of which 60 per cent is provided by the DFE, with the balance to be found by LEAs. About £180m is for training on national curriculum, assessment and IT; £72m for management and appraisal and £10m for all SEN training.

The earmarking of training funds and the setting of national and local priorities has had a beneficial effect, since it was designed to encourage a planned approach to the identification of staff development needs at the level of the LEA, the school and individual members of staff. Unfortunately, the financial crisis facing LEAs and the undermining of their role have resulted in mounting levels of frustration when identified training needs could not be met.

LEAs are experiencing great difficulty in finding their 40 per cent contribution to the DFE grant, with the result that some of the allocated money is unspent and many places on courses are left unfilled. This has implications for the survival of the few long courses which are still able to run.

LEAs and schools are now free to determine how SEN training funds should be allocated between various SEN headings - e.g. mandatory training for teachers of the hearing and visually impaired and for children with severe learning difficulties; courses for special needs coordinators and learning support teams in primary and secondary schools, as well as many other groups which have not previously been specifically targeted - e.g. staff of schools for children with moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behaviour difficulties, physical disabilities, language and communication difficulties, etc. For reasons which are not clear, training for teachers of deaf/blind children still has an earmarked sum of £2m.

While flexibility in the use of GEST funds is in some respects welcome, there is already evidence that LEAs are now giving lower priority to seconding staff for training in the fields of sensory impairment and severe learning difficulties.

Types of training

In a national review of GEST supported training carried out by HMI between April 1991 and April 1992, HMI identified five broad types of training (OFSTED 1993a):

1) Training for individual teachers designed to extend and supplement their initial teacher education;
2) Training provided in response to specific new initiatives, such as the National Curriculum;
3) Training to extend a teacher's expertise in order to meet newly identified personal,

school or regional needs - e.g. preparation for headship;

4) Professional development and updating in a teacher's current area of work, as well as to meet specific needs identified by appraisal;

5) Training to provide a teacher with a mandatory post-initial qualification - eg for hearing or visually impaired pupils.

The OFSTED report specifically noted the low priority given in ordinary schools to training in the field of special educational needs.

Policy Issues

Reviewing current trends towards school-based courses, a number of questions suggest themselves:

- Has the pendulum swung too far towards schools? Can schools both identify and meet the whole range of their staff development needs?
- What will be the roles and responsibilities of LEAs in staff development and how will these change as the Funding Agency for Schools assumes more responsibilities?
- Has government gone too far in stepping down from providing leadership and in developing coherent national strategies for staff development?
- Can everything really be left to the market place and the glossy brochures of the armies of trainers (of whom only a select few are retired HMI and advisers)?
- Is the fragmentation of training and the demise of one year full-time courses and of research training depriving teachers of the opportunities for reflection and in-depth study which are necessary to the health of the profession as well as of the individual? Are we neglecting the training of the next generation of well-informed reflective practitioners and leaders?
- Are there distinctive issues in the training needs of teachers working in the field of SEN which need to be addressed? For example, is there a shortage of trainers and if so do we need a 'training of trainers' initiative? Is there a special role for universities and colleges as regional centres of SEN expertise?

Towards a Teachers' Charter for Training

It is now more than 20 years since the report of the James Committee on teacher training (Department of Education and Science 1972), so perhaps the time is approaching when we can begin to re-examine its recommendations in the light of today's even more urgent needs. The report speaks in terms of what we might in the language of today call a Teachers' Charter. This would include the right of every teacher to a fully funded programme of opportunities for continuing professional development to meet needs identified by the teacher as well as by the school, including the entitlement to one term's sabbatical leave every seven years!

The fact that this last recommendation was thought unrealistic even in a climate of growth and expansion is a sad reflection on the priorities which we attach to teacher education. How many of us would trust ourselves to a surgeon or an airline pilot who had not attended any course of updating for ten years? It speaks volumes for the value which we place on the education of our children that the nation's parents and the profession itself not

only tolerates such a situation but appears to accept it with little or no protest.

It is a sad irony that no sustained campaign has ever been mounted by teachers' unions or professional associations to defend teacher education and demand a commitment to the continuing professional development of teachers who are at the spearhead of change and on whom the government depends for the implementation of its policies. Despite the occasional protest, the absence of any articulated concern about the lack of a clear commitment to staff development raises questions about the degree of importance attached to this by leaders of the profession, most of whom have themselves derived some benefit from opportunities for advanced courses.

If teacher education dies as a result of public and professional apathy, the world of education will have only itself to blame. No one has mounted a campaign to 'Save Teacher Education', comparable to the 'Save British Science' movement orchestrated by the nation's top scientists and prestigious bodies such as the Royal Society. Is this because teacher organisations have been too busy fighting other battles or is teacher education really such a low priority? Clearly, such a campaign could not be mounted by those providing teacher education; they would immediately be accused of defending vested interests and their jobs. Will a sustained campaign for teacher education emerge from the General Teaching Council?

Perhaps the day will come when parents demand that all teachers update their knowledge and skills regularly? In the meantime, will parents protest when nursery and infant teachers children will have less training than their colleagues teaching older children?

The Contribution of Higher Education

The government's sustained attack on teacher education is neither covert nor subtle, far less informed by evidence of what actually goes on in teacher education or by public information available in HMI reports or CATE documentation. Universities have been accused of belonging to an entrenched educational 'establishment' which has subverted reform and is responsible for the fall in standards and the pursuit of outdated orthodoxies. Underlying the radical options for teacher education which ministers and their advisers are currently considering, there appears to be a serious doubt whether universities have any contribution to make to the education of teachers. Teacher training institutions are accused of indoctrinating gullible young minds with 'barmy' theories. We have it on the authority of the Prime Minister himself that 'professors are generally lacking in common sense'. How then can they be entrusted with the responsibility for training teachers?

Universities in their turn need to make a clear and reasoned case for their contribution to both initial and post-experience teacher education, a case that will convince parents as well as the government. The case rests not only on disproving or denying fashionable stereotypes of what is taught but on a demonstration of ways in which courses try to achieve a working integration between practice as found in schools and helping students to reflect on that practice. The polarity between theory and practice espoused by some ministers and even in one recent OFSTED report is meaningless.

It is right that universities should no longer be the main providers of teacher education. Most have for many years seen their role as one of partnership with schools and with those being trained. Changes were certainly necessary and universities have themselves taken many new initiatives within such partnerships.

Training 'beyond that which is generally available'

If every teacher is a now *ipso facto* a teacher of pupils with special educational needs, it follows that the training and professional development of teachers working with pupils with special educational needs can no longer be considered separately from that available to all teachers. Nevertheless, just as children with SENs are considered to require 'provision beyond that which is generally available', it can equally be argued that their teachers also require some additional training, at least until such time as their 'ordinary training' is modified to encompass the needs of all children, including those with the whole range of special educational needs. Although a good start has been made by requiring all courses of initial teacher education to include a compulsory SEN element, there is still a long way to go before all training courses at initial or post-experience level adequately cover the whole range of special educational needs.

A large number of questions suggest themselves. The fact that there are neither answers nor prospects of answers to many of these questions reflects the absence of any clear policy or vision for staff development and constitutes further evidence that teacher education is in crisis.

- Now that the role of the LEA as a provider of training is itself in question, can schools really be expected to identify and meet the whole range of their staff development needs?
- How can schools and individual teachers form a judgement about which courses are most relevant to their needs? How will they identify local trainers?
- How many teachers now have opportunities to identify their development needs in discussion with headteachers and knowledgeable advisers?
- Even if they do, how often are resources available to meet those needs in competition with those identified by other members of staff and in the context of the needs of the school as a whole or new needs created by inspections?
- Are there opportunities in the form of good management support to enable teachers to put into practice what has been learned?
- Can we define what additional training is needed by different groups of teachers, 'beyond that which is generally available'?
- Even if we could, what are the prospects of providing it, at least to those who ask for it?
- What are the essential areas of knowledge, skill and understanding which the newly qualified teacher should be expected to have and which should therefore be made available in initial teacher education?
- What further training and support should be provided for teachers within the first or second year of their appointment?
- What training should be available to more experienced teachers and to heads of departments, deputy heads and headteachers?
- Do particular groups of teachers have distinctive training needs - e.g. teachers working in support services, particular types of special school, primary, secondary schools, sixth form colleges, grant maintained schools, further education colleges? If so, what are their distinctive needs, over and above any general training which they

may share with others? How could such distinctive needs be met within current and future provision?

- Is specialist training for specific groups of teachers effective and necessary? Upton (1991) suggests that although teachers value such training once they have it and would like to have access to it if they do not, support for such training is based on grounds of entitlement and professional standing rather than empirical evidence.
- What is the status of the non-mandatory qualifications of teachers of children with severe learning difficulties which replaced the specialist initial training phased out after 1985? Should this also be made mandatory?
- Should all other advanced qualifications in special needs be made mandatory for all teachers with 'significant responsibilities' for pupils with SENs? Should such a qualification be reflected in salaries and allowances?
- How much training will need to be concerned with access to individual subject areas of the national curriculum, as well as with the cross-curricular skills, themes and dimensions?
- Who will meet the training needs of teachers - other colleagues in the school, the LEA support or educational psychology services, higher education, the private sector? Are we moving into a yellow pages culture in meeting teachers' development needs?
- To what extent will such training be school-based? If so, how will teachers have opportunities to share ideas and experiences with colleagues in other schools and services? Can this be done through school clusters or training consortia?
- What options are available to the various partners involved - the teachers themselves, the schools and services in which they work, headteachers and governors, local education authorities, the government and the Funding Agencies and those who provide training in colleges and universities? All of these are themselves in the midst of a whirlwind of innovation, which may leave little or no time to consider staff development issues of individuals or institutions.

Against this background, are there any prospects of coherent policies emerging? One possibility for progress lies in the notion of a regional or local consortium covering a geographical area or groups of LEAs. Such a consortium would consist of schools, LEA advisers and inspectors and representatives of training institutions. Ideally, its members should identify the whole range of training needs while making provision for specific areas such as special educational needs. It is important to avoid any organisational arrangement which would result in the isolation of special needs from other areas of training and development.

At both national and local levels, could not those with an interest in teacher education join forces to make a case for coherent national and local strategies for teacher education in general?

ELEMENTS OF A STRATEGY FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

The following section will address a few of the issues identified in the series of questions outlined earlier in this paper. An attempt will be made to identify key elements and, where possible, a range of options which might be considered.

Initial Teacher Education

The successful education of children with special educational needs in ordinary schools depends on all teachers having a basic core of relevant information, knowledge and skills, as well as positive attitudes to the education of such children in ordinary schools (Mittler 1992). Ensuring that all students in training are exposed to special needs issues from the outset is therefore an essential investment for the future, even though it will take many years before the effects of such a policy make a major impact on schools.

As long ago as 1978, the Warnock Committee recommended that

'a special educational element should be included in all courses of initial teacher training, including those leading to the Postgraduate Certificate in Education' (DES 1978, para 12.7) and that

'those responsible for validating teacher training courses should make the inclusion of a special education element a condition of their approval of all initial training courses' (para 12.11).

This is one of the few recommendations of the Warnock Report which has been adopted in practice. There have been a number of surveys and HMI reports documenting the slow but gradual implementation of that recommendation and the difficulties of doing so. Since DES Circulars 3/84 and 24/89 and more recently 9/92, the availability of a special needs element in initial teacher education (ITE) has become an essential requirement for the professional accreditation as well as the academic validation of the course and, therefore, for the award of qualified teacher status to the student.

DES Circular 24/89 refers to the need for students to demonstrate:

'the capacity to *identify* gifted pupils and pupils with special educational needs or with learning difficulties and to *understand* the ways in which the capacity of such pupils can be developed'.

DFE Circular 9/92, although claiming to be based on the competencies required of all newly qualified teachers, refers only to

'the ability to *recognise* diversity of talent including that of gifted pupils'

'the ability to *identify* special educational needs or learning difficulties'

It says nothing explicitly about meeting their needs or about developing a range of appropriate teaching methods by differentiation or other means. The parallel Guidance Notes from CATE make no direct reference to SENs, though they do refer to the need for teachers to know about their:

'pastoral, contractual, legal and administrative responsibilities'

and that this should include:

'the preparation of teachers to detect the maltreatment of children and to safeguard their health and safety'.

Presumably, this could include the 1981 Act and the 1989 Children Act and those sections of the 1988, 1992 and 1993 Education Acts relevant to pupils with SENs.

The requirement for an SEN element, while welcome to special needs tutors and teachers, has not been easy to implement, for reasons clearly identified by HMI (1990). Not all universities have a member of staff with qualifications and experience in the field of special needs and may have to buy in the services of an occasional tutor. However experienced and credible this individual may be, such an appointment tends to reinforce the notion of segregation and separation when what is needed is a 'permeation' of special needs issues into all aspects of the course.

Unfortunately, this development is now under threat, as a result of the government's policies to reduce the amount of time students spend in training institutions and to transform the nature and length of training for teachers of nursery and infant children. It is hard to imagine how schools alone can be expected to deliver the 'SEN element'.

'Permeation'

The concept of *permeation* implies that each and every aspect of the course of initial teacher education is concerned with the needs of the whole range of children. The Warnock Committee referred to courses in child development and educational psychology, although these subjects are now rarely taught under these names. The emphasis today is on differentiation of the curriculum, ensuring that each aspect of the curriculum and every lesson and classroom activity are accessible to the whole range of children in the class (Lewis 1991, Peter, 1992).

A permeation policy also implies that every tutor in initial teacher education courses is by definition a special needs tutor. This in turn reflects the need for those tutors with expertise in special needs to work through their colleagues.

It is clear from the HMI (1990) report and from experience that permeation is not enough. The essence of permeation is that it is seamless and invisible and therefore difficult to manage or monitor. It is also entirely dependent on the extent to which mainstream tutors adapt all aspects of their work with students to conform to the permeation model. In a large department, some will do this more readily than others. Special needs tutors are not well placed to assess this aspect of their colleagues' teaching.

Related to this is the concept that special educational needs do not reside only in the child but can be caused, complicated and therefore prevented by the quality of the learning experiences offered by the school as a whole and in any individual classroom experience. For example, difficulties in learning can arise from books and materials which call for reading and comprehension skills beyond the reach of at least some of the pupils; from worksheets or blackboard instructions that are badly set out and from teacher language which is not fully understood. Indeed, repeated failure to understand what is required lies at the origin of many learning difficulties. It follows that student teachers need to be helped to check that all pupils have understood what they are required to do.

The special educational element in initial teacher education is not therefore merely a matter of learning about children with learning difficulties. It involves helping students to be constantly alert to problems which all pupils may experience from time to time in gaining access not only to the curriculum or to any individual lesson but to the whole range of experiences offered by the school throughout the day. The implications of this position are developed in Ainscow's (1993) discussion paper in this series. In the present context, such a view reinforces the need for mainstream tutors to take the main responsibility for ensuring that differentiation and access principles and practice permeate every aspect of the course. There are clear parallel here with the need to adopt 'whole school' policies for children from ethnic minorities (Mittler 1989) and from the whole range of social and family backgrounds (Mittler 1993).

These considerations apply equally to policy and practice concerning relations between pupils and teachers and to issues concerned with discipline, organisation and management, all of which need to be considered in preventing or addressing emotional and behavioural difficulties. These issues were well rehearsed in the Elton Enquiry (DES 1989b); fortunately, this report did result in some training at local level, though funds have since been drastically reduced.

Despite the requirement for a compulsory SEN element, the fact remains that surveys of newly qualified teachers regularly report that teachers do not feel at all well prepared either by their initial training and even less in the context of their first (probationary) year of teaching to work with pupils with SENs (Bovair 1991; DES 1987b, OFSTED 1993b). However, HMI (1990) reported that observation of their teaching and a study of their lesson plans indicated that their actual work in schools suggested that more foundation work had been done on this than was perhaps suspected by the students themselves. The detailed knowledge of the programmes of study and statements of attainment of the national curriculum which all students should now have will certainly help them to think about issues of access to the curriculum.

'Focused element'

Over and above the permeation element, students also need what HMI call a focused element which deals explicitly with special needs issues and which is compulsory. This can be provided through lectures, workshops or small group seminars, ideally by the subject and special needs tutors teaching together. It is sometimes possible to involve experienced special needs teachers on advanced diploma and M.Ed courses in running workshops and practical sessions based on their own experience. At Manchester University, practical workshops along these lines have been provided by special needs staff and students over a period of many years. In general, PGCE students display a high level of interest in working with pupils with special educational needs. Indeed, many have already gained relevant previous experience in schools, clubs and youth work before starting their PGCE course.

Unfortunately, the demise of one year full time courses and the non-availability of part-time students during the day rules out this valuable source of input to the course, though it is sometimes possible to bring in (or buy in) former students for this purpose.

School practice

It is also important that students experience examples of good special needs practice in

their work in schools which now constitutes two thirds of secondary courses. Mainstream tutors therefore need to ensure that any school in which students are placed reflects good practice in special needs provision. This in turn implies that they are able to recognise both good and not so good special needs practice when they see it and that they can convey its essence to their students. A secondary school may have an excellent reputation in the teaching of a particular subject but may be lacking an effective special needs policy. Students placed in such a school are therefore missing out on an important area of their experience. The same point applies to infant and primary schools.

The aim of an introductory course on special needs is to focus explicitly on criteria for good practice in primary and secondary schools. In future, students should be given a list of questions and criteria to consider in their practice schools. Some of these are mentioned in the government amendment to the 1993 Act as information on SEN policy and provision which must be published by each primary and secondary school. These include:

- the existence of a written special needs policy in every school;
- ways in which this policy is implemented;
- names and qualifications of special needs coordinators in primary schools or learning support teams in secondary schools;
- ways in which the curriculum is differentiated and made accessible to all pupils;
- policy and practice for identifying children with difficulties, including procedures for pupils with statements, contacts with neighbouring special schools; ways in which newly qualified staff (and others) can obtain support and advice in recognising and meeting special educational needs.

In addition to their school practice placements, students should also have opportunities to experience exemplary special needs practice at first hand. Even when such excellence is not found in their main practice schools, tutors can try to arrange a placement in a neighbouring or cluster school, in the meantime indicating to the main schools that such experience is being provided elsewhere.

Special needs placements

All Manchester University students undertake an additional special needs placement in the last two weeks of their course. This is often in a special school but may be taken in a variety of settings, including special classes or units in a mainstream school. They may also be attached to a particularly good learning support team in a secondary school or designated teacher in a primary school. Some are attached to advisory or educational psychology services or are placed in agencies concerned with assessment, young offenders or child protection. These placements are not formally assessed by tutors but there is a debriefing session where students share and discuss their experiences. Reports are also written by supervising teachers in the schools.

Elective courses

For many years, all students in Manchester have had an opportunity to take two optional elective courses covering a wide range of professional issues. Special needs has always been amongst the most popular of these electives. At one stage, two electives were available, one focusing on learning difficulties and the second on emotional and behavioural

difficulties.

With the reduction of time in the university, the choice of electives had to be reduced to one and later to two half electives, each lasting five weeks. In the coming year, no electives at all can be offered under the new CATE and DFE requirements. This deprives students of the opportunity to undertake a more detailed and in depth study of special needs issues.

Is there a future for the special needs element?

The need to abolish elective courses illustrates one consequence of the government's decision to increase the proportion of time which secondary students spend in schools. This is bound to have a major impact on the extent to which special needs issues can be introduced by way of preparation and groundwork. It is hard to envisage how schools alone will fill this gap, particularly when the proportion of time in schools is approaching 100 per cent.

For this reason, it is important that students are made aware while they are in the university of the main elements of good practice in meeting special educational needs in ordinary schools. The foundations for such knowledge and awareness can only be laid in the teacher training institutions. The partnership schools in which students are placed may or may not exemplify good practice, though the process of selecting them should certainly include this as one of the main criteria.

In the absence of opportunities for face-to-face contact with students in the training institutions, special needs staff at Manchester University and Manchester Metropolitan University are joining forces to put together a 'Special Needs Study Pack' of handouts, worksheets, annotated bibliographies and other material for secondary PGCE teacher training students in both institutions. Similar materials will no doubt be produced to meet the needs of primary students. Although this cannot replace the dialogue which comes from seminars and situations where students interact with one another as well as with their tutor, it is the only response that can be made at the present time to the government's decision to reduce the amount and nature of the contact between PGCE students and their tutors.

Recommendations from beyond the grave

In view of the imminent demise of initial teacher education in its present form, it may be worth while to summarise the conclusions and recommendations of two major reports on the special educational needs element in initial teacher education. These are the HMI (1990) report to which reference has already been made and a report issued by the Council for National Academic Awards shortly before it too was laid to rest by the government (CNAA 1991). The CNAA report is based on a survey of all initial teacher education training institutions in the public sector, followed by a workshop to discuss findings and draw up recommendations.

1) There must be a clearly stated policy at institutional level on how special needs issues will be addressed in initial teacher education.

2) One member of staff from the ITE team should be given the responsibility of coordinating special needs and liaising between SEN and ITE tutors.

3) The policy to be developed jointly between SEN and ITE staff should lead to clearly

identified roles and responsibilities and should be supported at the highest management level within the institution.

4) At least three special needs staff are required in each institution to make an input into ITE as well as to run advanced courses and undertake research.

5) Special needs staff should, like other mainstream tutors, have 'recent, relevant and successful' experience of special needs provision and develop close working links with schools and services.

6) One of the roles of special needs tutors is concerned with institutional staff development. To this end, they should organise seminars on current special needs issues for all their colleagues and ensure that relevant information is passed to them. This includes HMI (now OFSTED) reports, relevant research reports, book reviews and extracts from appropriate journals. Some of these documents can be passed to ITE students, others will be mainly to update colleagues. The HMI report emphasised that it was not enough simply to pass on information without comment; it was often helpful to set such documents in context by providing brief notes and commentaries and offering to discuss selected documents with colleagues or their students.

7) Students should have opportunities to meet disabled persons and young adults who have themselves experienced special needs provision, whether in special or ordinary schools. Institutions could also do more to encourage appropriately qualified disabled young people to seek admission to ITE courses, in the interests of an equal opportunities policy and to act as role models to others.

These are challenging recommendations. Is there anyone left to implement them?

Initial Specialist Training

The Warnock Committee considered the role of initial specialist training leading to B.Ed and PGCE which was then available for teachers working with pupils with hearing and visual impairments and those with severe learning difficulties. The Committee was unable to reconcile the conflicting advice which it received on the strengths and limitations of such courses and recommended that no new courses of this nature should be established and that HMI should review and evaluate their effectiveness. Six years later, the government asked its then Advisory Council for the Supply and Education of Teachers (ACSET 1984) to make recommendations on this matter in the context of a wider review of teacher education in this field. This body was also duly abolished but not before recommending that all specialist initial training courses should be gradually phased out. The government accepted this recommendation without consultation or discussion in a single paragraph of *Better Schools* (DES 1985).

The arguments that led the ACSET committee to make this recommendation can be readily understood in the wider context of integration and the need for all teachers to gain experience in ordinary schools before specialising. These arguments were advanced in good faith, in the expectation that in-service conversion courses would be available to enable teachers to be funded to take advanced qualifications in the field of special needs, both in the mandatory areas of sensory impairment, as well as in the field of severe learning difficulties. It was also expected that similar opportunities would be available to other teachers working in the field, whether in special or ordinary schools or in support services.

Post-experience specialist training

Unfortunately, the abolition of initial specialist training coincided in 1986 with a radical overhaul of in-service training opportunities for all teachers. This led within the space of a single year to a reduction by two thirds of the number of teachers who could be funded to take one year full time courses of all kinds and to a shift of all training from higher education to LEAs and to schools.

We now have a crisis in some areas of the country in the supply of teachers with the required mandatory qualification for teachers of children with hearing or visual impairments, as well as for teachers of pupils with severe learning difficulties. Although these 'categories' have been earmarked as priorities by the DES/DFE, LEAs have had great difficulty in matching the government contribution of 60 per cent with their 40 per cent share of the costs. As a result, many places are left unfilled and some courses are in danger of having to close.

For example, only 101 teachers obtained a specialist qualification in the education of hearing impaired children in 1992, compared to the officially estimated target of between 140 and 160 needed to replace normal losses. Course tutors estimate, on the basis of their contacts with LEAs and schools, that full time courses are under increasing threat of closure and that the number of part-time students qualifying is not enough to meet the needs of schools and services (Elphick, personal communication).

In the field of severe learning difficulties, HMI report that the number of teachers gaining recognised qualifications fell from 200 in 1986 to 105 in 1991. As two thirds of these were already working in this field, they estimate that only 35 new teachers a year were entering these schools with a relevant qualification (HMI 1992a).

The money made available for all courses from the DES was far too limited to enable either LEAs or schools to fund full time secondments, as well as the necessary replacement costs of the seconded teacher. LEAs also reduced their support for part-time courses, in the expectation that teachers would pay their own fees, since these could be spread over periods as long as six years on some courses. Some LEAs, however, continue to fund teachers on part-time courses within the context of LEA and school plans extending over a period of some years. Opportunities to enrol on longer courses are not always grasped by teachers, especially in schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties where a specialist qualification is not mandatory.

HMI have recently published a national survey of virtually all the specialist award-bearing courses available in the field of hearing impairment (HI), visual impairment (VI) and severe learning difficulties (SLD) (HMI 1992a).

- All HI and VI and three quarters of SLD courses provided satisfactory or better training and preparation. The standard of teaching was generally good.
- All VI courses had recruited their full numbers but recruitment to HI courses had fallen by 20 per cent in two years.
- Eight of the 12 SLD courses were under-subscribed and most of their course members were already teaching in SLD schools. The majority of students were over 35, with over 10 years previous teaching experience.

The system of in-service training, previously funded from a centrally held pool to

which all LEAs contributed, thus collapsed overnight and is now fragmented. From the outset, representations were made to Ministers, DES officials and HMI - all to no avail. The senior civil servant at the centre of this debacle declared himself publicly to be 'agnostic about the future of higher education training for special needs teachers'. Happily, he was soon moved to another Department but the policy did not change. The DES called a number of meetings but basically waited for market forces to determine the future of specialist training provision. In the meantime, the acute shortage of teachers with mandatory (SI) or quasi-mandatory (SLD) qualifications worsens by the year and nothing is being done about it. The tutors involved have now appealed on behalf of pupils with SLDs to the European Court of Justice. The impasse continues.

Continuing Professional Development for All?

As initial teacher education moves increasingly out of higher education and into schools, opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) for all teachers become even more important. In the past, the term in-service education of teachers (INSET) was widely used to describe a wide range of post-qualification training opportunities. These extend from half-day courses held in their own school through full time or part-time Advanced Diplomas, Masters Degrees and Doctorates. In the last few years, opportunities to study for named awards has all but disappeared at the full-time level. Most teachers who are working for such awards on a part-time basis are self-funding, though some are still supported from LEA or school funds.

Opportunities for newly qualified teachers

HMI reports on the *New Teacher in School* (OFSTED 1993b)) and on *The Induction and Probation of New Teachers* (HMI 1992b) estimated that half of a sample of some 300 teachers in their first year of teaching received less than adequate support from their LEAs and that over a quarter received less than adequate support from their schools.

The government's decision to abolish the probationary year has left something of a vacuum, with LEAs and schools sharing responsibility for the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and a lack of clarity about who is responsible for what. In response to this vacuum, new partnerships are emerging between LEAs, schools and higher education with the aim of developing a framework within which the new teacher can start on a programme of professional development immediately on starting their first job.

The University Council for the Education of Teachers has argued strongly for a much closer integration between initial teacher education, professional induction and continuing professional development (UCET 1993).

For example, Manchester University has embarked on a pilot project known as the Teaching Studies Programme for all NQTs in two LEAs. This involves University accreditation of an LEA's induction programme, the attachment of the NQT both to a school mentor and to a University tutor and the negotiation of a programme of professional development which is tailor made to the needs of the individual teacher in the context of their own school. A process of continuous assessment leads to the award of a Certificate and Diploma of Professional Studies after one and two years respectively. These can give as much as 50 per cent Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning to the Faculty's M.Ed programme.

The basis of support and assessment is a Teacher's File which is in the form of a record or profile of professional development and which includes evidence of experiences and competencies identified in the CATE criteria and in DFE Circular 9/92. These include specific as well as 'permeated' references to meeting the needs of pupils with SENs. With the reduction in the amount of time available for a special needs element in initial teacher education, it is all the more important to develop opportunities for newly qualified teachers to be given a firm foundation of good practice in special needs education in the newly emerging patterns of induction and teacher support.

The CATE criteria laid down the competencies expected of a newly qualified teacher in rather general terms but the National Council for Special Education, now the National Association for Special Educational Needs, has been rather more explicit in their *Guidelines to the Content of Teachers' Courses in Special Educational Needs* (NASEN 1990). These are presented under ten headings:

1) Background Studies
2) Theory and Philosophy
3) Assessment Issues
4) Curriculum Delivery
5) The Reflective Practitioner
6) Professional Roles
7) The Whole School Approach
8) Personal Development
9) Management
10) Exceptional Special Needs

An earlier list of training suggestions arose from a series of European workshops on special needs teacher education (Appleton, Dollard and Morgan, 1986). These distinguished between knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by newly qualified teachers, by those undertaking in-service and more advanced courses (see Appendix 1 for an example). These lists seem somewhat daunting in the context of the new requirement for initial teacher education to be largely school-based. Such requirements would be difficult enough to meet even in a full time course in higher education. Is it conceivable that even experienced teachers in schools could deliver such a curriculum during the course of their day to day work?

Opportunities for more experienced teachers

The story of the gradual attrition of opportunities for teachers to study for award bearing courses is too well known to require retelling. What has not emerged, however, is a coherent policy for staff development for teachers. This is not a plea for a return to one year full time diplomas and Masters degrees in their old form. In the absence of a radical restructuring and new patterns of funding, such courses are not likely to recruit more than a handful of self-funding UK students. A number have already been discontinued and their staff deployed to other work outside the special needs area.

Long courses have been replaced by a large number of short one day training events, mostly based in schools and delivered by other teachers and by advisers. A large number of training days have been directly targeted on the national curriculum and the assessment arrangements. These include the five days a year non-contact days which are a valued element of teachers' training opportunities.

The extent to which special needs teachers gain access to local national curriculum courses is not known and depends very much on local initiatives. In some areas, teachers from special schools were able to derive great benefit from taking courses alongside colleagues from mainstream schools, particularly in the early stages when programmes of study and attainment targets were relatively unknown. The more forward looking LEAs encouraged them to take advantage of these courses, as they were just as entitled to them as teachers from ordinary schools. But as time went on, teachers from special schools began to complain that the courses were becoming less relevant to their needs and that separate provision needed to be made. By this time, the funds had often run out and there was not enough money in the SEN training categories to provide the full range of training required.

Training designated teachers in ordinary schools

From 1983, the DES began to earmark funds for in-service training and to designate priority areas which would attract higher rates of funding. Special needs was one of the four original priority areas, for which a total of £7 million was allocated in 1983.

A welcome and successful initiative took the form of one term courses specifically for 'teachers with designated responsibilities for pupils with SENs in ordinary schools'. These courses (often known as SENIOS) were developed in partnership between the teacher, headteacher, LEA special needs adviser and higher education tutors.

With the aim of helping experienced teachers to become agents of change in their own school, course members typically spent three days in higher education and two days back in their own schools. By 1986, 25 such courses were running and even in 1988 the DES was expecting teachers with designated SEN responsibilities to undergo such training. Independent evaluations by Hegarty and Moses (1988) and national overviews by HMI suggested that these courses had a considerable impact on schools, particularly where the headteachers were already committed to change and where 'management of change' was well planned and resourced.

It is a great pity, therefore, that these courses are also withering on the vine, due largely to the inability of LEAs to find their 40 per cent share of the costs to match the DES 60 per cent. Some of the SENIOS courses are now taught on the basis of one half day and one evening per week but with depleted numbers. In one course, numbers reduced from 27 to 15 over a two year period. At the same time, LEA resources were being depleted by LMS and by the loss of large numbers of advisory posts. Schools naturally wished to determine their own needs and priorities, which did not necessarily include special needs training.

Today, the prospects of access to SEN courses for the generality of teachers in ordinary schools are not good. The aim of providing a course for one designated teacher in 23,000 primary schools and a team of perhaps three to four learning support teachers in 4000 secondary schools is obviously far short of realisation, though a good start was made in the mid 1980s. Can one be optimistic that SEN issues will be integrated into all courses for mainstream teachers? Will teachers emphasise the importance of this in identifying their

staff development needs and in their evaluations of courses that fall short in this respect?

Opportunities for support teachers

A notable feature of UK provision for pupils with SENs is the work of support teachers. Their role varies greatly from area to area; for example, some are peripatetic, others remain in a single school or work for clusters of schools. Some teams cover the whole range of pupils with special needs while others concentrate on specific needs - eg sensory impairment, specific learning difficulties, behaviour management.

Common to all of them are the tasks of supporting both pupils with SENs and the staff who work with them in ordinary schools; advising on curriculum access and modification and acting as advocates to ensure that the needs of children are met, whether they are on statements on not. A series of national HMI reports (HMI 1991) was complimentary about their day-to-day work but was critical of poor management and leadership from their LEA employers.

The role and function and indeed the very survival of support teachers, particularly peripatetic staff managed and funded by LEAs, has been in doubt for some time as a result of delegated funding and Local Management of Schools. It seems now to be the intention of the government to ensure that at least some of these support services remain the responsibility of the LEA, along with educational psychology and educational social work. But it is not clear whether this is limited to statutory work with pupils on statements or whether it includes the wider group of pupils with SENs but without statements, nor is there any indication that LEAs will have the funds to retain this service as a 'mandatory exemption'. Ordinary schools will be able to buy such support services either from the LEA or from any other agency of their choice.

If support services are to remain an LEA responsibility, how and from whom will they receive further training? What should be the content of courses?

It is obviously vital that support teachers should have access to courses which are related to their distinctive needs over and above those available to all teachers working with pupils with SENs. In particular, they need preparation and support in respect of their consultancy and negotiation roles and in the skills involved in working with other adults, including those in senior management positions whose support for their work is vital. Courses in Scotland have placed particular emphasis on preparation for such consultancy roles (Blythman 1985). Similar issues arise in the work of teachers with designated SEN responsibilities in primary schools and members of learning support teams in secondary schools.

Staff of special schools

Staff working in special schools include not only teachers but nursery nurses and classroom assistants, now collectively known as special support assistants. In addition, there is a need for joint courses with speech and physiotherapists and other health practitioners such as doctors and nurses, as well as educational psychologists, educational social workers, careers officers and specialist advisory teachers and curriculum specialists. There is a strong argument for much more joint training, not only with other professionals but also with governors and parents.

The Licensed Teacher scheme could provide a route to qualified teacher status for special support assistants but this route has not in general proved popular at any level. Although SSAs have for many years played a valued role in special schools, their opportunities for training and career development have been negligible. Their maximum pay is about half the starting pay of teachers and there are virtually no promotion or salary enhancement prospects. For many years, they were explicitly excluded from access to LEA training courses funded by the various DES/DFE schemes (e.g. TRIST, GRIST, LEATGS) though the rules are now more flexibly interpreted. They will also be able to qualify as teachers if they have 2 A levels or their equivalent under the government's new one year training proposals for non-graduates but only if they teach children at Key Stage 1. Whether this means children age 7 or children functioning at Key Stage 1 has not been considered.

Reference has already been made to the virtual collapse of full-time courses for teachers of pupils with sensory impairment and severe learning difficulties and the consequent crisis in the supply of newly qualified specialist teachers in some areas. Equally serious but less in the public eye are the needs of the great majority of teachers working in special schools and units for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical impairments and specific language impairments.

The needs of these teachers were consigned to the 'local priority' category before GEST; this meant that lower levels of DES funding were available to support their training, with the result that few gained access to award-bearing courses. Under the new GEST arrangements, all SEN funding is combined into a single lump sum, leaving it to LEAs and schools to determine their own priorities across the whole range of staff working in the SEN field. Whether or not this results in better opportunities for such teachers remains to be seen but the prospects do not seem encouraging, given the difficulties being experienced by LEAs in meeting their responsibility to provide mandatory training in the field of sensory impairment and to meet training needs of staff working with pupils with severe learning difficulties.

Teachers in special schools also require support in working with colleagues in ordinary schools and in promoting, managing and above all in sustaining change in both special and ordinary schools. They have much to contribute to their colleagues in ordinary schools in relation to assessment and record keeping, individual educational planning, behavioural methods and management, aspects of microtechnology and working with parents. They also have much to teach each other about ways of supporting integration, the obstacles encountered and how they might be overcome. At the same time, they themselves will need support in adult learning, consultancy and negotiating skills and in familiarising themselves with the many changes which are taking place in primary and secondary schools.

Appendix 2 provides an initial starting point for a list of training areas that appear to be relevant to teachers in special schools, though much of this will be equally relevant to their colleagues in ordinary schools and in support services. Such a list might be used as a basis for brainstorming training needs in a school or service. Clearly, such lists are too ambitious by today's standards.

Staff of Grant Maintained Schools and City Technology Colleges

Staff of Grant Maintained Schools (GMSs) and City Technology Colleges (CTCs) are just as much in need of training in supporting pupils with SENs as teachers in any other

school. Since they are subject to the 1981 Act now covered by the 1993 Education Act, they have the same legal obligation to identify pupils with SENs and to meet their needs as all maintained schools. Perhaps the selective ethos of these schools and the dangers of academic elitism make it all the more important to ensure that such training is available. Although relatively few schools have opted for GM status so far, it is important to ensure that their staff have access to LEA training resources. There is already evidence that some of them are making direct approaches both to LEAs and to Higher Education, though there is no information on the extent to which they are asking for courses to help their staff improve their knowledge and skills in teaching pupils with SENs. In the meantime, the proposed Funding Agency for Schools will need to work with both LEAs and schools to develop appropriate training frameworks for staff. So far, there is little evidence that this matter has been given a great deal of attention.

Staff in Colleges of Further Education

The independence of FE Colleges from their LEAs raises many questions about the extent to which they will in future make at least adequate provision for students with SENs. Provision for students with SENs has been extensively studied both by HMI (1989) and by independent observers (McGinty and Fish 1991). These reports reflect the usual British patchwork quilt, with examples of outstanding and innovative practice co-existing, sometimes in the same LEA or neighbourhood, with policies which either fail to admit more than a few such students or which segregate them from the mainstream of college life. The 1988 Education Act states that governors should 'have regard to the requirements... of students with learning difficulties' - all that remains of an attempt in the House of Lords to ensure that at least one college governor had direct experience of students with SENs.

Further Education has, however, been fortunate in the Further Education Unit which has produced over the years a whole series of exemplary guidance documents on ways in which students with SENs can have fuller and richer access to the curriculum and life of the FE College. The consistently high quality of FEU publications highlights the absence of similar documents for school age pupils, at least until the advent of the national curriculum (see Hutchinson (1991) for a useful summary).

Even more relevant in the present context is an excellent document on staff development produced by the DES (1987a) *A Special Professionalism*. This outlines a staff development framework with eight levels of training, ranging from awareness courses for senior managers and for college staff with varying levels of contact with students with SENs, through to in-depth advanced courses at certificate, diploma or M.Ed. level. This document reflects a great deal of thought on content, mode of delivery and academic levels required within each of the eight levels. The framework outlined in the report could well provide a firm foundation for a regional or, indeed, a national strategy. It is ironic that nothing comparable has been produced for teachers and other staff working with pupils of school age. It is tragic that this exemplary document seems to have sunk without trace.

After much lobbying, the DES finally included SEN courses in FE as one of its increasing number of priorities, though the total allocated for the whole country was, at its peak, well under one million pounds and has now disappeared from the list of GEST priorities. Even so, no information is available on how these funds were used. Attempts by some Higher Education Institutions with appropriately experienced staff to provide full-time and then part-time courses on the basis of needs identified by market research were poorly

supported by LEAs and had only a brief life. It appeared that responsibility for this sector fell between two advisory stools - SEN and FE, with neither taking full responsibility.

Contexts for Change

Despite this sad catalogue of failed initiatives and missed opportunities, there are nevertheless a number of sources of positive pressures for change which could result in more clearly articulated demands for staff development. We can consider these under a number of headings.

National contexts

- Inspections by OFSTED will include an assessment of the extent to which schools plan and provide for staff development. These and other inspections will in turn identify staff development needs and generate demand for relevant courses.
- The 1993 Education Act includes an amendment which will make it mandatory for every ordinary school to publicise its special needs policy and practice. This will also need to list the names and *qualifications* of all staff with responsibilities for pupils with SENs.
- A decision in principle needs to be taken about the status of the 'recognised qualification' in special needs education. The recommendation for a mandatory qualification for all teachers with a 'defined responsibility for children with SENs' was made in 1954 and again by the Warnock Committee but is further than ever from implementation.
- Such a policy would clearly encompass all teachers in special schools and units, members of learning support teams at all levels and designated teachers in primary schools. But would it marginalise this group from the majority of teachers, all of whom, by definition, are also teaching pupils with SENs? Is it still possible to aim for a policy in which every teacher with 'defined responsibilities' for pupils with SENs must have a recognised qualification? And how would we define a recognised qualification today? In terms of a full time course or its part time equivalent? Or would one or two relevant modules be enough? Should teachers with recognised qualifications receive additional allowances?
- A national staff development policy for education as a whole and therefore for special needs education is badly needed but seems unlikely to emerge from any known political party. The Warnock Committee's recommendation for a Special Education Staff College seemed a good idea at the time but was totally ignored by everyone from government to teachers' associations. It is probably too segregative by today's standards but might be revived in the wider context of a national staff development plan for all teachers. The Department for Education seems to have distanced itself, if not actually abrogated its role as a catalyst for strategic policy development in this field and is content to leave this to schools and what is left of LEAs, resting its case on increased funding allocations through mechanisms such as GEST. Perhaps the emergent General Teaching Council will build staff development into its aims and revisit the idea of a national framework for professional development?
- With the absorption of what is left of HMI into OFSTED, can we hope that this

organisation will take a strategic view of staff development and that this will take full account of staff working with special needs populations? Can one express the same hope for the new Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority? Will they improve on the National Curriculum Council's somewhat inadequate incursion into initial teacher education which again equated special needs with special schools?

School Contexts

With or without central government, a long term, medium term and short term staff development programme should be an integral part of every school development plan. Parents, governors and the local community will want to see evidence that the staff of the school are creating opportunities to increase their knowledge, skills and experience.

- Every school can, through its staff and its governing body, begin without delay to work out a staff development strategy and the tactics for its implementation.
- Teacher appraisal will identify professional development needs of individual teachers and of the school as a whole. This should help the school to define its policies and priorities for training.
- A senior member of the management team should have overall responsibility for staff development - this is often the deputy headteacher.
- The school will need to create a training budget and earmark funds which can be used for this purpose and for nothing else. Priorities will need to be established for the larger items of expenditure and a contingency fund retained to take advantage of unexpected opportunities - e.g. a workshop or visiting speaker.
- Information provided by schools could be extended to include a list of courses attended by staff outside the school, as well as workshops and training days organised by the school itself. In this way, parents and potential parents will be able to assess the opportunities available to staff to keep abreast of developments.
- Some forms of training are relevant to everyone who works in the school, and should therefore be open to classroom assistants, secretarial, technical and ancillary staff. Wherever possible, training events should also be open to other professionals, such as relevant therapists and other health professionals, educational and clinical psychologists, social workers, careers officer.
- There is also ample scope for the inclusion of governors and parents in some training opportunities. This would increase their sense of ownership of training and of school development and help to foster a sense of common identity.
- Schools can plan to make more strategic use of training opportunities. For example, staff attending a course need to share what they have learned with colleagues - e.g. by circulating summaries, handouts and information about new developments and publications. Staff can divide responsibilities for scanning particular professional journals add drawing the attention of their colleagues to relevant publications, conferences, materials etc.
- Each school should have a small professional library, funded from its training budget. This should include a selection of books and journals concerned with special needs practice.

Looking beyond Schools

- Schools can form training clusters to share ideas for developments as well as costs. Such clusters could be 'mixed' - i.e. nursery, primary, secondary, special, FE or confined to a single sector for a particular purpose - e.g. special schools, teachers working with pupils with emotional and behavioural disorders, etc.
- All clusters could link with possible sources of training in LEAs, the few remaining Teachers' Centres and with higher education. They could share ideas and experiences concerning the strengths and limitations of possible providers, including the growing army of private consultants and training consortia.
- There are lessons to be learned about cascade or pyramid training both from the GCSE experience and, within special education, from the success of the Education of Developmentally Young project in identifying the strengths and limitations of this and other cascade models (Robson, Sebba, Mittler and Davies 1988).

Higher Education

It is symptomatic of the anti-intellectual times in which we live that it is necessary to justify the potential contribution which higher education can make to the initial and continuing development of teachers. But it is also axiomatic that the nature of that contribution must be one of partnership with schools, teachers, LEAs and the professional associations and also with central government and its agencies.

Ideally, such a partnership should be at national level, perhaps through the establishment of a training consortium. There may be a role for the proposed General Teaching Council in providing a focus for such an initiative but the matter is too urgent to admit of further delay. But such consortia could also be developed on a regional or area basis. Universities as regional institutions seem well placed to play a catalytic role in providing a forum for such a consortium.

Universities have responded in a variety of ways to the changing needs of teachers and other professionals and to the constant shifts of policy and funding mechanisms over the past ten years. A few examples with potential for future developments can be mentioned at this point:

- Higher education is beginning to develop new forms of outreach, including accreditation, consultancies, off-site courses and, more recently, pre-OFSTED 'health checks' and post-OFSTED school-based courses and consultancies.
- Most courses are now in modular form, a module typically involving 25 hours of direct contact and a similar period of private study. Modules can be assessed by means of a practical assignment or by an essay but teachers can choose not be assessed if they wish to take a module on a free standing basis.
- Modules are generally transferable to other areas and institutions within the framework of Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) schemes.
- LEA and school based courses are being accredited by HE, so that teachers can gain recognition for relatively short periods of study but accumulate such credits with a view to accreditation of prior experience and learning (APEL) if they wish to embark on an award bearing course. Credits can usually be transferred to another institution if the teacher changes jobs and moves to a another area.

- Teachers can gain HE credit for an agreed assessed school-based project which is directly relevant to the needs of the school.
- In-service courses and one day workshops and conferences are held in schools or clusters.
- Distance education is likely to become a major force for development in the future but is badly in need of official endorsement and seed corn funding. The Open University pioneered successful DE courses many years ago and new DE courses are being developed in the fields of hearing and visual impairment and speech and language difficulties - e.g. by Birmingham and Manchester Universities (Mason and Miller 1991). DE modules can be taken on a free standing basis or can be accumulated for an award bearing award at certificate, diploma or Master's degree level. A network of local tutors is needed to provide additional professional and personal support; in addition, mutual self help groups at local level can provide further support. Funding needs to be available to support summer schools or at least one day workshops and conferences.

Research

Universities still have a significant contribution to make to research in the field of special needs policy and practice. Higher education staff are well placed by virtue of their knowledge of relevant research and professional literature and their contacts with practice in this and other countries to take an impartial overview of key areas in the field, to make national and international comparisons of the major issues in the field and to make a contribution to monitoring and evaluation. In addition, universities still try to secure significant research grants from bodies such as the Economic and Social Research Council and the Department for Education.

Unfortunately, research in special needs has not been well supported since the mid-1980s, when the DES funded three major projects in SEN provision from the NFER and the Universities of London and Manchester. One of these (Robson et al. 1988) and part of a second ((Moses and Hegarty 1988) were specifically concerned with teacher education. Both made a number of recommendations for better practice which ministers said they 'would study with great interest'. We assume they are still studying. These projects developed a range of approaches for evaluating the effectiveness of courses, including case studies, interviews and questionnaires.

Despite the lack of interest in funding, disseminating or using research, universities can still make a significant contribution in providing support and supervision to teachers and students who wish to undertake their own investigations (Vulliamy and Webb 1992; O'Hanlon 1993). By this means, the tradition of critical evaluation and impartial enquiry may be kept alive at a time when it appears to be under threat.

CONCLUSIONS: PRINCIPLES FOR PROGRESS

Despite this rather pessimistic and perhaps unduly negative catalogue of lost opportunities, what are the prospects for a more positive approach to staff development in the future?

The first condition for progress is that teachers themselves will articulate a clear demand for more and better opportunities for professional development as a fundamental entitlement. This demand will need to be supported or even initiated by all the relevant professional and subject associations, the teacher unions and the local authority associations.

Secondly, each school or service should develop a staff development programme which should be part of the school's development plan and which should be monitored by governing bodies and incorporated into OFSTED and other inspections.

Thirdly, the needs of staff working with pupils with SENs should not be segregated from those of all other teachers. All teachers need to have opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in ensuring that special needs education is improved in all schools. At the same time, the distinctive training needs of teachers with major SEN responsibilities need to be clearly identified and met.

Fourthly, training should not be seen in terms of single day events but as part of a clear and coherent strategy which offers a variety of routes to professional development and school improvement. This includes opportunities to undertake in-depth and critical analyses of policy and practice.

Fifthly, all courses should be evaluated to assess their effectiveness and to inform future policy for the participant, the school and the providing institution.

Finally, there is an urgent need to develop a training of trainers initiative at local, regional and national level, with an accessible and continuously updated data base of trainers and areas of specialisation, together with information on effectiveness and evaluation.

Whether the education of children with special educational needs is in crisis or merely at the cross roads, it is essential that professional staff with a responsibility for meeting their needs should have access to opportunities to update their knowledge, skills and experience. The argument of this paper has been that such opportunities have been undermined rather than enhanced and that such training as has been available has been ad hoc and short term.

What is needed now is a reconceptualisation of staff development needs and a clear and concerted strategy for achieving it. Despite the collapse of an effective staff development policy at national and local level, there are opportunities for a phoenix to rise from the ashes, if only we can form new partnerships and work together to help it to fly.

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APPENDIX 1: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES REQUIRED AT THE LEVEL OF INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

From Appleton, M., Dollard, J. and Morgan, G. (eds.) (1986)

Knowledge

Dynamic nature of child development and environmental effects

Handicapping conditions which can affect learning and behaviour

The nature of intelligence

Conceptual development

The wider concept of special needs

The educational implications of handicap

Conditions for successful learning (including classroom ethos and organisation)

Models of curriculum development

Construction of individual learning programmes

Structure in learning

Linking learning processes to curriculum methods

Assessment techniques and instruments

The teacher's role and sphere of influence

The educational system and how it operates

The philosophy and practice of integration

How the school as an organisation can facilitate or impede learning

A range of resources as teacher aids (including technology)

Support services outside the school and how to obtain help

Skills

Establishing a good pedagogical climate

Communicating with children, parents and educational professionals

Selecting and using effective styles and approaches to teaching pupils with learning difficulties

Devising individualised programmes based on assessment, evaluating results

Using technological aids to learning, where appropriate

Identifying and using resources

Developing good working relationships with parents

Recognising needs when they arise and giving prompt help

Working as a member of a team

Seeking new knowledge

Self evaluation and improving professional skills

Attitudes

That in a multicultural society, every child, including the handicapped, has a right to a full education

That to be different is to be normal and that each person is an individual, worthy of respect

That the handicapped and non-handicapped can benefit from being educated together, both cognitively and socially

That the teacher should show sensitivity to the development of potential and to the need to reduce the effects of handicap

That the teacher has a leading role in the encouraging cooperation between school and home in order to improve the life of the child

That the teacher should value the contribution made by others, including parents

That the teacher should be self-critical, willing to debate, assess and change attitudes and professional performance

That teachers should be optimistic and move away from a passive determinism with regard to handicapped pupils.

(*NB Similar lists were drawn up for in-service and more advanced training needs.*)

APPENDIX 2: INITIAL LIST OF TRAINING AREAS FOR STAFF IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND UNITS (updated from Mittler (1987).

Within School

- Whole School Curriculum (including National Curriculum and cross-curricular elements)
- Assessment, record keeping and reporting to parents
- Records of Achievement
- Individual educational planning
- Goal setting
- Cooperative and group learning
- Interactive teaching
- Language and communication
- Alternative and augmentative communication
- Counselling
- Sex education
- Child protection and abuse
- Pupil participation in decision making
- Preparing for self advocacy
- Discrimination
- Equal opportunities policy and implementation
- Evaluation and monitoring
- Microtechnology and IT
- Working with parents
- Challenging behaviour
- Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties

Management

- Managing integration
- Management of and resistance to change
- Coping with stress and innovation overload
- Life without LEAs
- Educational marketing
- Working with governors
- Appraisal

Monitoring and evaluation

School-based research

Staff development

Children Act

Disabled Persons Act

NHS and Community Care Acts

Decision making

Outside School

Supporting colleagues and pupils in mainstream schools

Multi-disciplinary collaboration

Links with NHS and SSD agencies

Links with pre-school

Links with further education, TECs, etc

Supported employment

Visiting other schools and services

Visiting families

TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A response by C P Marshall, HMI

Professor Mittler's paper is a tour de force in respect of examining every angle of teacher education provision for those involved in special educational needs.

The paper emphasises that Teacher Education, both pre- and post-experience, along with the education service as a whole, has been and still is undergoing radical change on an unprecedented scale, a point with which I inevitably agree.

The paper identifies many changes in provision which, it is suggested, are likely to have had a negative effect on the status quo. Some of the changes have, however, had direct or indirect *benefits* not all of which are given credit in the paper. In respect of post-experience training in particular:

- the introduction of five non-contact days for all schools has provided new training opportunities;
- an increased emphasis on schools and teachers to identify their specific training needs in school development and staff development plans has led to greater planning of training, often to meet specific objectives;
- there has been a move away from a take-it-or-leave-it approach to course provision, previously adopted by many LEAs and HEIs, together with a move towards potentially better targeted training;
- the development of distance learning and modular courses has increased the accessibility of training - previously many teachers were denied the possibility of pursuing a formal qualification because of the constraints imposed by full-time courses;
- there have been greater opportunities for pursuing further professional development on-the-job or, more particularly, in close contact with pupils, often through action research projects which have benefited the schools as well as the individual member of staff;
- although seen by some as a somewhat double-edged benefit, the new arrangements for GEST funding for special needs has widened the range of teacher eligibility to include all disability groups.

The continual need for additional training

Most new initiatives are introduced with an associated plea for additional training if success is to be assured.

When budgets are limited, however, it becomes essential to determine priorities. The paper presents two appendices of lengthy lists of training areas. How does one construct a rationale for deciding priorities between all the items listed?

Given that there is a variety of types of training for different purposes - skills training, updating knowledge or information, the introduction of new procedures such as appraisal

etc. - has special education developed a sufficiently well-argued and robust taxonomy for the different types of training that can be made available in relation to the needs of the system - i.e. mainstream schools, special schools, support services etc. as well as of individual teachers - in relation to the length or extent of training, the level of training (i.e. what pre-training experience or expertise would be required), and the planned outcomes and/or objectives of training?

Professor Mittler rightly calls for all elements of training to form part of a coherent strategy (his fourth Principle for Progress). Such a strategy for teachers of pupils with SEN could also be built into a taxonomy of training types, lengths, levels and purposes.

Some possible tensions revealed in the paper

Special versus ordinary

The notion that everyone is a teacher of special needs and therefore requires training does not alter the fact that some teachers require much more training than others. A tension arises from the desire not to segregate teachers but at the same time enable some to specialise to meet the very special needs of the most disabled.

What should trigger the 'need' or provision of any additional training? The paper rightly questions the nature of the training for those working in mainstream schools as against those working in special schools. The suggested provision of a taxonomy of special needs training might also be relevant to this issue which is related to Professor Mittler's third Principle for Progress.

Other tensions may exist in relation to training opportunities that are potentially available to all teachers but seldom taken up by those working in the field of SEN. Are teachers of SEN pupils made aware of these opportunities? If not why not? If they are, why do they not take proper advantage of them?

Training opportunities, and the apparent apathy of teachers and teacher associations

The paper expresses sadness and/or dismay at the demise and/or reduction of some previously available training opportunities. It also recognises that it is difficult to rally many teachers, schools or organisations to raise the flag of concern, or to declare their inability to meet the new or changing demands without additional training targeted at the needs of teaching pupils with SEN.

This, in times when special schools are becoming ever more complex, often with many multi-handicapped pupils; to teach a curriculum that has to deliver 9 or 10 subjects as well as personal, social and life skills; or/and the development of linguistic or sensory skills, in some cases just to enable the pupil to communicate to his/her neighbour.

This tension relates to Prof. Mittler's first Principle for Progress.

School-based versus 'other' based training

Several references are made in the paper to the possible limitations of school-based training, whether initial or post-experience. There is nonetheless a hint of an acknowledge-

ment that there is relatively little real evidence concerning the effectiveness of training, whether school-based or otherwise. A well-argued case is made for the need for capitalising on the SEN expertise to be found in HE institutions. This must be right. There is surely, also, a strong additional argument for claiming that certain skills - whether in relation to the teaching of individuals or groups - must be better practised, if not also learned, in places where there are children i.e. schools. To resolve the tension a balance needs to be struck as to how and where such provision can best be delivered, who should be responsible for arranging and directing the different elements, how the latter should be integrated, and how the largest number of teachers possible can be given access to them. Many HEIs, as is pointed out in the paper, have been developing ways of contributing to or participating in school-based and other alternative forms of in-service training - no doubt these can be developed and explored further.

The delivery of the SEN element in ITT is a specific concern raised by the paper. Maybe, as is partly suggested, this will lead to the development of distance-learning elements of ITT, in relation to pupils with SEN, created by HEIs but undertaken by students in schools. There could also be spin-off benefits from such a procedure for increasing the effectiveness of special needs' policies, planning and delivery in mainstream schools. The paper refers to new teachers' dissatisfaction with their ITT in respect of preparing them to work with SEN pupils - the 1992 HMI survey of new teachers in school (The New Teacher in School, OFSTED, 1993, HMSO) confirms this previous finding.

The identification of training needs

The paper rightly stresses the importance for schools of establishing staff development plans within a School Development Plan, together with associated management responsibilities and strategies for implementation, (the second Principle for Progress). Many mainstream schools, particularly secondary, are already well down this road. A possible tension arises, however, in determining both whole-school needs and individual staff needs and marrying these together so as to produce outcomes which meet both sets of identified needs satisfactorily. There is also a balance to be struck in mainstream schools of meeting the needs of the majority of pupils as well as of those with SEN. OFSTED inspections may have a part to play here in that the inspectors may identify an inappropriate balance and call for some specific action to redress this.

Issues/Problems

The paper raises a good number of issues or problems relating to the effective provision of training. I wish merely to highlight a few:

i A word which recurs throughout the paper is *partnership*. This seems to communicate different things to different people but partnership implies a close involvement in planning, in responsibility, in control. Whether in ITT or post-experience training there is still much to do to fulfil the promise which the notion of partnerships hold out. Developing real trust between partners and genuinely sharing in the decision-making process still needs in many cases to be worked at.

ii **Who will meet the training needs?** Because of some of the changes discussed in the paper, a good number of those with expertise in both SEN and the training of teachers are taking early retirement or are finding themselves with new responsibili-

ties. It seems to be essential that some effective database is created, and made generally available, which will keep track of where expertise is located, whether it is available through consortia of schools, HEI or individuals, or in other ways, together with some comment as to its effectiveness. The co-ordinating, organising and monitoring of this bank of expertise is certainly worth giving some attention to if schools and teachers are to make informed decisions.

iii **The problems of providing professional development**. The issue here is not so much that of funding, which of course is a separate concern, but of the release of teachers and the effect that training teachers during the school day has - whether ITT or post-experience - on the rest of the school. When *is* the best time to train teachers, and how can teacher absence from the classroom best be managed?

iv **Specialist training**. The paper raises specific concerns about the specialist training for teachers of some specific disability groups. This concern relates also to the supply of suitable teachers for support services. If such pupils' needs in the future are to be adequately met a case seems to have been made, at the very least, for determining, with a greater degree of certainty and clarity than currently exists, how many such specialists the system requires to be trained annually in order to meet projected needs.

The first section of the paper poses the question 'Is teacher education in crisis?' As new funding arrangements, and even newer ITT arrangements are put into place, and renewed consideration is given to the induction and professional development of teachers - not to say the introduction of new legislation - it certainly seems as though teacher education must, at least, be at some form of crossroads.

TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A response by Carol Ouvry

Professor Mittler's paper is extremely wide ranging, and as someone who has been involved in training only on an occasional 'one-off' basis, I found the overview of the current situation, and the description of some of the ways in which new models of training are being developed, very informative.

In the paper Professor Mittler argues that the opportunities for teachers to acquire and update knowledge, skills and experience at all times during their career, has been diminished rather than enhanced by recent changes. He refers to the transfer of funds for training to schools, and asks whether the pendulum has swung too far?

Several principles for progress are identified, and there are a few points to make from the point of view of a special school.

1. The first principle is that teachers need to demand more and better professional development. These demands are created in a number of ways, and I would expect them to come from:

a) The National Curriculum - this has perhaps been the most pressing need in recent years.

b) Appraisal - we are now approaching the completion of the first group of appraisals and I wonder what targets and associated training needs will be identified. What will their relationship be with the Institutional Development Plan or the Staff Development Plan? How can they be reconciled? How will they be provided? Will we be able to find both the finance, and the right courses?

c) Induction - In schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties recruitment has changed radically with the abolition of the special education initial training. Applicants now come from a wide range of backgrounds and we have to weigh up the relevance of the non-specialist experience, and the implications for support within the school.

Providing this support is a formidable task, and is not possible for a school to cover the whole range. A partnership with training institutions is essential to provide the full range of support and training needed by teachers new to the field of special education.

If induction of new teachers who have not had special education training is a formidable task, the current proposals for school based initial training and the suggestion that teachers in the early years only require a shortened period of training has appalling implications for those pupils who are likely to remain at the early stages of learning for most, or all, of their school career.

The vital importance of quality educational experience in the early years as a foundation for achievement throughout the rest of the school life is well known and should need no restatement. It is perhaps less widely known or acknowledged

that the more severe and complex the barriers to learning, the greater the necessity for in depth analysis, reflection and evaluation of every learning situation that those pupils experience. This must be based on sound knowledge of development and learning processes, and of appropriate approaches and strategies to further these.

d) Inspections - these will also identify training needs but will they match the needs perceived to be priorities by the school prior to the inspection?

e) Professional development for all staff and governors - this is an ongoing need. It may arise at any time out of the day to day work of the school.

2. Another principle is that a staff development programme should be developed that is part of the school's institutional development plan (IDP). The Staff Development Policy (SDP) will address the main issues around training in general terms, to ensure a coherent, equitable plan with clear structure and procedures. The IDP and the associated SDP should identify the particular training needs for the current year. However, I have found them to be very imperfect documents and they are easily put off course by a number of circumstances which can arise within or outside the school. These may include:

a) The demands for training already mentioned. These can be quite unforeseen and therefore not be included in the SDP.

b) School-based training - the five training days are planned and organized to address whole-school needs for training. These are likely to be the only times when all the staff, certainly of an SLD school, can be together for the purposes of reflecting and developing the work of the school, and consequently they are immeasurably valuable.

They should be the easiest to relate to the IDP/SDP, but even these can be disrupted by requirements from the authorities e.g. giving up the last training day of the year for appraisal training when a quite different focus had already been planned.

c) Sudden needs, such at the urgent need to address a specific issue, e.g. coping with bereavement or safety issues, can arise almost without warning at any time during the year.

d) Staff changes, particularly the loss of a member of staff with particular skills or expertise, can change the balance of a small school staff quite radically, and can give rise to different training needs. We do not necessarily know, when we draw up our SDP, that a member of staff will be leaving, nor can we know the experience of the staff who will be appointed, or how cover will be provided in the interim.

In spite of careful planning, we cannot always predict or control the timing or urgency of training needs that can arise, and must take precedence over those planned at the time of the review of the IDP/SDP for the year.

3. The principle of non-segregated training, but with opportunities for training 'beyond that which is generally available' to meet the distinctive needs of teachers of pupils with SEN, is closely linked with -

4. The principle, that training should be part of a clear and coherent strategy which offers a variety of routes to professional development.

The fragmentation of training referred to by Professor Mittler makes it more difficult to match the needs with courses as the familiar sources of training disappear and new models of training are developed by the institutions. At the same time a proliferation of training is offered by independent consultants or organisations working within the field of disability, such as the Spastics Society. BIMH, Sense, RNIB, RNID and many others.

The dilemma facing the schools is: how do we find out what there is on offer and select and judge what is the best training for our purpose? The search can be a very hit or miss affair.

A variety of options is needed:

- School-based, whole school training which will consolidate team work and whole school approaches and understanding;
- out of school alongside people with similar backgrounds, or people from different disciplines and from different provision;
- courses which are based on theory, and in depth consideration of the issues;
- courses which are practical, offering new ideas and approaches.

Planning successful whole school training is a specialised skill, and is not necessarily one that is to be found within every school. Schools cannot provide all the training needed, and finding the right training is now a much more complex task than it used to be. Schools have to find the best, and provide both the funds and the time to benefit from it.

The notion of a local partnership of organisations and institutions to identify and plan for the needs of teachers and schools, and to which a school can refer for help in providing for their own identified needs, is a positive suggestion. It also offers schools guidance, and a means of contributing to the planning of in-service training which is offered by agencies outside the school. We have found the collaboration with other SLD schools and SENJIT (Special Education Joint Initiative on INSET- a partnership scheme between LEAs and the Institute of Education, London University) to provide successful courses in a number of areas.

There is a need for all forms of training, both in school and outside school, both informal and formal. Throughout their career staff need:

- Opportunities to reflect;
- Opportunities to be inspired and revitalised;
- Opportunities to train with mainstream teachers;
- Opportunities to acquire specific knowledge and skills beyond that which is generally available;
- Opportunities to find out about innovations and current research;
- Opportunities to become more effective and more fulfilled teachers.

TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Summary of the discussion by Mrs Dee Palmer-Jones

1. The need for teacher training is obvious: we should not be defensive but should articulate clearly the entitlement of quality initial training and regular in-service training. Higher Education should not be defensive about its role, but should state the distinctive contribution made by Institutes of Higher Education to teacher education and to special needs training in particular.
2. There was a strongly expressed and widely supported argument that on the one hand the Government wanted to raise standards in schools, yet was considering removing the need for degree qualifications for infant teachers. We need a highly qualified teaching force to deliver quality in the classroom.
3. Institutes of Higher Education have moved to greater partnership with schools in the recent past, and even closer links should and could be developed in the future. Institutes of Higher Education need to move into schools or clusters of schools much more: they need to respond flexibly to demands from individuals, schools and from groups of schools.
4. Much discussion centred on how to identify the needs for training in schools. Schools may well benefit from partnership with Institutes of Higher Education in identifying the schools' needs. The use of the five training days available to schools raised further discussion. Five days is inadequate to serve all the training needs of a school. The needs of individual teachers and groups of teachers have to be balanced against whole school issues which need to be addressed. Devolved school GEST budgets mean that schools have increased responsibility for in-service training, and there was a feeling among discussants that the responsibility had moved too far towards schools. The reduced role of LEAs as coordinators of training caused concern. LEAs have, until now, been able to act as facilitators and coordinators of training, offering a variety of short, long, and modular courses. There was agreement among discussants for the need for strategic planning and coordination at local level.
5. This led to the expression of doubts and confusion about national policy on special educational needs, and more than one discussant felt that we needed a national policy for special educational needs, given existing variation nationally in policies, resourcing and training.
6. The purpose of teacher education must be to change practice in the classroom. Too often, in the past, it has not done so. Future training offered might well have competencies built into it, and more precise outcomes in terms of teaching and learning.

The point was made that much teacher development comes from being a member of a school which is a developing institution. The LEAs have acted as supporting

structures for institutions, and if they are reduced in power, or removed, then other supporting structures are needed. These might be provided by clusters of schools.

There was disagreement over who should set the policy for SEN; the DFE, or a General Teacher Council, which could give guidelines on what skills and training teachers need. It was suggested that SCAA might usefully act as adviser on policy. Leaving policy to be decided at school level alone is not a satisfactory model, as schools have so many conflicting priorities and limited budgets. An overall national policy needs to be in place before distanced learning packages could be developed. Schools exist to teach pupils. They need teachers with knowledge of the principles of teaching, encompassing the practices and knowledge of the practices which will ensure the learning of all children. There is a responsibility for a framework for those principles and practices which lie outside any one institution.

7. The changes in training in education have led to increased use of one-day training sessions throughout the country, and the decrease of long courses has led to a fragmentation and reduction in quality of training in the view of some participants, although others welcomed the flexibility it gave schools to address their own priorities.

   The point was made that the loss of full-time training for teachers of hearing impaired children has resulted in the average age of entrants in the field being over 40, and therefore less ready or able to move around the country, so there are serious shortages in some areas.

   Teaching is a low-status profession already. What is needed is a career structure linked to professional development and qualifications, in line with other countries such as the USA.

8. As one participant pointed out, the discussion was symptomatic of the fact that we were groping for a conceptual framework in which to respond. It is the responsibility of all involved in education to identify what additional training is required for teachers if they are to meet the needs of special needs pupils, and to identify the ways in which the training should be delivered. Schools, LEAs, Institutes of Higher Education all have a role in this. Our schools cannot take sole responsibility.

   New Government legislation requires all schools to have a policy for special needs, and governing bodies are responsible for ensuring that the school develops and implements the policy.

Conclusion by Brahm Norwich

The main paper, the response from the two discussants and the summary of the seminar discussion provide us with a comprehensive perspective on the state of teacher education and training as regards children and young people with special educational needs. As Peter Mittler states, the situation is in crisis state, and as he explains this arises from a complex set of conditions and factors. His proposals take the form of six general principles for progress which are vitally important for helping us to maintain a clear vision of what is needed. Stated briefly, they include :

1. The need for teachers to express clearly the demand for better professional development opportunities.
2. The necessity for schools to develop staff development programmes linked to schools development plans.
3. The need to link and integrate SEN elements into the preparation of all teachers, while identifying the distinctive training needs of teachers with major SEN responsibilities.
4. The need for training to be part of a coherent strategy with opportunities for in-depth and critical analyses of policy and practice.
5. The importance of evaluating the effectiveness of staff development activities.
6. The need to develop the training of trainers at all levels in the system.

As expressed in the other contributions to the seminar, the great challenge facing us is to find ways of translating these principles into specific schemes and arrangements. This is not a simple task as it involves having to start from a position from which most sensible people would rather not start. This requires hard choices and adaptations which many people find unacceptable. The task also needs to be seen in the context of general political differences over how to enhance the quality and educational standards in the country. This means that the movement forward from general policy formulation to policy implementation involves adopting damage limitation strategies and fairly restricted action plans.

One of the central tasks in the field of SEN and teacher education and training is to achieve a balance between including SEN elements in the preparation of all teachers, while ensuring that additional training is available for teachers with major SEN responsibilities in ordinary and special schools. This has been viewed in terms of a continuum of training need to parallel to the continuum of special educational need. However, the notion of a continuum does not deal with the tension in the relationship between common and specialist training. There is a need to define specifically when the training needs should be additional and different to the common training, even when it is known that improvements in the common training will affect what special training is needed. Chris Marshall's call for a taxonomy of training types, levels and purposes expresses this need. This can be seen to be one of the critical matters on which teacher education and training for SEN depends.

One theme which was raised in the seminar contributions was whether teacher education and training was genuinely valued by teachers and others interested in education. This is obviously linked to the quality of professional development programmes and whether what has been offered in the past has been valued by those who are meant to benefit from the experiences. The impact of professional development programmes is also

affected by development orientation of individual schools and teachers' professional working conditions. These factors are useful in understanding the value placed on professional development activities. But, there is also the perspective of the users of the education service, the parents and pupils. How much do they value the quality of the programmes for preparing and educating teachers ? Theirs is an important perspective in the current climate in which the rights of service users are stressed. It has particular relevance to teacher education for SEN. Another important task is therefore to find ways of mobilising the support of those who are affected and use the education service. Much needs to be done especially in the wake of the Government's proposals for the reform of initial teacher training.