

Introduction

This digital manual is a **guidance material** made available as an open educational resource. It serves the purpose of training, as well as motivating teaching experience **for the support of online and inclusive education**.

The result has been developed with the intention to support primary school **principals in** online and inclusive education **leadership**.

However, a wider audience will benefit from the digital manual. Also training providers, teachers and educators that are using digital infrastructure, resources or tools in education; are or will be involved in digital leadership; are interested in digital pedagogy for the support of lifelong learning opportunities. Academic institutions responsible for primary school educators and the students, future teachers or education leaders.

The digital manual will give the target audience, on an international level, a tool of good use for their relevant research and every day functional educational needs.

To better understand the purpose of the manual **key definitions** and integration guidelines have been prepared. The former at the beginning of the manual, the latter towards the end.

The manual has been divided into a few chapters.

In the subsequent chapter key definitions have been explained, explicitly, what **inclusive education** means, how **digital leadership** should be understood and why **open educational resources**.

Afterwards the manual consists of four learning units, each of them including Teaching & Learning (T&L) content and quiz questions. The topics of learning units (LU) are: inclusive digital learning (LU1), promoting digital intelligence in the primary school community (LU2), digital learning leadership for primary school community (LU3), and accessing and maintaining digital infrastructure for all.

Another chapter is devoted to **integration guidelines**, recommendations for principles on using the manual in online and offline educational contexts. The manual ends with the bibliography and additional sources - those related to the topics, areas and themes that have been addressed herein, and that can be useful for further research.

Continue to the next chapter of the Digital Manual for primary school principals in online and inclusive education leadership.

Key definitions

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Worldwide, there are 240 million children with various disabilities. As any other child, they require appropriate education in order to enhance their capabilities and achieve their full potential. However, the lack of consideration for children with diverse disabilities (as well as young speakers of minority languages) during the policymaking process is recognised as a significant factor impeding their educational opportunities and social participation. Inclusive education refers to the practise of assigning all students, irrespective of any difficulties that they face, to general education classrooms suitable for their age to obtain proper education and assistance allowing them to meet the requirements of the core curriculum. In other words, inclusive education is the way to provide equal educational opportunities for all students, enabling them to attend school, acquire knowledge, and develop the necessary skills for their process of maturation and the future success. Effective inclusive education is achieved by embracing, comprehending, and conforming to the physical, cognitive, academic, social, and emotional differences of students. Inclusive systems highly regard the various inputs that students from a variety of backgrounds bring to the class. Those contributions foster students' collaboration, enabling them to acquire valuable experience and develop their social skills. Nonetheless, advancements are made at a gradual pace. Implementing inclusive systems involves extensive changes at all levels of society. At school level, it is crucial to provide training for teachers, renovate school buildings, and ensure that every student has an access to learning resources that are easily accessible. At the community level, not only must discrimination be eradicated, but also it is necessary to educate people about the advantages of inclusive education. At the national level, governments should adapt the proper provisions (based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and analyse data on a regular basis to ascertain that children are provided with efficient services.

DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

Digital leadership is a term given to all individuals who perform leadership duties and activities through electronic channels. Digital leadership refers to the act of applying social influence by using technology for the purpose of provoking a transformation in attitudes, emotions, cognition, behaviour, and performance of people, groups, or organisations, with the aim of guiding them towards the accomplishment of a certain objective. In this instance, information technology is used for communication and information dissemination. Leadership in companies is typically relied on direct, in-person interactions. Presently, organisations are integrating technology into their operations, leading to a demand for digital leadership. This approach encompasses technological components which might involve videoconferencing, online collaboration software, cell phones, e-mail or Wi-Fi. Digital leadership may include the same structure and strategy as conventional in-person leadership, particularly in the context of technological progress that increasingly facilitates virtual interactions. Creating opportunities for greater individual engagement in decision-making is the essence of participative leadership. On top of that, digital leadership may be very inspirational. In order to accomplish this purpose, e-leaders may employ electronic correspondence as a means of expressing inspiring visions, delight over new projects, or satisfaction in the outcomes of their followers. Analysing another constantly changing environment, such as education, it is evident that the need for digital leadership is significantly rising. The current leadership model in education became gradually outdated during the Covid-19 pandemic, when all stakeholders, including parents and students, were exposed to the use of technology and online learning platforms. Leaders felt obliged to adopt the growing trend and develop e-leadership skills to support the employees and handle the shifting demands of consumers (particularly students and their parents). Rapidly, all educational leaders embraced innovative communication and collaboration technology, in conjunction with e-learning platforms.

OER

OER stands for Open Educational Resources – which refers to widely accessible materials used for educational purposes and the process of learning. OER, in contrast to conventional copyrighted resources, are developed or authored by an organisation or individual that provides permission for the reuse and customization of their work. The objective is to provide general access to information and different sources that are relevant in the educational means, consequently reducing the risk of digital exclusion. Open Educational Resources may consist of a number of materials, including: handbooks, lesson plans, presentations, tutorials, games, tests, multimedia and other learning tools or resources. Importantly, the first international regulatory document to address the subject of publicly licenced educational resources and technology in the area of education is the **Recommendation on Open Educational Resources**, which was accepted by UNESCO's General Conference during its 40th session on November 25, 2019.

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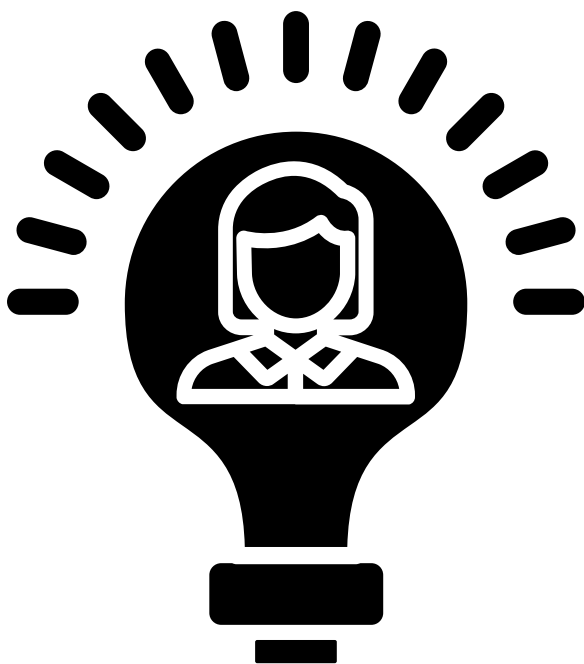
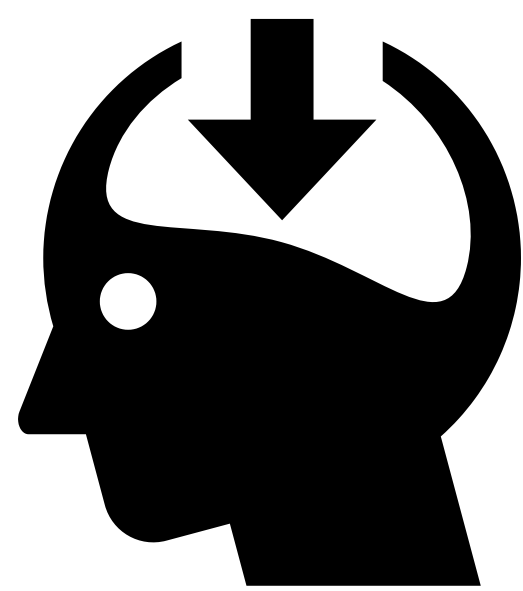
Learning Unit 1

Inclusive Digital Learning

Laura Landi & Rita Bertozzi



Introduction: Learning Objectives



To know...

- how to select the digital tools that support the full diversity of beneficiaries, including vulnerable students (Universal Design for learning framework)
- the potential and the limits of digital technology as a means to improve effective and inclusive learning in primary school.

To understand...

- how to assess and choose the most motivational, and user-friendly digital tools for the adaptation of the courses to the digital environment, also taking into account the special cultural needs of the school community.
- how to encourage the participation of families from vulnerable and/or culturally-diverse contexts.

To be able to...

- ensure equal participation of all students in the digital education process, empowering the teaching staff to develop a culture of digital inclusiveness within the school community .
- implement real-time, meaningful assessments enabled by technology—whether graded, non-graded, in—class activities, or student self-assessments.

Content II

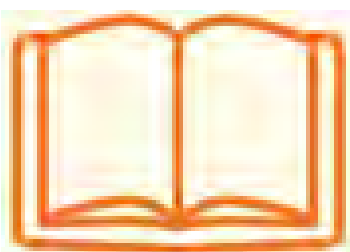
Inclusive education

VULNERABILITY

The possibility that a group of people will be excluded based on discriminatory grounds: gender, remoteness, wealth, disability, ethnicity, language, migration, displacement, incarceration, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion and other beliefs and attitudes (UNESCO, 2020, p. 4).
An individual can experience exclusion in different ways.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Means ‘that a person, group of people, organisation or social problem is affected and impacted upon by a number of pressures, forces, levers, discriminations and disadvantages’ (European Agency, 2021b, p. 6).
Successful inclusion in education must therefore consider learners’ experiences of inclusion or exclusion not only in the teaching-learning situation, but in terms of influences from organisational, interpersonal and societal levels.



UNESCO. 2020.
Global Education
Monitoring Report
2020: Inclusion and
education: All means
all. Paris, UNESCO.

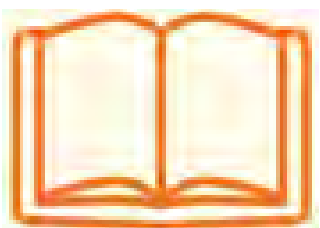
INCLUSION

- ‘A process consisting of actions and practices that embrace diversity and build a sense of belonging, rooted in the belief that every person has value and potential and should be respected’ (UNESCO, 2020, p. 419).
- Inclusion implies a comprehensive perception and appreciation of diversity within a less sharply defined community.
- Inclusion does not focus on a specific ‘target group’, rather it applies a learner-focused principle, granting quality education to all learners.
- Inclusion is understood as a theoretical construct in the sense of a desirable goal to be reached, rather than as a current societal reality. (source, AGENDA 2030)

It may firstly be useful to focus on individuals or groups who are particularly vulnerable to exclusion by a system to guide the design of inclusive conditions in the education system



Inclusive-education-in-action website



UNESCO (2009)

Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education. UNESCO, Paris



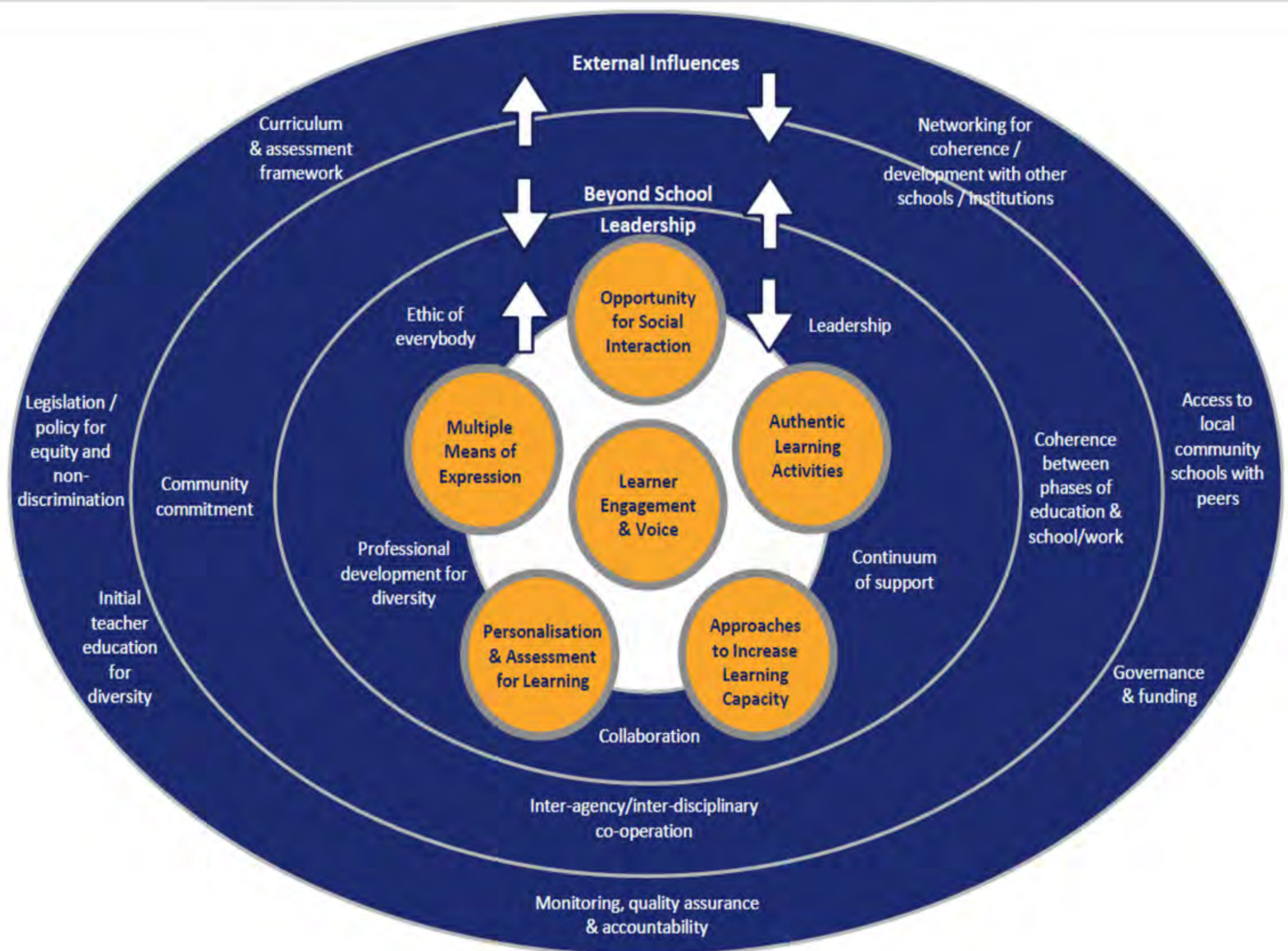
Art. 24-Education- United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) (UNCRPD)

SEN - Special Educational Needs

EQUITY

Defining equity, the Commission of the European Communities (2006) states that it is: ‘... viewed as the extent to which individuals can take advantage of education and training, in terms of opportunities, access, treatment and outcomes’ (p. 2). The OECD (2007) links equity to fairness and states that personal and social circumstances should not be an obstacle to achieving educational potential.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



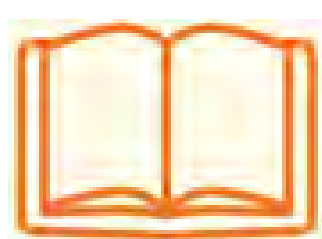
Ecosystem of Inclusive Education Model (adapted from European Agency, 2017b, p.11)

The original model was designed to provide a holistic overview of the complex networks in the environment that affect every learner. In the model, all the levels interact with and influence each other.

See **Unit 3** for more info



UNESCO (1994) Salamanca Statement regarding inclusive education: Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (p8).



UNESCO (1994) World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, Salamanca, Spain, 1994



European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2019. Inclusive School Leadership: Exploring Policies Across Europe. (E. Óskarsdóttir, V. Donnelly and M. Turner-Cmuchal, eds.). Odense, Denmark

THE CURRICULUM

The current use of the term 'inclusion' starts from the proposition that pupils with SEN have a right to a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs and that education systems have a duty to provide this. The curriculum is not fixed, but something to be developed until it is appropriate for all pupils. A flexible curriculum is beneficial to all students, because it takes into account personal interests and learning styles, broaden learning horizons and can promote common understanding.



Alongside these ideas are these key propositions:

- A curriculum for all considers academic and social learning. Curriculum goals and implementation should reflect this dual focus;
- Inclusion is a process and not a state. Educators will always need to move their work forward to enable the learning and participation of all pupils.

TEACHERS' CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS

All teachers should have positive attitudes towards all learners; they need experiences that will develop positive attitudes and values and encourage them to research, reflect and find innovative solutions to new challenges presented by learner difference. In particular, teachers should welcome support from colleagues with different areas of expertise and work co-operatively moving from an individual to a collective approach to their work.

All teachers should develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to meet the diverse needs of all learners:

- provide a range of learning opportunities with choice for all learners, in line with a view of intelligence as multi-dimensional;
- use a range of approaches to teaching, using flexible groups and taking account of learners' preferences;
- plan a relevant curriculum that provides coherent opportunities for the development of core, cross curricular competencies and meaningful engagement for all learners; and
- work with colleagues to develop individual plans to ensure the consistent deployment of any necessary support, aids and adaptations to meet learners' needs.



Resources from the Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion project



three-page infographic - Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion

SCHOOL LEADERS FOR INCLUSIVE SCHOOL SHOULD:

- Establish a positive ethos and a learning culture by making their vision and inclusive values and beliefs explicit, ensuring that inclusion and learner well-being are central to all policies and evident in all practice;
- Organise school in ways that avoid labelling or categorising learners, e.g. flexible, mixed groupings for different activities;
- Actively work to promote responses to difference that include learners by extending what is available in their usual learning environment;
- Encourage and empower staff to develop their capacity and competence to meet a diversity of needs through different approaches and contribute their expertise to the whole school learning community;
- Support staff to reflect on their practice and become autonomous life-long learners;
- Manage resources effectively and ensure that they reflect and respect the diversity of learners within the school;
- Develop effective monitoring, self-review and learner-centred evaluation to inform planning and strategic improvement to develop the school's capacity to support the best possible progress for all learners;
- Manage specialist staff and internal and external networks to take joint responsibility and to work in partnership to facilitate access to the curriculum and extracurricular activities for all learners; and
- Communicate effectively with the local community, interdisciplinary support services and specialist settings to ensure a holistic and coordinated approach to learners and their families that recognises the importance of meeting broader needs to enhance learning.

