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# Inclusion: Every Teacher's Responsibility

*Reflecting on Developing the National Framework for Inclusion 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*

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## Abstract

This paper discusses the development of the National Framework for Inclusion 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. This is a key publication for educators both in Scotland and globally, written by members of the Scottish Universities Inclusion Group (SUIG). This structured

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reflective resource, which is underpinned by the principles of Inclusive Pedagogical Approaches in Action, encourages educators to reflect on and consider their inclusive practice. A series of questions, reflecting current priorities and changes in Scottish education and society, align directly with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCs) Professional Standards for Teachers. The paper considers the Framework's underpinning principles, reflects on the collaborative five-step process followed by the writing group, and provides examples of how the Framework is being used in innovative teacher education practice. In using the ACToolkit change model to guide the development work, this paper also makes a new contribution to the fields of educational change and inclusive practice.

### Keywords

inclusive practice – initial teacher education – reflective practice – teacher education – teaching

### Introduction

This paper discusses the development of the recently published National Framework for Inclusion 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Scottish Universities Inclusion Group (SUIG), 2022). For brevity, this publication will hereafter be referred to as the Framework. The paper firstly reflects on how the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition was developed. Case studies from SUIG members' experiences of working with the Framework in their initial teacher education (ITE) courses then follow. This work contributes to inclusive teacher education through consideration of how the Framework supports the development of inclusive practice amongst teaching professionals. In explicitly aligning the development process with the ACToolkit change model (Agents of Change Toolkit Team, 2021; Pantić, 2015), this paper makes a new contribution to the literature in this area.

We encourage the reader to consider these Framework questions as they continue reading:

- In what ways can I share knowledge of inclusive practices to contribute to a flourishing learning community?
- To what extent do I understand and use inclusive pedagogical approaches, and what are the implications of these, in my practice?

The original Framework (Scottish Teacher Education Committee, 2009), a resource to support teacher educators in preparing student teachers for teaching inclusively, was developed as a key output from the Inclusive Practice Proj-

ect (Florian & Rouse, 2009; Rouse & Florian, 2012). This was funded by the Scottish Government and led by Professors Martyn Rouse and Lani Florian of the University of Aberdeen. Another key outcome was the establishment of the Scottish Universities Inclusion Group (SUIG), a working group of the then Scottish Teacher Education Committee (STEC), now known as the Scottish Council of Deans of Education.

### *Alignment with GTCs Professional Standards for Teachers*

The Framework is closely aligned with the GTCs Professional Standards for Teachers, and SUIG has revised the Framework each time the Professional Standards are updated, with the second edition having been published in 2014. Accordingly, following the publication of the refreshed Professional Standards by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCs, 2021a) in 2021, a writing group of SUIG members undertook the development of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Not only did this work result in the Framework 3<sup>rd</sup> edition but also a companion resource (SUIG, 2023) was developed, with additional reflective questions and examples from practice to further support teacher educators in using the Framework in their teaching. The Framework aligns with the Scottish definition of inclusive education (Scottish Government, 2019) and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (United Nations, 2015) which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone in society. With each iteration of the Framework, its impact in Scottish teacher education has increased (Cantali & Florian, 2023).

## **Developing the Framework for Inclusion**

### *Inclusion in Scotland*

Since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Scotland has made a resolute commitment to inclusive education with the introduction of legislation (for example, Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000, Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, Equality Act (2010), Education (Scotland) Act 2016) and policies that contribute to the move towards a more inclusive education system. The Framework was developed within this growing legislative and policy context and is closely linked to the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCs) professional standards. The Framework provides guiding questions to support teachers to explore the implications of selected GTCs standards, relating to key themes of inclusion and social justice.

A key conceptual change in Scotland, following the enactment of the Additional Support for Learning Act (Scottish Executive, 2004a), was that the term

special educational needs was no longer used (Allan, 2003). Instead, the term 'Additional Support Needs' was adopted, aligning with a new conceptualisation of additional support needs in Scotland. This development happened at the same time as new policy regarding the presumption of mainstreaming was being implemented (Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act, 2001; Scottish Government, 2019), and as A Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004b) began to be developed. This conceptualisation was that any child experiencing a barrier to their learning, whether short or long-term, was recognised as having an additional support need that they may require support with addressing (Cantali, 2019; Scottish Executive, 2004). This contrasts with definitions of special educational needs which refer to recognised disabilities or medical conditions, for example the definition of disability found in the UK Equality Act 2010, or the Department for Education in England's 2015 SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25 Years (Warnes, Done & Knowler, 2022). While the move away from focusing on disability and a deficit model was welcomed, the use of the term 'additional' still suggested that children experiencing barriers to their learning required 'extra' support. In the work to develop the Inclusive Pedagogical Approaches in Action (IPAA) Framework (see below), this was somewhat addressed, particularly through the development of the underpinning principle of *Difference is ordinary* (Florian *et al.*, under review). It also aligns with views such as Ainscow's, who stated that 'every child matters and matters equally' (2023), and the Scottish Initial Teacher Education Autism materials which are underpinned with a key message of 'We were expecting you!' (Scottish Government, 2021).

### *Developing the Initial and Revised Frameworks*

The initial Framework (Scottish Teacher Education Committee, 2009) was developed by a working group of teacher educators representing each of the seven universities involved in initial teacher education (ITE) at the time (Barrett *et al.*, 2015). The Inclusive Practice Project (IPP) (Florian & Rouse, 2009; Rouse & Florian, 2012), a Scottish Government funded teacher education research and development project at the University of Aberdeen supported the working party. The aim of the IPP was to develop new approaches to raising awareness and understanding of the educational and social problems/issues that can affect children's learning; and for them to have developed strategies they can use to support and deal with such difficulties (Florian & Rouse, *ibid.*). In 2012 the GTCs updated its professional standards leading to the production of the second edition of the Framework (Scottish Teacher Education Committee, 2014). The revised Framework was underpinned by the key principles of 'Inclusive Pedagogy' (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Inclusive pedagogy is

guided by three principles: (1) difference between learners should be expected in any conceptualisation of learning; (2) teachers must believe they can teach all learners; and (3) teachers develop creative and new ways of working with others (Florian & Black-Hawkins, *ibid*). Inclusive Pedagogical Approaches in Action (IPAA) takes the three principles of Inclusive Pedagogy and considers what these may look like in a teacher's practice (Florian, 2014; Florian & Spratt, 2013).

### *Policy Influencing the Framework 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*

The GTCS published its refreshed and restructured Professional Standards in August 2021 (GTCS, 2021b) which provided the context to refresh and update the Framework. Under the direction of SUIG, with representation from each of the now eleven higher education institutions involved in initial teacher education in Scotland, work was undertaken to develop the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Framework. This work was made possible through the dedication of SUIG members and critical friends, supported by the Scottish Council of Deans of Education, Scottish Government Learning Directorate, Education Scotland and the General Teaching Council for Scotland. As with the previous editions of the Framework, a working party of SUIG members (the writing group) was tasked with using the GTCS professional standards as a foundation to examine the implications for inclusion within teacher education. The writing group selected the most relevant professional standards for the revised Framework. These were Standards that influenced teachers' impact on inclusion and pedagogy for learners; the ongoing development of teachers, and the core elements of leadership integral to all GTCS professional standards. The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Framework takes into account the review of additional support for learning implementation in Scotland (Morgan, 2020), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), *The Promise* to Scotland's most vulnerable children (Independent Care Review, 2020), the Scottish Attainment Challenge (Scottish Government, 2020), and the ongoing impact of the post COVID-19 pandemic, all within a holistic view of the Scottish education system. Local and global events, including migrant integration and curriculum diversification were carefully considered as were challenges reported by some parents and teachers in securing adequate support for learners with additional needs. The Framework 3<sup>rd</sup> edition provides a set of reflective questions to support educators in critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs, and their subsequent inclusive practices underpinned by inclusive pedagogies. In doing so, it works in harmony with the GTCS (2021a) professional standards, emphasises the importance of creating learning environments where every learner feels valued and supported, and where barriers to learning and participation in school are actively addressed.

### Reflecting on Co-creating the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

The co-creation of the third edition of the Framework was deliberately designed to allow for all SUIG members from the 11 Scottish universities to contribute to the process and included a series of scheduled meetings alongside asynchronous opportunities. Peer feedback from external organisations was included towards the end of development process. The core writing group included teachers educators with international teaching experience (e.g. Taiwan, England, Portugal, Scotland), a range of settings (3-18, mainstream and specialist) and leadership experiences across all sectors.

The Inclusive Pedagogical Approaches in Action (IPAA) model, which underpins the previous Frameworks (2009, 2014), underpins this latest edition of the Framework (2021). As the development of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Framework was not a formal research project, ethical approval was not required. Support was, however, sought and received from the Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE), of which SUIG is a working group.

#### *Using the ACT Change Model*

The development of the third edition followed the Agents of Change ACT Change Model (Agents of Change Toolkit Team, 2021; Pantić, 2015). This is a five-step change model which provides flexibility within its structure. For example, in the development of the third edition, we revisited **Steps 4 and 5** during the process of refining the reflective question set. As the outcome of this work was pre-determined, **Step 2** was extraneous, and we considered **Steps 1 and 3** concurrently in our first writing group meeting.

**Step 1**, to establish the aim and purpose of the project; and **Step 3**, to negotiate and agree an action plan to progress the work; were undertaken by the SUIG Chair and then by the writing group collectively. We firstly considered the changes in Scottish education since the second edition of the Framework had been published in 2014, particularly influential reports including the Morgan report (Morgan, 2020), societal factors including increased migrant and refugee integration (Cantali, 2024; Mainwaring, Mulvey, Piacentini, Hales & Lamb, 2020), the Scottish Attainment Challenge (Education Scotland, 2017) and the COVID-19 pandemic; and newly prioritised aspects of the Professional Standard for Teachers (GTCs, 2021a) including learning for sustainability, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989) and its enshrinement in Scots law.

As a writing group, we debated several reflective challenge questions:

- *Where will the Framework sit regarding recognition of a wide understanding of inclusion and addressing barriers to learning? How can we promote under-*

*standing, via the lens of ‘dilemmas of difference’ that inclusion is a perpetual journey with no end point?*

- *How will the Framework encourage all educators to view themselves as owners and teachers of inclusion in their educational establishment?*
- *What is the 21<sup>st</sup> century conceptualisation of diversity and difference? How can we encourage educators to move away from a deficit view, where this still exists, and encourage celebration of achievement and viewing diversity as a strength? From this perspective, how might the Framework encourage practices to move on?*

This debate and discussion were helpful in establishing a shared understanding of our aim for the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Framework, and to ensure that there was alignment from the beginning of the process with the underpinning principles of the Inclusive Pedagogical Approaches in Action (IPAA) pedagogical model. As we progressed through the various stages of developing the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, we returned to these questions to guide a sense check discussion amongst the writing group. In using these questions throughout the process, they supported our engagement in debating not only these questions but also the proposed Framework reflective questions that were being developed. This aligned with Priestley, Phillipou, Alvunger & Soini’s conceptualisation of curriculum development, or ‘curriculum making’, being an active process involving ‘*enactment or social practice.*’ (Priestley, Phillipou, Alvunger & Soini, 2021; p.6). Anecdotally, a writing group member commented that their experience of debating and using the proposed Framework questions to stimulate reflective discussion amongst the writing group and then the wider SUIG membership has supported them in using the reflective questions more authentically with students. Arguably, then this collaborative, professional space with trusted colleagues, provided a deepening of sense making for this member, something noted as needed for effective curriculum making (Alvunger, D., Soini, T., Philippou, S. & Priestley, M. (2021).

In establishing how the action plan was to be enacted (**Step 4**), the SUIG Chair sought advice from SUIG members, present and former, who had been part of the writing groups for the original Framework and/or the 2014 revision, to inform planning for the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition writing group. In our first meeting, we agreed on the importance of having all SUIG member voices, and thus all 11 Scottish ITE programmes, contribute to the development of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. This was built into the action plan (**Step 3**) for taking the revision and redevelopment forward (Figure 1).

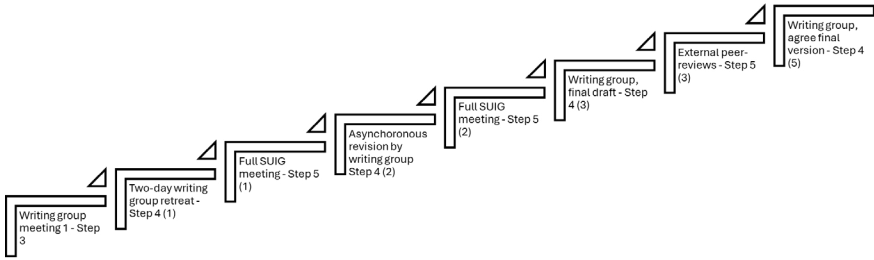


FIGURE 1 Stages in developing the National Framework for Inclusion 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

### *Development Work Using Think-Pair-Share*

The writing group met for a two-day retreat to progress **Step 4**, enacting the action plan. We used a ‘Think – Pair – Share’ technique, in a way similar to that used by Ramesh, Case, Stockstill & Dragan (2021) in a virtual retreat with dental school academics. This saw us working as individuals – pairs/trios – whole group to consider the refreshed GTCS Professional Standards (GTCS, 2021a), and to firstly develop reflective challenge questions to support engagement with the Standards for Provisional Registration, Full Registration, and Career-Long Professional Learning. We focused on reflective questions for each strand of the Professional Standards in turn. Across the first day of activity, the SUIG Chair ensured that everyone had the opportunity to work with different colleagues. This included colleagues from different universities and, perhaps more importantly, newer SUIG colleagues being able to work with more established colleagues. This fulfilled the secondary purpose of membership of the writing group being to provide a professional learning opportunity for colleagues, particularly in working in a pair/trio with a professor of inclusive education.

Once we had developed a set of proposed questions, we then, again using the think-pair-share technique, reviewed the 2014 Framework questions and decided which would be retained in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. We used the ‘think-pair-share’ model in the two full SUIG meetings to ensure that members of the writing group were able to engage in meaningful discussion with the wider SUIG membership about the proposed reflective questions. Alongside the development of the central reflective questions, we also worked on the other sections of the Framework document, including suggested reading and resources for educators engaging with the Framework to support their ongoing engagement and professional learning with inclusive pedagogies and practice.

In choosing to use a ‘Think – Pair – Share’ model to structure our collaborative conversations, the way in which this aligned with IPAA principles was considered. In providing ‘thinking space’ to engage with the materials under discussion, this acknowledged that everyone’s capacity to engage with the

work was different and allowed for everyone to be familiar with the materials to be discussed. This reflects the notion that ‘difference is ordinary’ as well as maintaining the key element of trust and respect in being a teacher in Scotland (GTCS, 2021a). Working in pairs or trios ensured that everyone had space for their voice to be heard and valued. A writing group member commented that this model worked well in valuing everyone’s voice in what might have been an overwhelming context for some participants due to possible perceived hierarchies, for example an early career lecturer and a world-renowned professor who had developed the IPAA framework. This member went on to reflect that:

the method of setting up the review of the Framework, and the collaborative nature of SUIG, provided the context for ‘creating critically collaborative conversations’ (Brookfield, 2017 p. 117). The purpose of these types of conversations are based on challenging assumptions, drawing in different perspectives, recognising and valuing all voices regardless of status and checking and rechecking possible responses before deciding on the final form (Ibid.) The spiral approach to the development of the resource seemed to me to support all of the principles above, creating, what I found to be, a very inclusive and thought-provoking process which afforded possibilities to interrupt thinking and consider others’ viewpoints. It also supported me to be able to engage in several different ways, working around other commitments and due to working with others the associated workload seemed shared and manageable rather than daunting. Developing the resource with other teacher educators at different Scottish institutions was a privilege as it gave insight into others’ professional lives and their contexts highlighting both similarities, differences, challenges and affordances all of which have supported the development of my professional learning and practices.

As we progressed through developing, drafting and redrafting the various iterations of the Framework, we made the decision to also develop a companion resource *Working with the National Framework for Inclusion: a guide for teacher educators* (SUIG, 2023). This included reflective questions that, for reasons of space, we had not been able to include in the Framework, and case studies of how the Framework was being used within various teacher education courses.

### *Reflecting on Using the ACT Change Model*

In considering how the writing group worked together to develop the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, and how this work was underpinned by the ACT change model, planning to cycle through Steps 4 and 5 more than once in the initial planning meeting

was of benefit in ensuring rigour in the developmental process. It also ensured that the voices of Scottish teacher educators nationally were heard, and wider voices from the Scottish education community, through our seeking peer review feedback on the final draft. The peer review team included teachers from across the 3-18 age range in different Local Authorities, including rural and urban settings, higher education colleagues, representatives from national bodies including Education Scotland and the GTCS, and specialists from charities and bodies working with and for the interests of populations with protected characteristics. This was important to the writing group in developing a resource which would reflect the current priorities in Scottish education, and changes globally and nationally, as discussed earlier. The SUIG Chair felt confident in her decision to make use of the ACT change model to achieve this, particularly as there was flexibility in how the model could be enacted, for example if the writing group had wished to revisit the action plan (Step 3) in response to peer feedback from the first full SUIG meeting where the draft reflective questions were discussed by all members.

Another writing group member reflected on their experience of developing the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, writing:

It was an absolute privilege to be part of the dedicated working group that produced the draft of the Framework. It was a carefully designed iterative, collaborative, and rather labour-intensive process as we constantly drafted and revised the questions by dipping in and out of smaller-group discussions, putting words on the paper, looking at them critically, noting omissions and any issues with clarity. The process of making the Framework demonstrates inclusive values – it was a safe and open space; we listened to each other's views and professional experiences – what went well and what the challenges were. The process is about learning from one another. I especially enjoyed how we were unpacking and debating over specific terms like 'should we use learners' difference here or learning difference?', 'what do learning spaces mean in a child's life?', 'why should we see curriculum as a living document?', as colleagues drew on their own research knowledge and perspectives. Although we did not directly involve other groups (until the peer review process of the draft document), the views and experiences of a broader range of practitioners, other teacher educators, children, and families were also frequently represented as part of our discussions. We were sensitively attuned to a teacher's different development needs at different career stages to ensure that the questions were supportive and relevant to their professional positioning. The Framework is an exemplary outcome of

the SUIG as a community of practice. It shows how teacher educators based in Scotland work together and exercise collective agency to support teachers' development for inclusion.

Throughout the process there was a strong sense of having a shared responsibility to support teacher educator colleagues, and our teacher colleagues in schools, in working to develop their inclusive practice further. In modelling the reflective discussion process and providing space for participants to follow up areas of interest, the work undertaken by the writing group aligned well with the conceptualisation of collaborative professional inquiry (Kennedy, 2014) and professional learning moving towards being identified and fulfilled by teachers considering what their own professional learning needs were (Kennedy & Beck, 2018).

### Using the Framework in Teacher Education

The following examples are taken from a combination of empirical and anecdotal accounts from SUIG members who have volunteered to share their experiences in these example case studies. These different examples align with the aims of this article as teachers reflect upon ways to create spaces and opportunities for practices to embody a felt sense of inclusion. It is important to note that each SUIG member was aware of their advantageous position to interact closely with students and teachers in natural educational settings and to gain insights into authentic interactions with the framework. Being aware of this position, SUIG members carefully sought to understand how participants engaged with the Framework and how they might reframe or reinterpret existing practices to offer possibilities of Hope across educational landscapes. Often these landscapes present challenges as educators seek to navigate various contextual constraints that impact on the successful implementation of inclusive practices. However, at a time when sociopolitical contexts, both locally and globally grapple with understandings of equality, diversity and inclusion, the following excerpts seek to provide examples of what Paulo Freire refers to as pedagogies of hope (Freire, 1995) where students and teachers sought to cultivate an ethical disposition and commitment to *doing justice*.

#### *Example One: Using the Framework in an Initial Teacher Education Course*

The first example is linked to the data gathered from an ethnographic study that took place during a one-year post-graduate initial teacher education

course that was located in a university within a large Scottish city. In seeking to support student teachers as they engaged with the Framework, concepts of equity and linguistic and cultural diversity were explored through questions taken from the Framework: *'What does it mean to be human?'* and *'What does it mean to adopt a rights-respecting perspective in my emerging classroom practices?'* Opening dialogue around such questions enabled student teachers to reflect on their own socially and culturally constructed mindsets and world views. Such reflections challenged their understandings of how classroom 'norms' have been framed in policies and educational settings as they sought to respond to the complex sociopolitical spaces that classrooms have now become (Ferreira, 2022; Nieto, 2005). Deep reflective thinking linked to these questions raised awareness of the westernised monolingual, monocultural and mono-literate mindsets and practices that can often unconsciously and unintentionally set up 'borders' (Anzaldúa, 2012) in teachers' mindsets around curricular and classroom literacy encounters for pupils from migrant and refugee backgrounds who are learning English as an additional language (EAL).

Following these discussions, student teachers reported back how they had sought to develop literacy practices that embodied a more *just* concept of inclusion by inviting other cultural perspectives to the text being explored in their diverse classroom settings. As a teacher educator, I was struck by an example of a student teacher who reported back on her active desire to broaden her learning intentions by asking pupils to reflect on how to bring change to society through social action, particularly for those more vulnerable in society. She felt this was important as her school was linguistically and culturally diverse and they had been collectively exploring what justice looks like and feels like in society. In this literacy encounter, pupils explored concepts of migration, and linguistic and cultural differences, reflecting on the attitudes they felt were behind the Migration Bill (which became the Illegal Migration Act, 2023) being discussed in the Westminster Parliament at the time. This student teacher had sought to embed what had been discussed on her ITE programme in relation to the questions within the Framework, where a rights-based understanding of literacy practices responded to the complex *differences* impacting on today's diverse classroom populations. Her reflections and newly developing practices facilitated open dialogue with her pupils around the global movement of people. Through her critically informed approach to literacy, she supported pupils in her classroom who all wished to write their own letters to their local MP to protest the Bill. She reported:

'My Primary 7 class wrote amazing persuasive letters to the MP, who then mentioned them in Parliament (Westminster). [The MP] replied to their

letters individually. We watched it in class with the children and they were so excited. It was nice to show them that their voice really can make a difference.’

Reflecting on this scenario as a teacher educator caused me to consider the ways in which the Framework had acted as a *cultural tool* (Wertsch, 1996) and was a key driver behind student teachers cultivating alternative discourses and uses of language to those that were prevalent in some media outlets around migration and refugees. Discussion around questions within the Framework had facilitated the development of this student’s practices to ensure that they were culturally and linguistically responsive to diversity in their classrooms and in the wider community. As a result, knowledge, culture and language were seen as plural during literacy practices, enabling the coexistence of diverse world views as all pupils engaged with texts (Foley, forthcoming). Following placement experiences, it was clear from the ethnographic study data that the impact of the Framework had shaped how student teachers committed themselves to supporting all pupils in understanding the diverse cultures, geographies, histories and languages that were represented, not only within their classrooms, but across national and international borders.

### *Example Two: Using the Framework in a Continuous Professional Learning Course*

The second example explores how the Framework is being used in a Postgraduate Certificate programme in inclusive education. The programme, currently delivered in a hybrid format within a large Scottish department of education, furthers teachers’ professional development by initiating practitioner enquiries on policy, multi-agency working, and inclusive pedagogy. Most students are teachers in mainstream and ASN settings across stages and subject areas, who share a commitment to supporting every child’s learning.

Following the publication of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Framework, a face-to-face session was specifically developed to create space for students to learn about the Framework as an important open-access resource that is aligned with Scotland’s professional standards and gain experience in using it as a flexible tool to stimulate critical examinations of various aspects of practice.

The design of the highly interactive session was inspired by arts-based approaches in research and teacher education (e.g. Dallacqua, Kersten-Parrish & Rhoades, 2022; Hannigan & Raphael, 2021; Leavy, 2018) and relaxed pedagogy (Acton & Dyi Huijg, 2020) to promote inclusivity, participation, collaboration, and reflexivity. A range of diverse activities were set up at each table and students could ‘flow’ freely in the room to work on them – what they chose to fo-

cus on and for how long were not prescribed. There was also a quiet space with quality publications on inclusive education available. Group discussions were facilitated by activities such as making posters with cut-outs from newspapers or magazines, drawing, badge-making, reading stories, and a mapping exercise.

We carefully selected a small group of reflective questions from the Framework to match each table's main theme. Three or four questions were considered plenty to avoid overwhelming the students and allow sufficient time for extended discussions. The questions were laid out together with other course materials to stimulate exchange and critical reflection. For instance, at one table, students would read real stories of children's experiences and how their views were respected or marginalised when crucial decisions were made that affected their daily experiences of inclusion in their educational settings. The students were then asked to consider the following questions from the Framework:

*'In what ways do I ensure that all learners contribute to the shaping of classroom practices?'*

*'How do I involve diverse communities of learners and other partners in the enquiry process?'*

*'How do I engage learners in sustaining a rights-respecting culture in the learning community?'*

The students have consistently found the session helpful, enjoyable, productive and mind-opening as they could notice gaps in their practices and beliefs and effectively engage with the principles of inclusive pedagogy underpinning the Framework. Following the session, the students could also carry out their own professional enquiries into some of the identified issues and develop reflective essays for the course assignment. For example, one student, who was leading on devising well-being strategies for her school, noted that previously she simply did not realise that the pupils were left out of the development process. In her practitioner enquiry, she invited a group of pupils to be 'co-researchers': they together designed a survey to ensure that the questions would centre pupils' concerns and later analysed the wider responses to inform specific actions for the school to prioritise. The Framework was used as a tool to support practitioners' adoption of a rights-based approach by respecting pupils as key partners and fostering their participation in co-creating inclusion (Wang, 2021).

Like the experiences shared by Barrett et al. (2015), as teacher educators, we welcome the flexibility of the Framework to be integrated with existing materials and adapted, not only to the regular teacher education programmes, but also to wider professional development sessions. Students are not prescribed a checklist of expectations but, quite importantly, trusted and supported to

develop practices situated in their professional working contexts. Recently, the Framework was introduced to all teacher educators in our Institute with the aim of ensuring that all student teachers and in-service teachers will have the opportunity to learn about and enact the principles of inclusive pedagogy. Embedding the Framework in our extensive teacher education curriculum is underway and we hope we will be able to share the impact of this initiative in the near future.

*Example Three: Using the Framework with International ITE Students*

The role of the Framework in supporting commitment to supporting all pupils was also evidenced when the Framework had been used to facilitate discussion and critical reflection with Special Education student teachers from the U.S. These students, who participated in an immersion experience in Scotland (see Powell, Darling-McQuistan & Battalio, 2024 for wider context information, including the aims and nature of the immersion experience), were encouraged to engage with a curated selection of questions from the Framework 3<sup>rd</sup> edition after a period spent in various schools across Scotland. The questions selected, included:

- *Who is considered to be disadvantaged/marginalised?;*
- *Who makes these judgements?;*
- *How do I make sense of differences?;*
- *In what ways does this enhance inclusion and a sense of belonging?;*
- *In what ways are my emerging practices inclusive of all learners without stigmatising or marginalising some?;*  
*and,*
- *In what ways do I ensure the diversity of learners is valued in my classes?*

This activity, which was designed to support the students to reflect on their experiences within Scotland, simultaneously stimulated rich dialogue about the students' experiences in U.S. schools, both as pupils and as pre-service teachers. Despite the different (P)olitical, social, cultural, economic and geographical contexts of Scotland and U.S. (see Powell et al for a full overview of notable differences within education systems), the students were able to connect meaningfully with the questions and consider them in relation to their experiences to date in *both* the U.S. and Scotland.

This example illustrates that it is *possible* for the Framework to be used beyond the Scottish context to support meaningful critical reflection. While further research would be required to explore if the questions stemming from the Framework had an impact on these students' developing practices, the non-prescriptive, principle-based design of the Framework appears to successfully support dialogue, thinking and reflection across different continental

contexts. This experience surfaced the benefits of opportunities to explore 'inclusion' and inclusive practices from different perspectives and in particular, highlighted the ways that the reflective questions from the Framework can be used to support productive and expansive dialogue.

Summarising the above examples, these illustrate how the Framework has supported teacher educators in thinking and developing their practices regarding inclusion and social justice. The impact of promoting a wide understanding of inclusion is evident, for example, as student teachers report a 'more *just* concept of inclusion' and considerations of 'dilemmas of difference' (Norwich, 2009) by widening student teachers' consciousness, of, for example, culture. The examples highlight also how teachers can broaden their views through, for example, ensuring that children are genuinely listened to. In doing so, this can enrich educational experiences. The Framework here is key to interrupting thinking and enabling practitioners to explore held assumptions and beliefs, whilst also providing teacher educators with support to do this. These examples provide a flavour of the possibilities of the Framework to support and develop the practices of all educators and so to see themselves as both owners and teachers of inclusion.

## Conclusions

This paper has considered aspects of the journey undertaken in developing the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the National Framework for Inclusion, including the process of creating the resource and how it is being used in Scottish teacher education courses. Throughout, Ainscow's vision of '*every learner matters and matters equally*' (Ainscow, 2023, np) was reflected in not only the work being done to provide a resource to support educators in challenging and reflecting on their own inclusive practice and the pedagogies underpinning this, but also the way in which we worked to ensure that the resource reflected the landscape of teacher education in Scotland. We were cognisant of the challenges facing teaching colleagues in schools, particularly reduction in resource as austerity savings have been implemented by the Westminster government over the last decade. In preparing tomorrow's teachers to take their place in inclusive schools throughout Scotland and beyond, we hope that the use of the Framework by teacher educator colleagues will support beginner teachers to feel equipped with the critical thinking, knowledge and understanding of inclusive practice and pedagogy, as well as being change agents, as they move into the teaching profession.

As Cantali and Florian (2023) discuss, the ongoing impact of the Framework is significant. It informs teacher education practice in Scotland, particularly encouraging teachers at the beginning of their career to consider how their

inclusive practice is developing, and whether it is doing so in line with the Scottish Government's definition of inclusive practice, and the wider societal aims of the Scottish Parliament for education to be a driver for social justice and equity. This paper, as discussed earlier, brings a new contribution to the field, not only in considering how inclusive pedagogical approaches continue to support teachers as they reflect on their inclusive practice, but also to the field of teachers as agents of change for inclusive education in reflecting on the application of the ACToolkit Change Model. We conclude by returning to the Framework questions posed in the Introduction. We invite the reader to consider how they might take their reflections, informed by this paper, to continue to develop their inclusive practice in the classroom.

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