

Perspectives of Pre-Service and In-Service General Education Teachers of the Faculty of Education on Inclusive Education: A Phenomenological Study

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The trend of educating children with special needs is expanding in Sri Lanka with the increase placements of disability students in general education classrooms. As a result, general education teachers are expected to be able to understand the diversity of exceptional students, implement alternative pedagogical approaches that meet special needs of these students, and make appropriate accommodations for individual needs. It is the challenge that is placed on teacher education institutions to prepare teachers equipped with these competencies. As a teacher education institution, the Faculty of Education of the University of Colombo implemented the Bachelor of Education and the Postgraduate Diploma in Education programs with the intention to prepare general education teachers with required knowledge, skills and appropriate mindset to be able to teach in regular classrooms. The curriculum of these programs is designed by incorporating the contents of inclusive education to ensure quality inclusive practices. Despite these initiatives taken place with years, recent studies revealed that these teachers feel under prepared to teach diverse range of needs and abilities of students. Understanding their readiness to teach in inclusive classrooms is possible through exploring their lived experiences about teaching in inclusive settings. This paper, as a part of the main phenomenological study which is aimed at exploring the lived experiences of four pre-service and four in-service teachers about their teaching in the inclusive classrooms, presented the reviews of literatures pertaining to the perspectives of general education teachers by highlighting the themes that have been emerged, the lessons learned and the gaps that have been identified in a chronological order. At least thirty empirical studies conducted for the last ten years (from 2010) have been reviewed through a systematic search using the ERIC, Emerald, JSTOR and Taylor & Francis of e-databases subscribed by the university and CONSAL.

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