

Global Frameworks for Collaborative Practice in Inclusive Education Meta-Aggregation of International Perspectives

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Abstract:

This study examines teacher collaboration as a critical factor in the successful implementation of inclusive education for students with support plans. As inclusive education continues to gain global prominence, the effectiveness of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process increasingly depends on meaningful and sustained collaboration among educators. Employing a qualitative meta-aggregation design, this research synthesizes findings from international studies on collaborative practices across diverse educational contexts. The analysis identifies recurring challenges, including limited time for collaborative planning, communication barriers among stakeholders, and inconsistencies in shared responsibilities. Despite these constraints, the findings highlight the significant role of structured collaboration in promoting joint instructional work, improving decision-making processes, and supporting differentiated learning strategies. Drawing from these insights, the study proposes an international framework that emphasizes clear communication, shared professional values, and coordinated instructional practices to strengthen collaborative engagement. The research contributes to the growing discourse on inclusive education by offering evidence-based recommendations for enhancing teacher collaboration and improving educational outcomes for students with support plans. Implications for policy development, professional training, and future research are also discussed to support more effective and sustainable inclusive practices.

Keywords: inclusive education, teacher collaboration, Individual Education Plan (IEP), meta-aggregation

Introduction:

The transition from deficit-based resource allocation toward social and collective models of school support represents a significant global shift in special education. This paradigm emphasizes shared responsibility, equitable participation, and inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of learners within mainstream educational settings. Central to this transformation is the Individual Education Plan (IEP), or student support plan, which serves as a primary mechanism for individualizing instruction while ensuring learners' access to the general curriculum.

The growing emphasis on collaborative practice reflects the recognition that inclusive education requires coordinated efforts among educators, specialists, and stakeholders to effectively address learners' varied academic and socio-emotional needs. International scholarship underscores that collaborative structures enhance the implementation of inclusive policies and promote more responsive educational environments (Semon et al., 2021; Adeoye, 2025).

Despite its widespread adoption, the pedagogical efficacy of the IEP is often constrained by insufficient or superficial collaboration between general and special education teachers. While international policy frameworks mandate collaborative decision-making, practical implementation frequently remains fragmented, with responsibilities confined within professional boundaries. This "siloed" approach typically places the burden of plan development on special education teachers, while classroom integration and continuous monitoring remain inconsistent.

Research highlights that effective interdisciplinary collaboration requires clearly defined roles, shared professional values, and structured communication processes to ensure coherent instructional planning (Gerdes et al., 2020). Similarly, studies on teachers' perspectives reveal that institutional constraints, limited time, and varying professional expectations often hinder meaningful collaborative engagement in inclusive settings (Fodo, 2020).

Recent developments in inclusive education further advocate for a "whole education" approach that integrates collaboration into school culture, policy development, and instructional practice. Such frameworks emphasize systemic alignment among teachers, administrators, families, and external specialists to ensure sustained support for learners with diverse needs (Kenny et al., 2023). Moreover, collaborative professional development initiatives have been shown to strengthen teachers' competencies in inclusive pedagogy, fostering reflective practice and shared problem-solving within professional communities (Holmqvist & Lelinge, 2021). These findings suggest that collaboration extends beyond administrative coordination and must function as an ongoing pedagogical process embedded in everyday teaching practice.

Furthermore, effective collaboration supports differentiated and individualized instruction, which remains central to inclusive education. The capacity of teachers to design and implement differentiated learning experiences depends largely on shared expertise, coordinated planning, and the integration of specialized knowledge across professional roles. Evidence from recent systematic reviews highlights that successful differentiation in inclusive classrooms is closely linked to collaborative planning and instructional flexibility (Lindner & Schwab, 2025). These developments reinforce the need for collaborative competencies that enable educators to translate individual learning targets into meaningful classroom practices that support diverse learners.

Given these global developments, there remains a need to synthesize qualitative evidence from international contexts to better understand the competencies and structures that support effective collaboration in inclusive education. While existing studies document the importance of teamwork and shared responsibility, there is limited consensus regarding the core elements that sustain meaningful collaborative practice across diverse educational systems.

This study therefore aims to conduct a qualitative meta-aggregation of international research to identify recurring challenges, shared practices, and essential competencies that inform effective teacher collaboration within the IEP process. By examining international perspectives, the study seeks to contribute to the development of a comprehensive framework that supports sustainable and transformative collaboration in inclusive educational settings.

Literature Review:

Inclusive education has emerged as a central priority in global educational reform, emphasizing equity, access, and meaningful participation for all learners. International research highlights a growing shift toward inclusive systems that address learner diversity through structural and pedagogical transformation rather than deficit-based approaches. A systematic review by Amor et al. (2019) identifies increasing global attention to inclusive practices, particularly in collaborative teaching, differentiated instruction, and policy alignment.

Similarly, Ainscow (2020) emphasizes that promoting inclusion and equity requires systemic change, including shared responsibility among educators and stakeholders. These perspectives are reinforced by Kefallinou et al. (2020), who

argue that inclusive education's effectiveness depends on coherent implementation strategies, institutional commitment, and collaborative engagement across educational contexts.

The theoretical foundations of inclusive education further highlight the importance of collective and relational approaches to teaching and learning. From a systems theory and constructionist perspective, Rapp and Corral-Granados (2024) conceptualize inclusive education as a dynamic process shaped by interactions among institutional structures, professional practices, and social contexts. This perspective underscores the role of collaboration as a mechanism for constructing inclusive environments and addressing diverse learner needs. Similarly, Anjum and Aziz (2024) emphasize the importance of collaborative practices in fostering equity across cultural contexts, highlighting the value of diverse epistemologies and shared knowledge construction in educational settings.

Collaboration among educators has been identified as a central component of effective inclusive education. Mapping collaboration across international contexts, Semon et al. (2021) demonstrate that inclusive systems rely on structured partnerships among teachers, specialists, and families to support learners with diverse needs. However, the nature and extent of collaboration vary across educational systems, reflecting differences in institutional support, professional roles, and policy frameworks. These findings align with Adeoye (2025), who argues that collaborative approaches enable schools to respond more effectively to learner diversity by integrating expertise and promoting shared instructional responsibility.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is particularly significant in the development and implementation of individualized support plans. An analytic framework proposed by Gerdes et al. (2020) identifies key dimensions of effective collaboration, including communication, shared goals, and coordinated decision-making processes. Teachers' perspectives further reveal that collaboration often encounters challenges related to professional boundaries, limited time, and inconsistent institutional support (Fodo, 2020). These barriers highlight the need for structured systems that facilitate meaningful interaction among professionals and support sustained collaborative engagement.

Professional development also plays a critical role in strengthening collaborative competencies among teachers. Research by Holmqvist and Lelinge (2021) demonstrates that collaborative professional learning communities promote reflective practice, shared expertise, and improved inclusive pedagogy. Similarly, interprofessional education models emphasize the importance of structured training experiences that foster teamwork, communication skills, and mutual understanding among professionals (van Diggele et al., 2020). These findings suggest that collaboration is not an inherent skill but a competency that requires systematic development and institutional support.

Recent scholarship further emphasizes the importance of whole-system approaches to inclusive education. Kenny et al. (2023) propose an integrated model that aligns policy, planning, and instructional practice to support inclusive provision. This approach recognizes that effective inclusion depends on coordination across multiple levels of the education system, including school leadership, classroom practice, and community engagement. In broader global contexts, inclusive practices have also been linked to the development of intercultural competence and global citizenship, particularly in diverse educational environments such as higher education institutions in the Philippines (Butac et al., 2025).

The implementation of inclusive practices is also closely connected to differentiation and individualized instruction. A systematic review by Lindner and Schwab (2025) highlights that effective differentiation requires coordinated planning and shared expertise among educators. The integration of 21st-century skills frameworks and Education 4.0 principles further supports the need for flexible, collaborative instructional approaches that respond to diverse learner needs (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022; Care et al., 2018). These developments reinforce the importance of collaboration in designing adaptive learning environments that promote both academic and social development.

Thus, international policy and practice emphasize the importance of coordinated support systems that ensure continuity of services for learners with diverse needs. The World Health Organization (2018) highlights the value of integrated, people-centered approaches that promote coordination among professionals and stakeholders. Similarly, research on inclusive education implementation in diverse contexts demonstrates that historical and institutional factors shape collaborative practices and influence educational outcomes (Walton & Engelbrecht, 2024). Taken together, the literature underscores that effective inclusive education depends on sustained collaboration, systemic

alignment, and shared professional responsibility, thereby providing the conceptual foundation for examining collaborative practices within the Individual Education Plan process across international contexts.

Methodology:

This study employed a qualitative meta-aggregation research design aimed at systematically synthesizing qualitative findings into thematic statements that can inform educational policy and practice. Qualitative meta-aggregation enables the integration of diverse forms of qualitative evidence, including focus group discussions, observational data, and interview findings drawn from international literature. This approach was selected because it allows for the comprehensive examination of shared patterns and meanings across studies while preserving the original context of participants' perspectives, thereby generating evidence-based insights into collaborative practices in inclusive education.

A systematic search strategy was conducted using international academic databases, including ERIC and Taylor & Francis, to identify relevant studies published between 2014 and 2024. The inclusion criteria required that selected studies employ qualitative or mixed-methods designs with a substantial qualitative component, focus specifically on teacher collaboration in the development or implementation of support plans or Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and be conducted within primary or post-primary educational settings.

These criteria ensured the relevance and quality of the studies included in the synthesis while maintaining consistency across diverse international contexts. Data extraction was conducted using a standardized template designed to capture essential study characteristics, including research context, methodology, and key findings related to collaborative practices.

The synthesis followed a rigorous three-stage process. First, verbatim findings were extracted from the primary studies to preserve the authenticity of the original data. Second, these findings were systematically categorized according to conceptual similarities, such as communication practices, professional values, and ethical considerations. Finally, related categories were aggregated into broader synthesized themes, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns and core competencies that characterize effective collaboration in inclusive educational settings.

Findings and Discussion:

The Collaborative Planning-Implementation Gap

Across international contexts, collaboration in inclusive education is most evident during the initial planning phase of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process, yet it often diminishes during implementation and review. While teachers, parents, and support personnel typically convene to share information and establish goals, the responsibility for drafting and operationalizing these goals frequently rests with special education teachers alone.

This pattern reveals a persistent gap between collaborative planning and classroom practice, where inclusive strategies are discussed collectively but enacted individually. Such fragmentation limits the effectiveness of inclusive education, as sustained collaboration is essential for translating individualized targets into meaningful instructional practices. The literature emphasizes that inclusive education requires continuous engagement among stakeholders rather than isolated moments of coordination (Kefallinou et al., 2020).

The dominance of special education teachers in developing IEP goals further reflects the historical separation between general and special education systems. Although inclusive education promotes shared responsibility, institutional practices often maintain professional boundaries that restrict meaningful collaboration. Florian (2019) argues that the coexistence of special and inclusive education requires integrated professional practices that bridge disciplinary divisions.

However, when collaboration is limited to administrative procedures, opportunities for joint instructional planning and reflective dialogue are reduced, reinforcing the perception that inclusive education is the responsibility of specialists rather than a collective endeavor. The collaborative planning-implementation gap also reflects broader challenges in translating policy mandates into classroom practice. Inclusive education policies often emphasize

participation and shared decision-making, yet schools frequently lack the structural conditions necessary to sustain collaborative work.

Research highlights that the value of inclusive education lies not only in policy adoption but also in effective implementation mechanisms that support continuous professional engagement and institutional alignment (Kefallinou et al., 2020). Similarly, studies examining national contexts demonstrate how historical and institutional factors shape the extent to which collaborative practices are embedded within school systems (Walton & Engelbrecht, 2024).

From a systems perspective, effective collaboration requires coordinated processes that ensure continuity between planning and implementation. The World Health Organization (2018) emphasizes that integrated and people-centered approaches depend on sustained coordination among stakeholders and ongoing monitoring of services. Although this framework originates in healthcare, its principles highlight the importance of continuity and shared responsibility in inclusive education. When collaboration is treated as a single event rather than a continuous process, the coherence of instructional support for learners with diverse needs is compromised.

Teacher competencies and professional development also influence the extent to which collaboration extends beyond planning. The development of collaborative and digital competencies has been identified as essential for addressing contemporary educational challenges and supporting inclusive practices (Caena & Redecker, 2019). Professional development initiatives that promote mentoring and reflective practice have been shown to strengthen collaborative engagement and enhance the implementation of inclusive strategies in classroom settings (Meda et al., 2023). These findings suggest that sustained collaboration requires not only institutional support but also the continuous development of teachers' professional competencies.

Furthermore, the integration of 21st-century skills and personalized learning approaches highlights the importance of ongoing collaboration in instructional design. Educational systems aligned with contemporary skill frameworks emphasize coordinated assessment practices, flexible instruction, and interdisciplinary teamwork to support diverse learners (Care et al., 2018). Emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and digital learning environments, also offer opportunities to enhance collaborative planning and individualized instruction, although their effectiveness depends on teachers' capacity to integrate these tools into inclusive practices (Ayeni et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2022).

Curriculum integration and work-integrated learning approaches further illustrate the importance of continuous collaboration in bridging planning and implementation. Integrated curricula encourage interdisciplinary teaching and shared instructional responsibility, enabling educators to connect individualized learning goals with broader classroom activities (Drake & Reid, 2018). Similarly, collaborative engagement in professional contexts requires ethical coordination, shared reflection, and ongoing communication among stakeholders to ensure effective practice (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). These approaches highlight that meaningful collaboration must extend beyond formal planning sessions to encompass continuous pedagogical interaction.

The literature consistently indicates that collaboration in inclusive education is frequently conceptualized as an administrative requirement rather than an ongoing pedagogical process. The persistent gap between planning and implementation reflects structural, professional, and institutional challenges that limit sustained collaborative engagement. Addressing this gap requires systemic support, continuous professional development, and coordinated instructional practices that align planning with classroom implementation. By reconceptualizing collaboration as a dynamic and continuous process, educational systems can enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education and promote more equitable learning experiences for all students.

Barriers to "Joint Instructional Work"

Barriers to meaningful "joint instructional work" remain a persistent challenge in the implementation of inclusive education across international contexts. Teachers consistently identify three major constraints that limit sustained collaboration: insufficient time for co-planning, professional distance between general and special educators, and the prevalence of the "safe talk" phenomenon in professional interactions.

These barriers hinder the development of shared instructional responsibility and prevent the effective integration of individualized learning goals into general classroom practice. The literature suggests that while collaboration is widely

promoted in policy discourse, institutional realities often limit the conditions necessary for sustained professional engagement and coordinated instructional work (Walton & Engelbrecht, 2024).

One of the most frequently cited barriers is the lack of dedicated time for collaborative planning. Teachers often report heavy workloads and rigid schedules that leave limited opportunities for co-planning and reflective dialogue. Without structured time for collaboration, individual learning targets outlined in support plans are rarely integrated into classroom instruction in meaningful ways.

The absence of coordinated planning processes disrupts continuity between instructional design and implementation, thereby weakening inclusive practices. From a systems perspective, coordinated services and sustained engagement among professionals are essential for effective support provision (World Health Organization, 2018). This highlights the importance of institutional structures that prioritize collaboration as a central component of inclusive education.

Professional distance between educators also contributes to limited collaboration. Historically, the separation of roles between general and special education teachers has reinforced disciplinary boundaries that hinder shared responsibility. Florian (2019) argues that inclusive education requires the coexistence and integration of specialized and general pedagogical practices, yet institutional arrangements often perpetuate divisions that restrict collaborative engagement. These professional boundaries limit opportunities for joint decision-making and reduce the potential for shared expertise in addressing diverse learner needs.

Communication challenges further constrain collaborative practice, particularly through the phenomenon of “safe talk.” Teachers frequently avoid critical discussions or constructive feedback in order to maintain collegial relationships, resulting in superficial communication rather than meaningful professional dialogue. This tendency prevents the development of trust, shared understanding, and deep-level collaboration necessary for transforming instructional practices. Ethical and reflective communication is essential in professional collaboration, as it enables educators to engage in critical reflection and continuous improvement of teaching practices (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018).

Teacher competencies and professional preparation also influence the effectiveness of collaborative work. The development of collaborative and digital competencies has been identified as crucial for addressing contemporary educational challenges and supporting inclusive practices (Caena & Redecker, 2019). Professional development initiatives that incorporate mentoring and reflective learning opportunities have been shown to strengthen teachers’ capacity for collaboration and improve inclusive instructional practices (Meda et al., 2023). These findings suggest that collaboration requires deliberate training and institutional support rather than relying solely on individual initiative.

Technological developments in education present both opportunities and challenges for collaborative instructional work. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and digital learning platforms can support personalized learning and enhance instructional coordination among educators (Ayeti et al., 2024). However, the effective use of such technologies depends on teachers’ digital competencies and their ability to integrate technological tools into inclusive practices (Ng et al., 2023). Without adequate preparation and institutional support, technological innovations may further widen gaps in collaborative practice rather than strengthen them.

Curriculum design and pedagogical approaches also influence the extent of joint instructional work. Integrated and inquiry-based learning models encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and shared instructional responsibility, enabling educators to connect individualized learning goals with broader curricular objectives (Drake & Reid, 2018; Bai & Song, 2018). Similarly, project-based and learner-centered approaches require continuous communication and coordinated planning among teachers to support diverse learning needs (Martinez, 2022). These approaches highlight the importance of collaborative structures that extend beyond administrative coordination to encompass everyday teaching practices.

In specific national contexts, the challenges of collaboration are further shaped by cultural and institutional factors. For example, studies examining inclusive education implementation in the Philippines reveal that limited training, institutional constraints, and resource challenges often restrict teachers’ ability to engage in sustained collaborative

practices (Dela Fuente, 2021). Similarly, global efforts to align educational outcomes with sustainable development goals emphasize the importance of systemic collaboration in achieving inclusive and equitable learning environments (Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019).

Hence, the literature demonstrates that barriers to joint instructional work stem from structural, professional, and communicative challenges that limit sustained collaboration in inclusive education. Addressing these barriers requires institutional support for collaborative planning time, professional development that strengthens communication and teamwork, and pedagogical frameworks that promote shared instructional responsibility. By overcoming the constraints of time, professional distance, and superficial communication, schools can foster deeper collaboration that supports more effective and inclusive educational practices.

The Role of Knowledgeable Others

Successful inclusion in diverse educational settings is often facilitated by the presence of “knowledgeable others,” including therapists, specialists, and experienced peers who provide professional guidance, feedback, and instructional support. These individuals contribute specialized expertise that enhances teachers’ capacity to address diverse learner needs and implement differentiated instruction effectively.

Their involvement promotes shared problem-solving and encourages reflective practice, enabling classroom teachers to adopt new strategies and refine their pedagogical approaches. Inter-professional collaboration therefore plays a crucial role in strengthening inclusive education by expanding teachers’ professional knowledge and supporting continuous instructional improvement (Dela Fuente, 2021).

The role of knowledgeable others is particularly significant in fostering differentiated instruction within inclusive classrooms. Through collaboration with specialists such as speech therapists, counselors, and instructional coaches, teachers gain fresh perspectives on learner diversity and develop more responsive teaching strategies. These collaborative interactions support the development of essential 21st-century competencies, including communication, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). Such competencies enable educators to adapt instruction to diverse learning profiles while promoting inclusive classroom environments.

Inter-professional collaboration also supports the development of teachers’ professional competencies and pedagogical skills. Collaborative learning opportunities, such as mentoring and service-learning initiatives, have been shown to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom practice by providing opportunities for guided reflection and shared experience (Resch & Schrittmesser, 2023). Similarly, project-based learning approaches encourage collaboration among educators and specialists, enabling teachers to develop practical skills and implement inclusive instructional strategies more effectively (Martinez, 2022).

Technological advancements have further expanded the role of knowledgeable others in inclusive education. Digital tools, artificial intelligence, and online learning platforms provide additional sources of expertise that support teachers in designing personalized learning experiences and enhancing instructional differentiation. The development of teachers’ digital competencies has become increasingly important in the post-pandemic educational landscape, as educators are required to integrate technological resources into inclusive teaching practices (Ng et al., 2023). Policy frameworks for artificial intelligence in education also emphasize the importance of institutional guidance and collaborative decision-making in adopting emerging technologies (Chan, 2023; Jin et al., 2025).

Collaborative engagement with knowledgeable others also contributes to broader educational goals, including sustainability and global competence. Systemic approaches to education for sustainable development highlight the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and shared expertise in achieving inclusive and equitable learning outcomes (Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019). Similarly, research on sustainability competencies underscores the need for collaborative professional practices that support holistic learning and social responsibility in educational settings (Brundiers et al., 2021; Ferguson & Roofe, 2020).

The contribution of knowledgeable others is also evident in interdisciplinary instructional models, such as integrated STEM education and collaborative communities of practice. These approaches promote shared expertise among educators, enabling them to design inclusive learning experiences that connect multiple disciplines and address diverse

learner needs (Thibaut et al., 2018; Kelley et al., 2020). Additionally, online communication and professional networks provide platforms for educators to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and engage in collaborative learning across institutional boundaries (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2019).

The literature demonstrates that knowledgeable others play a vital role in strengthening inclusive education by enhancing teacher competence, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, and supporting continuous professional development. Their involvement provides diverse perspectives that enable teachers to differentiate instruction more effectively and respond to complex learner needs. By fostering inter-professional collaboration and leveraging technological and institutional resources, educational systems can support sustainable inclusive practices and promote more effective learning outcomes for all students.

Implications for Teacher Education

Teacher education programs play a critical role in advancing inclusive education by equipping future educators with the competencies required for effective collaboration and differentiated instruction. To support inclusive practices, teacher preparation must move beyond theoretical knowledge of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and emphasize the development of practical collaborative competencies.

This shift involves preparing teachers to engage in shared decision-making, interdisciplinary teamwork, and responsive instructional design. Evidence from inclusive education contexts highlights that many teachers feel insufficiently prepared to address diverse learner needs, underscoring the importance of practice-oriented training that integrates theory with real-world application (Dela Fuente, 2021).

A key implication for teacher education is the development of interdependent professional roles. Pre-service and in-service teachers must understand how general and special education responsibilities overlap within inclusive classrooms. Rather than functioning within isolated domains, educators should be trained to collaborate in designing, implementing, and evaluating instructional strategies that support diverse learners. Research on collaborative problem-solving emphasizes the importance of shared responsibility, collective expertise, and coordinated action in addressing complex educational challenges (Graesser et al., 2018). Such competencies enable teachers to function as members of professional learning communities that support inclusive educational environments.

Teacher education must also prioritize instructional contextualization, which involves integrating individualized learning goals into general classroom activities. Educators need the skills to embed specific targets, such as communication or social development goals, within broader curricular experiences in subjects like science, arts, or mathematics. Innovative pedagogical approaches emphasize the role of teachers as designers of learning environments who create flexible and inclusive instructional contexts that respond to diverse learner needs (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018). This perspective highlights the importance of equipping teachers with the capacity to adapt curriculum content and instructional strategies to support all learners.

Bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application is another essential focus of teacher preparation programs. Experiential learning approaches, such as service-learning and field-based training, provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage directly with inclusive practices and reflect on their professional development. These experiences promote critical reflection, collaborative engagement, and practical skill development, thereby strengthening teachers' readiness to implement inclusive instruction (Resch & Schritteser, 2023). Similarly, collaborative communities of practice have been shown to enhance teacher self-efficacy and support the development of inclusive pedagogical strategies (Kelley et al., 2020).

The development of 21st-century skills is also central to preparing teachers for inclusive education. Teacher education programs must cultivate competencies such as creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, which are essential for addressing the complexities of diverse classrooms (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). In addition, integrated instructional models, including interdisciplinary and STEM-based approaches, encourage collaborative teaching practices and support differentiated learning experiences (Thibaut et al., 2018). These competencies enable teachers to design inclusive learning environments that promote active participation and meaningful engagement for all students.

Teacher education must likewise address broader educational goals related to sustainability, well-being, and social inclusion. Frameworks for sustainability education emphasize the importance of collaborative competencies, ethical responsibility, and systemic thinking in preparing educators to address global challenges (Brundiers et al., 2021; Ferguson & Roofe, 2020). Furthermore, inclusive teacher preparation should incorporate social and emotional learning and student-centered approaches that engage learners' perspectives and promote holistic development (Cefai et al., 2018; Ainscow & Messiou, 2018). These dimensions contribute to creating supportive and equitable educational environments.

Technological competence and digital literacy have become essential components of teacher education in contemporary learning contexts. Teachers must be prepared to utilize digital tools, online communication platforms, and information technologies to support inclusive instruction and collaborative learning (Fraillon et al., 2019; Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2019).

In addition, global policy frameworks emphasize the integration of well-being and health promotion within educational systems as part of holistic teacher preparation (World Health Organization, 2024). By developing collaborative competencies, instructional adaptability, and technological expertise, teacher education programs can better prepare educators to implement inclusive practices and respond effectively to diverse learner needs.

Conclusion:

Collaboration continues to be widely regarded as the central “orthodoxy” of inclusive education, yet its transformative potential remains only partially realized in many educational contexts. While international policies consistently promote collaborative practice as a foundation for supporting learners with diverse needs, the findings of this study suggest that collaboration is often limited to procedural or administrative functions rather than sustained pedagogical engagement.

The persistence of structural barriers, including limited time for co-planning, professional boundaries, and superficial communication practices, constrains the development of meaningful joint instructional work. As a result, inclusive education initiatives frequently fall short of achieving their intended outcomes, highlighting the need for more coherent and practice-oriented frameworks that strengthen collaborative processes within schools.

This study underscores the importance of adopting a comprehensive framework that emphasizes open communication, shared professional values, and collective responsibility for instructional decision-making. Moving beyond “safe talk” toward authentic professional dialogue enables educators to critically reflect on their practices, challenge assumptions, and develop innovative strategies that respond to diverse learner needs. Effective collaboration requires not only structural support, such as dedicated planning time and institutional leadership, but also the cultivation of trust, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to inclusive principles. When teachers engage in continuous collaborative processes, individualized learning goals can be meaningfully integrated into classroom instruction, thereby enhancing the quality of educational experiences for all students.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the need for systemic approaches that position collaboration as a continuous pedagogical practice rather than a discrete administrative task. Schools must foster professional learning environments that encourage interdisciplinary engagement, shared expertise, and reflective practice. Strengthening teacher preparation and professional development programs to emphasize collaborative competencies is essential for building sustainable inclusive practices. Such efforts can support educators in developing the skills required to design differentiated instruction, address complex learning needs, and create supportive classroom environments that promote participation and equity.

Inclusive education can only achieve its transformative promise when collaboration becomes embedded within the culture and everyday practices of educational institutions. Future research should continue to examine the relationship between the quality of collaborative planning and student learning outcomes, particularly in diverse international contexts. Investigating how collaborative practices influence academic achievement, social participation, and overall learner well-being will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives. By advancing

evidence-based approaches to collaboration, educational systems can move closer to realizing inclusive education as a dynamic and equitable process that benefits all learners.

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