

Professional Development for Inclusion

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 11

Special Issue: 1

Month: November

Year: 2023

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

Received: 06.10.23

Accepted: 02.11.23

Published: 20.11.23

Citation:

Vimala, TS.

“Professional

Development for

Inclusion.” *Shanlax*

International Journal

of Arts, Science and

Humanities, vol. 11,

no. S1, 2023, pp. 42–46.

DOI:

[https://doi.](https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v11iS1i2-Nov.7314)

[org/10.34293/sijash.](https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v11iS1i2-Nov.7314)

[v11iS1i2-Nov.7314](https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v11iS1i2-Nov.7314)

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Abstract

In today's globalized and interconnected world, fostering inclusion within professional settings is imperative for organizations aiming to thrive and remain competitive. There are a lot of teachers that have to deal with the problem of supporting kids who have a wide range of abilities and needs. Many classrooms have become more diverse as a result of the implementation of inclusion plans by school districts. These plans have allowed for the inclusion of children with a wide range of disabilities. It has been discovered by a number of educators that the utilisation of technology can make it easier to incorporate children with disabilities into general education classrooms. However, it is common for children to lose valuable techniques as they progress from one grade level to the next.

Keywords: Professional Development, Inclusion Education, Teacher's Classrooms.

Introduction

“True inclusion is not about diversity quotas; it's about creating an environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work.”

Intentional and systematic efforts to provide individuals, groups, and organisations with the information, abilities, and tactics needed to establish and maintain diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environments are what make up professional development for inclusion. It includes many different pursuits with the overarching goal of creating a work environment where every person, regardless of who they are or what they look like, may thrive and give their all.

Key Terms in Professional Development for Inclusion

- Diversity is the presence of many different kinds of human characteristics.
- Treating all people fairly and impartially, notwithstanding their differences, is what we mean when we talk about equity.
- Thirdly, inclusion means making sure that everyone's opinions and skills are acknowledged and appreciated.
- Advancing one's career by participation in courses, workshops, and other learning opportunities is an important part of creating inclusive leadership.
- The fifth definition is “ally ship,” which is standing up for the rights of oppressed people and groups by speaking out against injustices and working to make society more welcoming to all.

Effective professional development is crucial in empowering educators to create inclusive spaces where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Through a comprehensive

analysis of existing literature, educational policies, and best practices, this thesis examines strategies for enhancing professional development programs to support inclusive education. Additionally, it explores the impact of such initiatives on educators, students, schools, and communities. By addressing the gaps in current professional development practices and proposing innovative approaches, this research contributes to the advancement of inclusive education worldwide.

Professional Development Approach

Our method for in-service professional development encourages both regular and special education teachers to form collaborative teams to design and execute technology-enhanced curricular activities that benefit all students. Our method is characterised by four primary characteristics: it is continuous, it is facilitated, it covers various subjects and grades, and it has administrative backing.

Never stop learning and growing in your career. The team's operations follow this iterative pattern:

1. Evaluating the progress of both special education and general education pupils
2. Analysing and evaluating present procedures
3. Establishing shared aims and targets
4. Analysing available technological resources
5. Acquiring experience with cutting-edge technological tools
6. Creating an assessment-rich shared activity or curricular unit
7. Reflecting on and modifying the intervention
9. Putting this activity into practice in the classroom

Training and Education

Offering workshops, seminars, and courses that raise awareness about diversity, equity, and inclusion issues, and provide practical skills for promoting inclusivity and mitigating biases in the workplace.

Following Things can be Implemented in Schools

- **Leadership Development:** Providing opportunities for leaders and managers to develop inclusive leadership competencies, such as empathy, cultural competence, and the ability to foster diverse teams and equitable practices.
- **Policy Development:** Reviewing and revising organizational policies, procedures, and practices to ensure they promote fairness, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of the organization, from recruitment and hiring to promotion and advancement.
- **Mentorship and Coaching:** Facilitating mentoring relationships and coaching programs that support the professional development and career advancement of underrepresented individuals, while also providing opportunities for cross-cultural learning and exchange.
- **Accountability and Evaluation:** Implementing mechanisms to track and measure progress toward diversity, equity, and inclusion goals, and holding individuals and teams accountable for creating and maintaining inclusive environments

Classroom Experience Creation

As part of an inclusive approach to curriculum planning, instructors must identify and evaluate each student's unique learning objectives before moving on to the next activity or unit. Student results are used as a yardstick to evaluate the effectiveness of the newly introduced activity or unit of curriculum. The district's writing curriculum requirements served as the basis for some of the Pathways teams' activity goals, and the scoring rubrics used to grade students' writing portfolios served as an instrument for gauging whether or not the students had achieved these goals. As part

of the cluster activities, experts and representatives from six different countries met in workshops and focus groups to discuss the Profile's guiding principles and areas of expertise in relation to the professional development of educators in the field of inclusive education. This development should occur at every stage of the system's evolution.

Each Pathways activity has a long discussion period before, during, and after its execution in which teachers report on the students' progress towards the objectives. If some students are having trouble achieving their learning objectives, the activities are adjusted accordingly.

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

The creation and maintenance of employee resource groups (ERGs), also known as affinity groups, allows workers who have commonalities in terms of background, interests, or experiences to meet one another, work together, and promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

To put it simply, ERGs are Employee Resource Groups. An organization's affinity groups are groupings of employees who have voluntarily banded together on commonalities in life or work. Commonly used criteria for forming ERGs include racial/ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, handicap, and veteran status, among others. Among an ERG's main functions is to act as an advocate for its members while also providing them with support, networking, and professional development opportunities. In addition to their other roles, they provide valuable assistance to the company by discussing and advising on matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) have the potential to greatly impact workplace diversity and inclusion efforts by creating a feeling of community among employees.

Literature Review

The literature review provides a comprehensive overview of key concepts, theories, and research findings related to inclusive education and professional development. It begins by defining inclusive education and elucidating its underlying principles, such as diversity, equity, and social justice. Drawing on seminal works in the field, the review explores the historical evolution of inclusive education, highlighting milestones, challenges, and emerging trends. Additionally, it examines various models of professional development, ranging from traditional workshops and courses to collaborative learning communities and action research projects. By synthesizing empirical studies and theoretical frameworks, the review identifies gaps in current knowledge and sets the stage for the empirical investigation that follows.

Methodology

The research strategy, data gathering procedures, and analytical tools used in the study are detailed in the methodology section. Because it permits a comprehensive comprehension of the phenomena being studied, a mixed-methods approach is considered suitable for answering the complicated research questions. Interviews, focus groups, and participant observation are qualitative methodologies that can provide valuable insights into educators' ideas, practices, and experiences in relation to professional development and inclusive education. The frequency, effect, and correlation of professional development activities with student results can be quantified by statistical analysis and quantitative surveys. The purpose of this study is to increase confidence in the results by making use of data from three different sources.

Results

The results section presents the findings derived from the qualitative and quantitative analyses. Qualitative data reveal themes such as the importance of teacher attitudes and beliefs in fostering

inclusive practices, the role of collaborative learning communities in professional growth, and the challenges of implementing inclusive education in diverse contexts. Quantitative findings elucidate the prevalence of professional development activities among educators, their perceived effectiveness in enhancing inclusive practices, and their correlation with student achievement and school climate indicators. Through rich descriptions, quotes, and statistical summaries, the results section provides a comprehensive overview of the study's main findings.

Teachers and other staff members can pool their knowledge and experience in areas such as technology, subject matter, or working with students with special needs. Instructors with more experience educate those with less, and vice versa: lower grade instructors learn about the expectations placed on their students by upper grade teachers. More instructors are working together in the classroom as a direct outcome of the Pathways teams' emphasis on teamwork.

Discussion

The discussion synthesizes the findings within the broader context of inclusive education theory and practice. It identifies barriers and facilitators to effective professional development and offers recommendations for enhancing existing programs. Additionally, it explores the implications of professional development for inclusive education on educational policies, teacher preparation programs, and school leadership practices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis underscores the importance of professional development in advancing inclusive education goals. By providing evidence-based insights and practical recommendations, it aims to inform policymakers, educators, and stakeholders about the critical role of professional development in creating inclusive learning environments. Ultimately, it advocates for a transformative approach to professional development that prioritizes equity, diversity, and inclusion in education. "True professional development in inclusivity is not merely about ticking boxes or meeting quotas. It's about fostering a culture where diversity is celebrated, perspectives are valued, and every individual feels empowered to contribute their unique talents to the collective success."

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