

My interest in IET is as a parent of an ASD (Asperger's - the hidden disability) secondary school student. When reading through the discussion paper there seemed to be no mention of disability and whether IET is in any way fit for purpose in meeting the needs of the increasingly complex cohort of students presenting for education in the 21st century, among which neurodevelopmental disability and neurodiversity in all its forms plays a significant role. Neurodevelopmental disability is not exclusively corralled to specialist institutions, and so the needs of these students MUST be met by teachers in mainstream schools.

I have never undertaken a teaching degree so don't know what is covered in one firsthand. Anecdotally I hear that graduate and beginning teachers feel there is not enough focus in the practical 'how tos' for neurodiverse learners, and they feel largely unprepared to meet this need. That certainly is reflected in our lived experience, where teachers by and large don't seem to appreciate the need to CONSISTENTLY implement necessary accommodations and modifications that are essential for learning - adjustments in education should be viewed as a human right and not negotiable. Clearly not enough emphasis is placed on the importance of neurodiverse-friendly teaching practises (which we know do not disadvantage any learner in a classroom). Adjustments seem ad hoc and guesswork. Alternatively, if catering to diverse learners IS competently and effectively covered in IET, very few teachers appear to be consistently putting any of it into practise. Given ASD students have the worst educational outcomes of any student with a disability in this country, and 35% of ASD students don't even complete Year 10 (Amaze 2018/19 research) there obviously needs to be a major overhaul in teacher instruction. These outcomes are disgraceful and unacceptable, and should spur action for change. Every student should have the opportunity to be the best they can be, and quite frankly it is negligent for students not to receive the supports they need to succeed at school. Teachers need to be taught how from specialists with expert knowledge in the field.

It's lovely to know (Mayer et al. 2015) that following their IET, beginning teachers feel competent in professional ethics and PDs, but how horrifying it is to realise that they do feel effective in the 'bread-and-butter' components of their job like pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and feedback and teaching diverse learners (I note that learners with disabilities were strangely not included in the 'diverse' category). IET in its current form is clearly not working for many ASD and other neurodiverse learners - they need to be at front of mind in IET's re-design, as their needs are not being met.