

## **Inclusion in General Education: Training and Support for Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

My paper is based on my professional experience in India and the United States, as well as my academic experiences at Thompson Rivers University. This paper argues that general education teachers will feel more comfortable providing inclusion if they receive the proper training and adequate support from the administration and colleagues. It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that students with specific needs receive quality education, in accordance with Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities. General education teachers should consider the importance of inclusion. Current research has shown that general education teachers feel underprepared to teach inclusive classrooms. Some factors influencing hesitation among general education teachers to provide inclusion include lack of support, collaboration, and adequate resources. Pre-service programs and professional development opportunities provided by administrators must not assume that general education teachers already know about inclusion. I advocate for pre-service training and professional learning opportunities for general education teachers to make a successful inclusion program.

**Key Words:** *General Education Teachers, Inclusion, No Child Left Behind, Training, Support, Strategies for Inclusion*

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **Background Information**

Teaching experience in India and the United States has given me a broad understanding of general education. Inclusion was introduced to me when I moved to the United States and began teaching. Inclusion was not something I knew much about before moving to the United States. Basic training for this program was not considered by the administrators. No support was provided by the administrators and I felt overwhelmed. In addition, in my M.Ed. program, I took courses on Secondary school counseling that helped me understand general education teachers' roles in assessment and evaluation of students with exceptional needs. For equity, it is important to have an inclusive education. Inclusion training would be beneficial both to diverse learners and general educators.

Article 24 of the United Nations (1989) on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities emphasizes the need and right for a child to receive a quality education among the various sustainability goals. Inclusive education strives to provide equitable access to education for all, which is currently lacking. Enhancing equitable access to education is among the key aims of promoting inclusive education (Ainscow, 2020). General education instructors in particular require a variety of skills, resources, and support because they interact with children from a diversity of backgrounds. Prioritization of professionalism, teaching methods and most importantly the teachers' attitudes are essential for successful teaching outcomes. In this instance, considering the requirements for inclusion training for general education instructors is crucial due to the fact that it is deeply rooted in the larger context of educational inclusivity.

The importance of inclusivity in education has been emphasized over time by educators and other activists, and it has gained widespread support. The major goal is to guarantee that

everyone has access to high-quality education, regardless of their abilities or background. In this way, general education teachers make a significant contribution to assuring the inclusion of students with a variety of requirements, such as those with impairments, in the mainstream academic environment. Furthermore, general education teachers are critical in offering instruction to all learners, especially those with learning differences, behavioral challenges, and disabilities (Ainscow, 2020). While meeting the needs of students with diverse needs is essential in the modern education environment, many general education teachers need to prepare to offer quality education to students with diverse challenges. These teachers face many challenges in this case, especially a lack of support, resources, and limited collaboration. The consequences for students' social and academic lives are significantly impacted by these teachers' inadequate preparation to address the unique requirements of their students. According to Juvonen et al. (2019), teachers who receive adequate support, training, and have a favorable attitude toward diversity provide the appropriate assistance and high-quality instruction to the students. On the contrary, educators with inadequate support and knowledge concerning diversity training find it difficult to meet the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds, leading to poor outcomes. Exploring all aspects is crucial to provide exceptional students with a high-quality education, including the need for support, opportunities, challenging experiences, and teaching strategies that address diversity issues.

### **Problem**

Students across the world experience unique needs in the classroom and academic setting. There are limited efforts to assist these students in receiving quality education like their peers, as enshrined in Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the U.S. policy of No Child Left Behind. Since teachers are the primary

implementers of most educational programs, despite various laws relating to inclusivity in classrooms, teachers still face challenges. It is clear that general education teachers face a variety of difficulties including lack of support, and inadequate professional and training programs to ensure they are capable of delivering quality education to students with diverse needs (Ainscow, 2020). As general education teachers, we are underprepared, and we find it challenging to meet the requirements of learners with exceptional needs. A teacher must be well-versed in dealing with students with learning differences, behavioral issues, and disabilities.

General educators also struggle to create environments that are favorable to learning for all the students in an inclusive classroom. Because administrators at schools might not be aware of the difficulties general education teachers face, inadequate support and required opportunities for participation leave them feeling alone and unsupported (Ainscow, 2020). It is crucial to explore how school administrators, and other stakeholders may help these general education instructors deliver efficient and high-quality instruction while providing inclusion. In this regard, meeting the various needs of students from various backgrounds necessitates collaboration among teachers, support from school administrators, ongoing professional development, and pre-service teacher training, and administrators must find a way to coordinate the time and resources for such training. The significance of the teachers' attitudes and beliefs for the inclusion program cannot be understated.

### **Claim**

This paper examines the need to provide ongoing professional development and strategies to equip general education teachers to address the difficulties they may encounter while providing inclusion. In this paper, I will discuss some tips for assisting general educators

in promoting inclusivity in their teaching environments and what school leaders, administrators, and colleagues can do to promote an inclusive classroom environment.

The provision of pre-service training, ongoing professional development, collaboration between colleagues, and support from administration have been shown to enhance general education teachers' preparedness levels. It is also essential for meeting students' unique needs. In most cases, general education teachers need more resources, collaboration, and support, particularly from leaders and administrators, especially concerning inclusiveness (Ainscow, 2020). It is also important for these teachers to be prepared. Otherwise, they will not be able to effectively meet the diverse needs of their students. Consequently, ongoing professional development and pre-service training are essential to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need for an inclusive classroom. With no support, general education teachers may struggle to assess students' diverse needs.

Inclusion programs will only succeed if general education teachers have supportive attitudes and beliefs. Only support and assistance will not suffice. As a result of financial constraints and lack of time, administrators disregard the importance of inclusion training. According to Chartrand, S. (2019), The budget is likely to increase as more SEN students attend school, as well as awareness of and support for students with exceptionalities grows. In general education classrooms, students with exceptionalities are increasing, which requires additional preparation for teachers. Teachers are expected to perform a wide range of duties, and administration has high expectations of them. It is also essential that teachers remain up-to-date on the latest strategies and accommodations that might prove useful in inclusive classrooms.



## **Statement of Claim**

Providing pre-service training, ongoing professional development, support, and collaboration from colleagues and administrators enhances the preparedness levels of general education teachers in meeting the diverse needs of their students.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This paper claims that for inclusive classrooms to flourish, general education teachers need to be trained and supported. It is necessary to understand each student's particular needs in order to establish multiple assessments for SEN students. With this training, general educators can synthesize and collect information to make informed decisions about students with diverse needs in educational settings. With no support, general education teachers may struggle to assess students' diverse needs. Inclusion programs will only succeed if general education teachers have supportive attitudes and beliefs. Budgeting for inclusive training also poses some challenges. Inclusion training should also be considered by school districts to enhance the existing skills of teachers. It will allow them to apply knowledge and cope with different situations in a more effective manner in an inclusive classroom.

## **The Significance of Inclusivity and Teachers' Training**

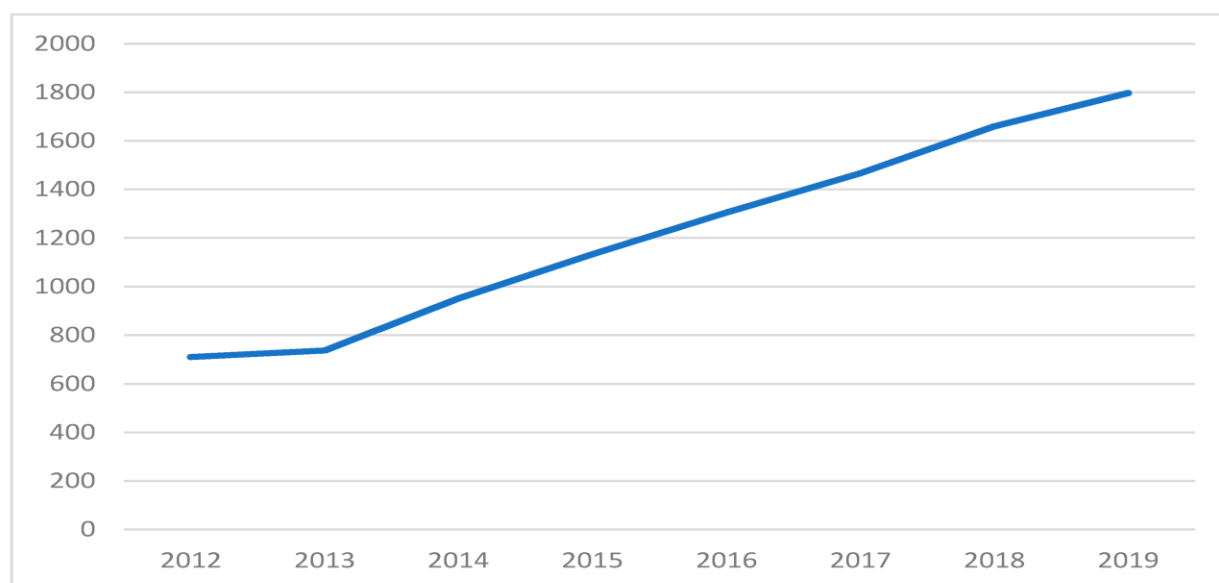
Inclusivity in the learning environment is essential for promoting high-quality education, especially among people with disabilities. For this reason, several studies have been conducted to emphasize the need for inclusive teaching and the need for the preparation of teachers to address the lack of Inclusivity in schools. In one of the studies conducted by the Global Education Monitoring Report Team and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2020), the authors have cited that inadequate preparedness by the teachers and the knowledge concerning the teaching methodologies leads to many teaching gaps that should be addressed to

ensure quality learning. The author goes further to explore the core values that teachers in various academic environments should have to address issues related to diversity. These issues include engagement in professional development, valuing the learner's diversity, working with others, and supporting learners based on their needs and abilities.

While offering these core competencies is essential, many teachers must have these key competencies and adequate training. In this case, the author suggests the need for teacher training on inclusion, especially among countries such as Latin America and the Caribbean. Some countries such as Ireland have increased the level of inclusion classes within the learning environment to cater for the needs of all students regardless of their background. The graph below shows the increasing number of inclusions based on classes in Ireland. It is showing that the number is increasing each year from 2013 to 2019.

**Figure 1**

*Increasing Number of Inclusion Based on Classes (Shevlin & Banks, 2021)*

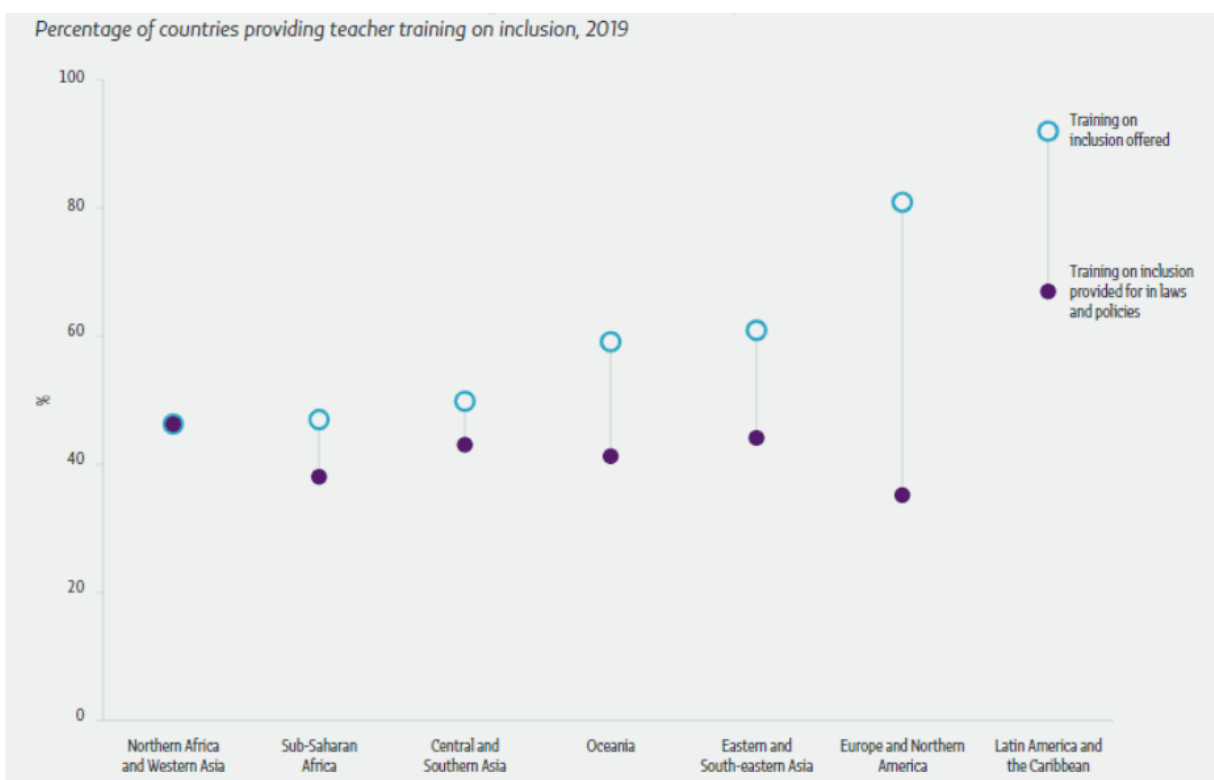


The same study by Global Education Monitoring Report Team and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2020) conducted a study regarding various countries that

have made efforts to include professional development on inclusion, and this revealed that a few countries, particularly those from middle and high-income countries have enhanced this process. For instance, the Global Education Monitoring Report Team and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2020) claimed that 25 percent of the countries and teachers in secondary schools reported that teaching in multilingual and multicultural settings has been integrated into teacher training and education. However, the study revealed that several countries, such as Brazil, Mexico, and Columbia, cite the need for inclusivity training as part of the teachers' development program.

## Figure 2

*Countries Enshrine Teacher Training on Inclusion in Laws and Policies* (Source: Global Education Monitoring Report Team and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2022)



Studies concerning the teachers' experiences dealing with students have revealed the key challenges that bedevil teachers during their teaching process. For instance, the Global Education Monitoring Report Team and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2020) cite that at least one in five teachers in the Netherlands struggles to deal with learners with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). However, those students are in their academic settings. According to Global Education Monitoring Report Team and International Task Force on Teachers for Education (2020), one teacher out of five claimed they had experienced such students in their teaching environment. The study explains the need for the government to offer teacher education and development programs in their training and development programs, as well as their plans, policies, and regulations, to ensure a high level of preparedness for the teachers.

### **Developing Skills and Knowledge for Teaching Inclusive Classrooms**

Understanding the unique needs of various students is critical in exploring the student's needs and developing various assessment measures for various stakeholders such as general education teachers, parents, and other educators interested in the student's progress. McLeskey et al. (2017) explore the varied needs of students, including the need for motivation, social regulation, language, memory, and attention, which should be considered during the evaluation and assessment programs. Ainscow (2020) recommends the development of a learner profile, which depends on the teachers' skills and knowledge of understanding the need of the students. For instance, general educators should be equipped with skills and knowledge vital in collecting information and interpreting patterns of crucial information because it assists in synthesizing information and collecting data to inform the decision-making process in educational settings. Based on the IDEA (2004), the evaluation and assessment process should resonate with their

needs. Teachers should have adequate knowledge of assessing and evaluating students from diverse backgrounds. Ainscow (2020) notes that a team of stakeholders, including the general educators, parents, and other key stakeholders, should be convened to assist students in making the reasonable progress they desire. The author is concerned with the student's progress and the requirements for ensuring the success and academic achievement of students with diverse needs.

Although some teachers have a significant level of education concerning students with Individual needs, continuous learning is essential because it offers teachers adequate knowledge and skills to address the current issues related to exceptional needs and diverse learners in the contemporary learning environment. Dyer (2019) reveals that most teachers who have received special needs education are located in special needs schools. However, there is a significant increase in individualized need students interacting with their non-disabled colleagues in the typical learning environment. Dyer (2019) further presents the statistics for students with disabilities spending time in regular classrooms. For instance, he observes that students with specific needs aged between 6 and 21 spend 80 percent of their time in general education classes, approximately 63.4 percent (Dyer, 2019). He further reveals that approximately 121,000 teachers in different countries significantly reduced teaching time while the number of learners with specific needs has increased immensely. A considerable amount of time was wasted through class management, which significantly affects the non-disabled and disabled learners. For this reason, the author claims that general educators should be more equipped with skills and knowledge, primarily based on special education and Inclusivity, to address the needs of all learners.

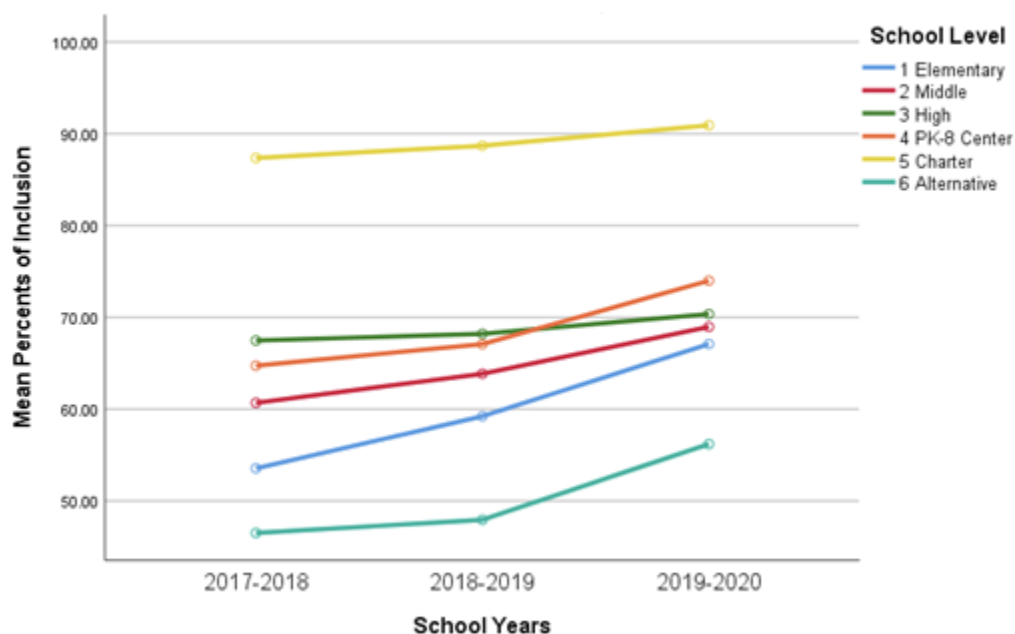
There are variations in the inclusion programs, particularly among various school levels. Silva et al. (2022) conducted a study and revealed the disproportionate level of inclusions among

different school levels. The following graph shows inclusion of different levels schools and their inclusivity between 2017 and 2020 in the U.S specifically in Miami-Dade County.

**Figure 3**

*Inclusion Percentage by Schools in Miami-Dade County U.S. (Silva et al., 2022)*

*Inclusion Percentages by School Level in Miami-Dade County Public Schools*



Comprehending the best ways of teaching students with diverse needs is essential in offering quality education. These will assist the general teacher in focusing on those exceptionalities and other students who are not disabled. The author claims that the number of students aged between 6 and 21 years was approximately seven million between 2017 and 2018; general education teachers need more training concerning these increased needs (Dyer, 2019). In most cases, general educators contribute immensely to the learning process of these students. In this case, the author further explores various amendments based on individuals with disabilities. Dyer (2019) claims that IDEA requires general education teachers to be involved in formulating

and implementing the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Furthermore, the author reveals that general education teachers had limited scores on inclusivity and teacher preparation programs.

While Inclusivity remains an essential aspect of the modern education environment, teachers and administrators face many challenges in enhancing inclusive programs in educational settings. Dyer (2019) offers various features inclusive settings should have, such as procedures and policies that encourage the design of school communities that focus on students from different backgrounds. Additionally, the author cites various benefits of inclusivity programs for students. Some of these include improved post-school adjustments to employment opportunities, particularly for those who attend vocational education training classes, and improved learner performance on various evaluation and assessment programs, particularly those within the IDEA. This is also woven together in legislation such as the No Child Left Behind. Inclusivity ensures that learners have increased access to the general education curriculum and meet the demands of the curriculum. Dyer (2019) further explains that such learners can have improved social relationships and interactions, particularly among peers that are non-disabled. Lastly, these students can effectively participate in extracurricular activities in the learning environment.

### **Possible Strategies for Promoting Inclusivity**

Despite the many challenges bedeviling general teachers in enhancing Inclusivity to meet the needs of the diverse students in the classroom settings, general teachers can promote a combination of various strategies to meet the unique needs of the learners.

#### ***Collaborative Approach among Teachers***

The study by Dyer (2019) infers that the approach used by teacher training is significant for providing inclusive teaching in their academic environment. The author further postulates that collaborative teaching is essential in various learning communities, because it enhances

instructional improvement strategies and evaluation methods, the implementation of various methods, and, most importantly, the development of the teachers (Kiel et al., 2020). The author urges teachers to become instructional leaders involved in their professionalization programs. In this case, using collaborative approaches and peer mentoring is essential in promoting teacher training. In a different study by Sanger (2020), claimed that peer mentorship may weave together programs such as pairing new teachers with experienced ones to allow for personalized and individualized approaches essential for professional development.

The provision of purposeful teacher collaboration is vital in teaching the required differentiation skills. A peer mentoring program, an inclusion team, and a professional learning community can be used in school settings to facilitate collaboration among teachers. For instance, teachers can learn about various attitudes required for inclusion and ensuring positive outcomes in their class settings. Sheppard (n.d.) opines that more than a single approach is needed to meet the diverse needs of students because most learners have unique needs that demand particular ways of addressing them. For instance, the author claims that students with similar diagnoses may demand different interventions to address their behavioral and educational needs. Furthermore, those with complex needs may demand multiple uses of cognitive and emotional support to enhance their learning program (Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2020). In this case, the training and development of teachers is not a static process that should be continual updates, and this utilization of the collaborative approaches through the available human approaches in schools can offer the best model for professional development and allow teachers to enhance inclusionary practices in their classroom settings.

In a study by Sheppard (n.d.), the author observed that many schools need more professional development budgets because they are grappling with reducing resources used and



costs of operating schools because of challenging economic times. Professional development within the schools is supposed to resonate with the school's strategic plans (Kart & Kart, 2021). Furthermore, expenditures on professional development and training are justifiable if the content taught aligns with the teacher's needs and inclusivity programs of the school, yet sometimes teachers are frustrated because they do not find the training sessions meaningful and cannot be applied in their specific teaching settings.

This method is designed to focus on collaborative opportunities that are readily available in schools while moving away from off-site, professional development days, and expensive ways of training teachers and it does not require extra time and training, it can be done collaboratively. Ainscow (2020) claims collaboration is essential in supporting inclusion because it enhances instructional experience and capacity. However, the success of this program, depends on the school leaders who should design programs that support collaboration in schools. Several teachers are naturally endowed with the skills to collaborate with others. Therefore, the modern times marred with declining financial support demands teachers and schools to be creative and focus on using the collaborative opportunities available to enhance student outcomes in schools. Professional development in schools through collaboration leads to more significant and positive academic outcomes.

### ***Student-Level Interactions***

This is another strategy that can be coined together in student-level interventions, which perceives instruction as an individualized practice that should be designed to meet the specific needs of every student in the class. Jordan, et.al. (2009), stated that in order for teaching to be effective overall and for inclusive practices to be effective, teachers should be able to engage each student in the classroom and establish a meaningful relationship with them, thereby

promoting learning at the level of engagement that each student is able to achieve. General education teachers should apply various strategies to address the learner discrepancy in meeting the various needs of the students and address the complexity of the skills and knowledge, especially in middle-level schools. Sheppard (n.d.) identifies various methods, such as modifications and adaptations that have been perceived as effective in assisting students in general classes because of enhanced collaboration between special education teachers and general educators in these schools.

Beyond accommodations and adaptations, another mechanism entails student-directed learning that can promote student autonomy and enhances skills such as self-monitoring, goal setting, study planning, and problem-solving. Another aspect entails integrating classroom-level strategies designed to support learners in middle and high schools. It is focused on critical aspects such as peer-mediated instruction, cooperation, universal design, and professional learning (Paseka & Schwab, 2020). For instance, cooperative learning in class settings for students with and without disabilities can work together through discussion and collaboration in various groups. This can also improve social interactions among students because cooperative learning can enhance positive learning outcomes for those with and without exceptional needs.

### ***Social Support Strategies***

Apart from student-level interventions, Sheppard (n.d.) claims that social support strategies can effectively offer instructional support for learners. This method is designed to promote social interactions among all the learners because it allows the teaching environment to be conducive (Cook, 2019). Also, there is a need for peer-to-peer support, where teachers encourage learners to assist each other by pairing them based on their various needs, and this can assist in completing tasks that could not be done individually (Sánchez et al., 2019). Organizing

peer-to-peer support strategies can be effective in content classes since it focuses on inclusion strategies. This also allows for the pairing of the students and further allows for the development of robust relationships, leading to increased opportunities for the learners to access the required support. Thus, Sheppard (n.d.) is convinced that peer support programs and a clear vision by the faculty and administration that embraces high-quality education for all learners and meets their expectations regardless of their status, condition, or background.

The author also claims that the school must create a cohesive learning community that values and embraces diversity. Furthermore, collaboration should be promoted among students and general education teachers because it contributes to developing a universal program that embraces the unique needs of all students (Stehle & Peters-Burton, 2019). The evaluation mechanism should be friendly and focus on school connectedness, safety, and academic achievements (Sheppard, n.d.). School administrators can succeed if they utilize the ongoing system for change. Most importantly, the school should develop various ways of developing a technical support system that assists learners in meeting the academic setting's social, behavioral, and instructional needs. The development of modification and adaptations mechanism for students in assisting them in the content area and enhancing their adaptation mechanisms is critical, maximizing their ability to participate in class and school activities. Teachers should focus on providing individualized instruction methods that address the specific and unique needs of the students. Furthermore, allowing students to participate in their learning enhances their learning outcomes.

**Table 1**

*List of Strategies Proposed to Help Promote Inclusivity*

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Inclusivity Content</i>
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<i>Collaborative approach among teachers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators and teachers working together</li> </ul>
<i>Students level interactions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student-directed learning</li> <li>• Integrating classroom-level strategies to support learners</li> <li>• Social interactions between educators and students</li> </ul>
<i>Social support strategies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer-to-peer support</li> <li>• Educators' continuous development training</li> </ul>

## Summary and Gaps in the Literature

With increasing rates of learners with diverse needs in the modern learning environment, teachers and administrators should devise ways of meeting these needs and enhancing successful outcomes for all students. The literature review has provided the critical milestones concerning inclusivity programs in the modern learning environment. The review is thematically arranged and explores the thoughts and researchers of the scholars who have previously researched the current subject under interrogation. Firstly, the review has explored the significance of Inclusivity and teachers' training and development essential in promoting high-quality education. The study explicates the importance of the government offering teacher education in their training and development programs and promoting the plans, policies, and regulations to ensure a high level of preparedness for the teachers.

The second theme is concerned with the role of teachers in the assessment of learners. This section concerns the student's progress and the requirements for ensuring the success and

academic achievement of students with diverse needs. The third theme pinpoints the importance of inclusive education for general education teachers. One of the authors offers statistical information concerning the increase of students with specific needs and exceptionalities in traditional school settings and notes that most teachers in this environment must prepare to handle such learners. The authors in this section agree that comprehending the best ways of teaching students with diverse needs is essential in offering quality education. Furthermore, addressing the key challenges that bedevil teachers in these environments will allow them to deliver quality education to all students regardless of the various needs of the learners.

The last section is concerned with the strategies that have been implemented in the past to promote Inclusivity in schools and allow teachers to design successful inclusion programs. One of the critical methods entails collaborative approaches, especially among teachers, because it enhances instructional improvement strategies and evaluation methods, implementation of various methods, and most importantly, the development of the teachers. Authors in this section agree that professional development in schools through collaboration leads to more significant and positive academic outcomes. Another strategy that can be coined together in student-level interventions, which perceives instruction as an individualized practice, should be designed to meet the specific needs of every student in the class. Beyond the student-level interventions, social support strategies can effectively offer instructional support for the learners. This method is designed to promote social interactions among learners with and without disabilities because it allows the teaching environment to be conducive. Various strategies are essential in promoting an effective learning environment in this case.

While the literature has explored the importance of having teacher training and professional development programs as well as; the role of teachers in the assessment of learners;

the importance of inclusive education for teachers; and the possible strategies for promoting Inclusivity, several gaps still exist that should be addressed, mainly through this research. For instance, many researchers have provided information but must offer the course of action or strategies to implement the professional or pre-service training. Through this research, various recommendations and strategies about how leaders can advocate and ensure professional and pre-service training have been suggested to make successful inclusion programs.

General education teachers will benefit from the training and support they receive in both the school-wide and classroom settings for providing adequate support to their students. Furthermore, it will strengthen their existing skills and knowledge about inclusion. Next chapter, I will explain how these strategies will be applied in both classroom and school settings.

### **Chapter Three: Application**

In the previous chapter I argued that a successful inclusion program requires appropriate training and support from administration for general education teachers. In order to promote positive learning outcomes for students' specific needs, it is essential to look for ways to support general education teachers. This includes pre-service training and ongoing training for inclusion and collaboration. Various strategies are required in order to address these issues in this respect.

#### **Context: Application in School /District-wide Settings**

##### ***Provision of Right Training for the teachers***

Among the various applications, providing the required support from the administration and offering proper training is essential for general education teachers to teach learners effectively based on their diverse needs. As I have addressed in the literature review, the Global Education Monitoring Report Team and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2020) discussed that the provision of professional development varies widely. This

support can be based on coaching, training, and offering additional resources to teachers. One critical support that should be given to general education teachers includes supporting staff, paraprofessionals, special education teachers, and special education teachers to offer extra assistance in the classroom.

Collaboration between these key persons and general educators offers them the skills necessary to adapt to the challenging environment. Dyer (2019), as discussed earlier in literature review, states that number of students with individual needs are increasing in general classrooms. These professional development trainings specific to inclusion will help the teachers to understand the individual needs of their students. From my peers, mentors, and professional learning communities, I have gained knowledge about individual education plans and strategies to help students with a variety of learning needs. Other additional resources include assistive technology that can enable teachers to provide quality services for learners with diverse needs. Another vital aspect is offering training, whereby teachers should be granted ongoing professional development that assists them in developing knowledge and skills. Some training includes addressing behavior challenges, utilizing assistive technology, and differentiating instruction. In the literature review, I have mentioned the third form of support that should be given to the teachers entails coaching by assisting them in identifying and addressing the specific challenges they face in the classroom (Kiel et al., 2020). In this case, teachers can offer feedback concerning effective classroom methodologies, mainly when teaching students with diverse needs. Furthermore, coaching and mentorship are essential in offering encouragement and emotional assistance, especially for educators who are unmotivated due to challenging classroom environments.

### ***Professional Development and Workshops***

School administrators should focus on investing in professional development by preparing workshops where guest speakers can share various skills, knowledge, and experiences regarding Inclusivity in teaching. These workshops should be conducted during the school year in the summer and should be attended by special education and general education teachers. Such communities can thrive through teachers' facilitation by the teachers themselves because they offer development opportunities themselves.

### ***Online Course***

Another critical application in the school-wide context is the provision of webinars and online courses, which should be based on flexible approaches that allow teachers to access various options, time, and resources, such as attending. Several schools require additional funds to conduct professional development trainings, as stated in the literature review by Sheppard (n.d.). As well as being cost-effective, online courses are vital for providing courses on inclusive teaching practices. The importance of webinars and online courses must be considered because they are designed to meet teachers' unique needs and interests. Online courses and webinars can specifically tailor different subjects of expertise, incredibly advanced, intermediate, and beginner levels, into individual aspects. As stated by Hall (2012), UDL allows general education to become more flexible to meet the interests and needs of all students. In theory as well as in practice, we can improve learning opportunities for all learners by embracing UDL. While online webinars and courses are essential resources for teachers, they only offer opportunities for the teachers to coordinate and form various communities from different backgrounds and locations. It becomes easy to share resources, experiences, and ideas with one another to enhance their



skills, promote their professional development, and further the development of meaningful networks.

Whereas webinars and online courses are essential for teachers, ensuring their credibility and quality is pivotal. This should be done through validation by acknowledged institutions and accredited institutions. Instructional coaches and experienced inclusion teachers work with teachers in small groups and one-on-one programs to offer helpful feedback on lesson planning and teaching strategies essential for students with diverse needs.

### ***Peer Mentoring***

Based on my literature review, I have mentioned that a collaborative approach to teaching enhances a teacher's professional growth, just as peer mentoring enhances teacher professional growth as well. Teachers view peer mentoring as an essential ongoing support because it allows experienced teachers to provide mentorship for their colleagues on inclusion (Sanger, 2020). The program is regarded as an effective way to offer guidance and support to new teachers who are overwhelmed with their new duties and sometimes have difficulty implementing inclusive practices in classrooms, and educational administrators should encourage it. Experienced teachers are mandated to offer support and guidance and ensure that the new teacher comprehends various aspects of the teaching practices. Further, there is a development of a sense of community among them.

The new teachers should comprehend the inclusive practices offered within the school, which leads to a more inclusive culture within the school. Implementing peer mentoring programs demands the creation of formal mentorship programs where new teachers are given opportunities to work with experienced teachers who comprehend various aspects concerning Inclusivity. This program assumes that many new teachers need help with inclusivity aspects or

those who would wish to develop their practices continually. As such, it creates a culture of continuous growth and learning process that is vital for all the teachers, thus, leading to improved school outcomes.

### ***Collaborative Planning***

Collaborative planning is essential in ensuring that the needs of all the learners are well-met in the classroom setting. A collaborative effort is undertaken to design and plan a lesson based on inclusiveness and accessible quality education for all learners, including those with disabilities. In this case, special education teachers and inclusion specialists are employed with the school to offer valuable insights and methodologies concerning creating an inclusive environment (Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2020). In collaborative planning sessions, teachers can discuss different mechanisms, modifications, adaptations, practices, accommodations, and teaching practices required to ensure that all the students have been effectively supported. As discussed in my literature review, this also identifies potential barriers that prevent learners and should be addressed to ensure an inclusive learning environment benefits all learners.

### ***Inclusion Teams***

Forming inclusion teams within the school is an important way of promoting inclusive practices in schools. This can assist in bringing diversity among stakeholders because people with different expertise and perspectives come together to work for a common purpose and towards meeting a common goal. As mentioned in the literature review, the teams should identify various learning setting barriers and offer recommendations, guidance, support, and strategies concerning the best inclusion practices in the school and class settings (Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2020). Inclusion teams are also responsible for monitoring the progress and program for the inclusion efforts and identifying the critical areas of improvement to make necessary

adjustments. As such, the team should be responsible for conducting regular meetings on progress issues and evaluating various outcomes, including inclusion strategies effectiveness and students' outcomes, for providing the necessary feedback that should be acted upon. The table below shows types of students with special needs in regular and special needs schools.

**Table 2**

*Types of Students with Special Needs in Regular and Special Needs Schools (Vyrastekova, 2021)*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Regular school</b>	<b>Special school</b>
Number of respondents	138	70	68
Gender			
Girls	52	34	18
Boys	86	36	50
Age in years (range)	4–20	4–20	4–20
Age (average +/- st.dev)	11,6 +/- 3,9	11,2 +/- 3,9	12,1 +/- 3,9
Type of disability			
Visual	5	1	4
Hearing	10	4	6
Physical	28	13	15
Cognitive	29	4	25
Mental health conditions	49	25	24
Chronic disease	21	13	8
Other	50	26	24
Number of handicaps			
exactly 1	105	56	49
2 or more	33	14	19

Inclusion teams are also responsible for facilities collaboration and communication between general education teachers, administrators, and support staff. This can contribute to developing a culture of inclusion in the school community where every individual's perspective is considered. For this reason, creating a supportive and welcoming environment is essential for students from diverse backgrounds (Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2020). The administrators and schools should promote the formation of teams because they effectively promote inclusive practices in schools and ensure that every learner is granted the opportunity of succeeding in school settings.

The support of the leaders and administrators contributes immensely to ensuring that teachers have the right skills, resources, and knowledge to teach learners with diverse needs.

Providing the necessary resources, coaching, mentorship, inclusion teams, and collaboration planning is a panacea for providing quality education for students with diverse needs.

### **Application in Classroom Settings**

Beyond the school-wide strategies for promoting Inclusivity, school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders can also focus on classroom settings by offering strategies and methodologies that promote an inclusive learning environment.

### ***Collaborative Approach among Teachers***

According to the findings of the literature review, collaborative approach among teachers is essential. Collaborative approaches among teachers can be applied in various ways, as follows. Team teaching weaves together two or more teachers that work together when teaching a single lesson or course unit. This approach aims to promote engagement among educators, which has been perceived as effective in enhancing learning mechanisms. Another method entails the promotion of professional learning communities, which is critical among teachers because it promotes the discussion of the teaching strategies, reviewing of data, and the sharing of new ideas to enhance the learning outcomes of all students regardless of their conditions (Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2020). The third method is co-teaching, which has also been perceived as an essential strategy that allows teachers from different departments in the same school to collaborate in evaluating, delivering, and planning instruction methodologies for students from diverse backgrounds. Most importantly, teachers are granted the opportunity to share experiences and expertise. The fourth is peer collaboration and offering feedback, which are standard methods that promote effective outcomes and enhance teaching practices. One of the critical aspects concerning this teaching mechanism is the provision of feedback and allowing the teachers to engage in professional growth and development. Teachers, in this case, can work on

critical weaknesses collaboratively. Collaboration is essential because it responds to the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds, leading to the designing of differentiated instruction in inclusive settings.

The collaborative approach among general education teachers has been highly perceived as effective in teaching learners with diverse needs, enhancing knowledge sharing, experiences, and skills, and facilitating the development of efficient teaching methodologies.

### ***Student-Level Interactions***

As observed in the literature review, many scholars advocate for student-level interactions, which can be utilized in various ways to support the inclusion program outcomes. It is essential for differentiating the instruction methodologies based on the student approaches. Discussion of the diverse needs of the students is essential in comprehending their weaknesses, allowing them to develop individualized teaching programs to assist students with exceptionalities. Interaction among teachers is the primary factor influencing the inclusivity program in schools and meeting the diverse needs of the students as stated in literature review by Jordan et.al (2009).

### ***Social Support Strategies***

The literature review reveals that social support strategies are essential to creating a supportive environment in classrooms. Some of the social support strategies entail the following. Teacher-student support, which entails building positive relationships between learners and teachers, is essential. Teachers should demonstrate emotional support based on active listening and empathy. Another way is through family involvement, where teachers engage the parents and guardians in the learning process of the students by seeking input based on learners' Individualized Education Plan (IEP), participating in parent-teacher conferences, and offering

regular updates concerning the student's performance and progress in school (Sánchez et al., 2019). Notably, offering classroom routines, whereby general education teachers can design routines that support learners with different needs, such as providing extra time, clear instructions, and visual aids to promote understanding of complex tasks.

Also, the promotion of assistive technology has been perceived by scholars as an important way of meeting the various needs of students, especially the use of communication devices, recognition software, and text-to-speech software (Sánchez et al., 2019). Implementing social support strategies is essential in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for the teachers and in promoting an academic setting that allows all learners to succeed regardless of their diverse needs.

## **Summary**

Exploring various strategies and methodologies for promoting support, inclusion, offering pre-service training, and collaboration is essential to ensuring positive learning outcomes. These strategies can be applied in school or classroom contexts. One way entails the support the administration and school leaders give. The provision of support varies immensely and can be based on coaching, training, and offering additional resources to teachers. Another way includes investing in professional development by preparing workshops where guest speakers can share various skills, knowledge, and experiences regarding inclusivity in teaching. Another critical application in the school-wide context is the provision of webinars and online courses, which should be based on flexible approaches that allow teachers to access various options, time, and resources, such as attending. Educational administrators can also use peer mentoring since it is perceived as an effective way of offering guidance and support to new

teachers who become overwhelmed with their new responsibilities and sometimes experience challenges implementing inclusive classroom practices.

Apart from school-wide programs, classrooms can also be used, especially collaborative approaches, team teaching, professional learning communities, co-teaching, peer collaboration, student-level interactions, and social support strategies. One of the ways includes using collaborative approaches; promoting professional learning communities; co-teaching that allows teachers from different departments in the same school to teach together collaboratively in evaluating, delivering, and planning; and peer collaboration and offering of feedback is essential to promoting effectiveness. Also, student-level interaction has been perceived as essential, whereby the small group instruction method is applied. The teachers can design small groups of learners to teach on individualized terms. Secondly, the teachers can discuss classroom-level meetings, where they hold meetings among themselves to discuss the progress of various students. As Mngo & Mngo (2018) stated that there is no doubt that the success of inclusion depends on general education teachers' knowledge and instructional skills, and especially on their attitudes and beliefs regarding inclusion. Moreover, social support strategies such as teacher-student support, peer-to-peer support, family involvement, offering classroom routines, and the promotion of assistive technology have been perceived by scholars as an important way of meeting the various needs of the students.

#### **Chapter Four: Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter will summarize three preceding chapters, and it will explain how the chapters relate to one another. As a summary, I will discuss how training and support for educators can help to improve inclusion programs and benefit both students and teachers. The

implications of supporting and training general education teachers in school wide settings as well as in classrooms will also be discussed.

### **My Argument**

In this paper I argued that Training and supporting general education teachers are essential to creating inclusive classrooms. Exploring a student's requirements and establishing multiple assessments require a thorough understanding of each student's particular needs. Teachers should have adequate knowledge of assessing and evaluating students from diverse backgrounds. For Example, Teachers should be able to collect information and interpret patterns by possessing essential skills and knowledge. As a result of these training, general educators are better equipped to synthesize and collect information to make informed decisions in educational settings for students with diverse needs. In general education, teachers may experience challenges when assessing students' diverse needs without additional support. It is also important that general education teachers' attitudes and beliefs are supportive of the inclusion program; only assistance and support will not make it successful.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The increase in the number of students with exceptionalities has been reported in many countries, particularly the U.S. Despite the increase in these numbers, limited efforts have been made to assist these students in receiving quality education like others, just as enshrined in Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the U.S. policy of No Child Left Behind. One of the critical challenges is inadequate preparation of the general education teachers who meet these students daily, yet some need help to offer quality education and ensure effective outcomes.



The paper was divided into key sections, including the introduction, literature review, and application. In the introduction, I presented the background information, the problem, the issue, the reasons for this study, and the research question. The paper was thematically arranged in the literature based on various themes, as follows. Firstly, the review has explored the significance of Inclusivity and teachers' training and development essential in promoting high-quality education. This section was concerned with explaining the significance of the government offering teacher education in their training and development programs and promoting the plans, policies, and regulations because it is critical in promoting the teachers' level of preparedness. The second theme has explored teachers' role in assessing learners. The student's achievement level depends on the teachers' perceptions and preparedness levels. The third theme of the literature review explores the need for inclusive education for general education teachers. Various offer empirical information concerning the increase of students with individual needs and exceptionalities in traditional school settings and note that most teachers in this environment need to prepare to handle such learners.

In the literature review I presented evidence that general educators must understand how to teach learners with exceptionalities in order to provide quality instruction. It is also important to address the problems that teachers face and identify the panaceas in the learning environment so that teachers can deliver quality education to all students no matter what their needs may be. I explored the strategies that have been implemented in the past to promote Inclusivity in schools and allow teachers to design successful inclusion programs. Some of these strategies entail collaborative approaches, especially among teachers, because it enhances instructional improvement strategies and evaluation methods, implementation of various methods, and most importantly, the development of the teachers. Various scholars have claimed that enhancing

professional development in school settings can lead to positive learning outcomes. Student-level interventions, social support strategies are effective in providing instructional support for the learners. It allows social interactions among students with and without disabilities because it makes the classroom friendly.

The application is divided into two main sections based on school-wide and classroom strategies. In the first context, strategies that has been mentioned entails the provision of support and training by the administration. Coaching, training, collaboration and additional resources can provide these supports and training to teachers. In addition, webinars and online courses should be designed to be flexible, so teachers can access them in a way that is convenient for them. In the second section on the application, I explored the various strategies and methodologies for promoting support, inclusion, offering pre-service training, and collaboration as critical in promoting positive learning outcomes in class settings. Furthermore, I have explained how social support strategies and interactions at the student level are implemented and will be beneficial for differentiating instructions.

One of the implications about this paper is that beyond the school-wide settings, classroom strategies can also provide opportunities for teachers to improve and provide a quality learning environment to the students. A collaborative approach includes team teaching, co-teaching, and peer collaboration. In addition to promoting professional learning communities, teachers are encouraged to discuss teaching strategies, examine data, and share new ideas to enhance learning outcomes for all students. Peer mentoring is considered essential since it offers guidance and support to new teachers who may not have encountered specific challenges related to inclusive teaching.

In the student-level interactions, teachers can establish small groups of learners to provide instructions to them. Teachers can hold classroom level meetings among themselves to discuss the progress of various students. Individual students can be discussed. Lastly, social support strategies such as teacher-student support, peer-to-peer support, family involvement, offering classroom routines, and the promotion of assistive technology have been perceived by scholars as an important way of meeting the various needs of the students.

### **Implications**

Accordingly, this paper has important implications for policy makers, educational researchers, and school administrators when it comes to how inclusion training can prepare general education teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms. In order to ensure positive learning outcomes, it is imperative to explore a variety of strategies and methods for encouraging support, inclusion, preservice training, and collaboration. Several of these strategies can be applied to the classroom or to the school environment. One way is through the support provided by the administration and school leaders. The types of support provided to teachers differ greatly and include coaching, training, and the provision of additional resources.

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the benefit of inclusion training for general education teachers. It is possible to improve the inclusion program by implementing various accommodations and modifications. Professional development can also be achieved through the preparation of workshops where guest speakers can share their knowledge, skills, and experiences regarding inclusive teaching. In the school-wide context, the provision of webinars and online courses is also crucial. These should be provided in a flexible way that allows teachers to access a variety of options, time, and resources. The use of peer mentoring is also perceived as an effective method for providing guidance and support to new teachers who may

be overwhelmed with their new responsibilities and may experience difficulties in implementing inclusive classroom practices.

Students with exceptionalities deserve quality education and teachers should ensure their needs are addressed according to Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In order to provide quality education to all learners, there are still some challenges. We can make inclusion programs beneficial for the specific needs students if we can overcome these challenges. Teachers in general education can benefit from these trainings and strategies while providing inclusion for their students.

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