

## Engaging Learners with Complex Needs; the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenge.

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The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has brought many challenges in terms of the skills teachers will need to educate the increasing new generation of children with Complex Needs. Mental Health, for example, is an area where the profession has no pedagogical history, and our professional learning in this area has to scaffolded from a basis of sound principles into meaningful practise.

The DFE – funded Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Research Project discovered that Engagement was the most effective approach for teaching children with Complex Needs . The Engagement Profile and Scale ( EPS) evolved as an evidence based tool for developing personalised approaches to assessment , teaching and learning <http://engagement4learning.com/> . The validity of the EPS came through its multiple trials, in multiple schools with multiple teachers, across the UK and internationally. This has now been adopted by the Rochford Review , and is recommended as the future statutory assessment framework in classrooms for children with SEND.

The Complex Needs on line training materials offer professional learning opportunities in key areas of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Special Needs Teaching , ( [www.complexneeds.org.uk](http://www.complexneeds.org.uk).)

Our repertoire of teaching approaches must continue to change and diversify as our children and young people with SEND change and diversify. The answers will rest with the ability of the teaching workforce to enskill itself from within, through systematic and deductive, evidence based initiatives, reported with rigour throughout the community of schools.. Schools have a major role to play here if we are to preserve the intellectual integrity of our profession , and our capacity to serve Society's most vulnerable children.