

General Educators' Concerns About Inclusion Teaching

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Background

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that all students be educated in the least restrictive environment with same-age peers to the greatest degree possible (Klehm, 2014).
- In inclusion settings, GE teachers must address the needs of SWD while attending to the mainstream students as well.
- While SWD must be included in the GE setting, researchers documented that GE teachers are not equipped with the proper knowledge, skills, and resources as special education teachers to effectively teach SWD.

Purpose

- What concerns do general educators have when teaching in inclusion settings?

Methods

- **Resources:**
 - Various educational databases located through the Monmouth University library
- **Keywords:**
 - general education, special education, collaboration, inclusion, students with disabilities, evidence-based practices, resources, student behavior, and content knowledge

Findings: Themes

Proper Preparation:

- General educators lack skills such as knowledge about assessment, key dispositions, and curriculum adaptation (Alexander & Byrd, 2020).
- Teachers and pre-service educators express the need for more knowledge and experience to support SWD (Kim et al., 2020).
- Less than 50% of general educators use EBPs (Thompson et al., 2020).

Lack of Resources:

- Teachers are concerned about limited space, modified materials, personnel, and lack of materials to support SWD in inclusion settings (Thompson et al., 2020).
- Budget cuts and releases are barriers to inclusion; if teachers want inclusion, they need to pay for it (Woodcock & Woolfson, 2019).

Student Behavior:

- Teachers have a closed mindset toward allowing SWD to be their true selves (Mofield, 2020).
- Not enough time to handle disruptive behaviors, provide supports, and respond to other students (Woodcock & Woolfson, 2019 Al Jaffal, 2022).

Collaboration:

- Limited time only allows teachers to conduct brief informal meetings, e-mails, and text messages as means of collaboration (Thompson et al., 2020).
- Do not have the content knowledge to communicate (DaFonte & Barton-Arwood, 2017).

Discussion

- Educators lack confidence in their pre-service training and feel they need extra preparation to be successful.
- Teachers do not have the proper materials or funding to support SWD in the inclusion setting.
- Teachers view SWD as disruptive and frustrating, sometimes leading to turnover.
- Teachers do not have the time or content knowledge to effectively collaborate with others.
- The research provided differentiation among teacher opinions and implications from teachers around the world.

Limitations

- A broad research question led to many of the same findings among studies.
- The studies did not include gender-diverse participants.

Implications

- General educators require specific training to be successful in inclusion settings.
- What professional development opportunities are available for general and special education teachers?
- Are there programs that support teachers in understanding the needs of SWD in the classroom?