

Inclusion

Faculty Perceptions Regarding the Inclusion of Students with Intellectual Disability in University Courses --Manuscript Draft--

Manuscript Number:	INCLUSION-M-21-00015R2
Article Type:	Research Article
Keywords:	Inclusion, Inclusive Postsecondary Education, Intellectual Disability
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Manuscript Region of Origin:	UNITED STATES
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Abstract

Researchers established that inclusive post-secondary education programs are beneficial for students with and without disabilities. However, research regarding faculty perspectives of these programs and faculty perceived benefits and challenges is limited. This qualitative study interviewed faculty members (n=8) at a university in the Southeastern United States who included university students with an intellectual disability in their general courses. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of university faculty regarding the benefits and challenges of including students with intellectual disability in their courses, as well as gaining their recommendations for faculty members who may include students with ID in future courses. Key findings included higher levels of inclusivity, increased awareness of disability, increased engagement, and a focus on improving teaching skills. Challenges were identified in the areas of awareness, worrying about making mistakes, and practical concerns. Recommendations for future instructors included being prepared with strong pedagogy, structured classroom management plans, and be provided the opportunity to meet students with ID prior to future inclusive courses.

Faculty Perceptions Regarding the Inclusion of Students with Intellectual Disability in University Courses

Individuals with intellectual disability (ID) lack options for post-secondary education in comparison to their non-disabled peers (Grigal et al., 2013; Grigal et al., 2019). The idea of inclusive post-secondary education (IPSE) for individuals with ID is relatively new and has varying structures nationwide. Recent legislation and the passing of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) in 2008 provided more opportunities, support, and encouragement for individuals with ID to attend IPSE programs (Grigal et al., 2013). Therefore, we can now define IPSE programs for individuals with ID as both academic and social participation in a two-to-four-year program, resulting in an earned certificate, at an accredited college or university (Grigal et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2018).

Nationwide, there are over 300 college programs for students with ID (Think College, 2021) compared to roughly 4,300 post-secondary institutions awarding undergraduate degrees to typical college students (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). This comparison emphasizes that there is still much progress to be made to provide inclusive post-secondary options for students with ID. Nevertheless, recent trends in program development demonstrate that inclusive post-secondary opportunities are improving (Gilson et al., 2020). As these opportunities continue to expand, the need for research regarding the effects of IPSE programs on university students, faculty, and classroom climates, consequently increases (Gibbons et al., 2015).

IPSE programming provides a college experience typical of most experiences, including specialized coursework based on the individual and his or her interests, interactions with peers and faculty, and active participation in clubs and extracurricular activities (Becht et al., 2020). However, IPSE programming generally does not culminate in a college degree (Becht et al.,

2020). Current research supports the benefits of an inclusive college education on all learners, with or without disabilities (Gilson et al., 2020). Reported benefits, both for students with and without disabilities, involve positive classroom climates, willingness to interact with others, and an increased acceptance of diverse learners (Jones & Goble, 2012; May, 2012). While research has begun compiling the many benefits reported from peers, the impact of inclusive classrooms on faculty is less known.

Faculty in Post-Secondary Education

Faculty and staff who are employed by IPSE programs are well-versed in disabilities and have experience teaching individuals with ID. University faculty outside of the IPSE program may not have many experiences, if any, with individuals with ID. This lack of experience could negatively impact both the student's and the faculty member's disposition throughout the course. Since faculty attitudes directly impact the classroom climate and determine overall student success (Jones et al., 2016), a feeling of hesitancy or negativity regarding including a student with ID in their course could result in a challenging semester for all parties. Previous research suggests that inexperienced university faculty might embrace a more inclusive environment if disability awareness and acceptance trainings were adopted in post-secondary education (Gilson et al., 2020).

Jones and colleagues (2016) discovered that many faculty members at universities and colleges are willing to teach students with ID and believe in the benefits that arise from inclusive learning environments but require more support and training to be able to teach students with ID properly. However, this is just one study. Burgin et al. (2017) suggested that future research should focus on preparing faculty in advance to work with students with ID and diverse learning needs in their inclusive college classrooms. As faculty members are integral stakeholders in the

academic and social environment of post-secondary institutions, providing the proper support for faculty could increase the likelihood of creating an inclusive environment for all learners (Gilson et al., 2020). Many other studies report that faculty feel unsure about how to include students with ID in their courses (Gibbons et al., 2015; Love et al., 2019). Faculty are less comfortable interacting with students with ID because they are less knowledgeable about disabilities and less familiar with students with ID (Gibbons et al., 2015; Griffin et al., 2012).

Universities could improve outcomes for all students by investing in diversity training for faculty members. Part of the training process could include training faculty to facilitate universal design for learning (UDL) throughout their courses and materials (Love et al., 2019). Previous research found that faculty are less comfortable interacting with students with ID because they are less knowledgeable about disabilities and less familiar with students with ID (Gibbons et al., 2015; Griffin et al., 2012).

Purpose of the Study

Although students with ID have been actively participating in inclusive post-secondary environments for over a decade (Think College, 2020), there is still a paucity in the literature on the lived experiences of both the students participating in the programs and the faculty members who work directly with these students. The researchers of this study explored the impact of inclusive college courses on university faculty members' perceptions and practices. Additionally, the researchers questioned what supports could be implemented to improve faculty experiences and better prepare faculty to include individuals with ID in their courses. The research questions for this study were:

1. What are the perceived benefits to faculty when students with ID are included in their university classes?

2. What challenges do faculty face when including students with ID in general university classes?
3. What suggestions do faculty have for improving the experience of future faculty working with students with ID?

Method

Participant Eligibility and Selection

The study was approved by the University's IRB prior to the participant recruitment process. Inclusion criteria required faculty participants to have taught a university course which included at least one student with ID on their roster. Those recruited held the rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor, and were employed full-time by the University during the semester which they taught the course which included a student with ID. Only those who taught a course including a student with ID within a period of two years prior to the recruitment were included with the expectation that those participants would accurately remember the inclusive experience. Any faculty members who were direct employees of the IPSE were excluded from the study.

Fourteen individuals met the inclusion criteria for this study. Two of those 14 individuals no longer worked at the institution; however, they were still invited to participate since they met the inclusion criteria. One of them took a position at a small, religious institution in the Midwest. The second left the field of higher education to explore other opportunities. The fourteen individuals who met inclusion criteria were invited via email to participate in the study. The invitation email included an explanation of the study, questions that would be asked, and a copy of the approval form from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Nine of those who were invited replied within the two-week recruitment time-frame stating that they would participate in the

study. Three of those who were invited replied several weeks after data collection already started. Two individuals who were invited to participate in the study never responded to the recruitment email. Unfortunately, one individual who agreed to participate encountered a conflict and was unable to join the researchers during data collection. Ultimately, eight participants were interviewed for this study. All participants provided verbal consent prior to participating in the interviews. Participant demographics are detailed in Table 1.

Setting

The University itself was a regional, public university which served over 37,000 students and employed approximately 1,500 instructional faculty members. The students with ID who registered in the participants' courses were enrolled in an IPSE program housed in the university's Department of Special Education. The IPSE had a total of 40 students at the time of data collection. Students were working toward earning state approved certificates in Supported Employment, Supported Community Access, and Supported Community Living. Students enrolled in the IPSE were expected to take between one and three electives outside of the IPSE program, depending on their Plan of Study (POS). Students could choose to take the outside electives either for credit or as an audit.

Students worked with their advisors to choose electives that were aligned with their interests and career goals. Once a potential elective was identified, the instructor was contacted by an IPSE staff member to develop a learning plan to ensure that the objectives of the course and the needs of the student would be met. During the time that the learning plans were developed, IPSE staff provided a brief overview of ID to the faculty member. This training included strategies and accommodations that would benefit the student with ID during the

course. IPSE staff checked in with faculty throughout the semester and were available to support anytime it was requested by either faculty or students.

Due to COVID-19 and the restrictions pertaining to social distancing, all researchers and participants were in different physical locations during all stages of the study. Participants, facilitator, and notetakers conducted all interviews via Zoom. Zoom is a video communication platform that uses audio and video to facilitate live, virtual meetings. Participants all reported familiarity with Zoom from prior experience utilizing it within the context of the University. Participants were asked to log on to the meeting five minutes prior to their scheduled interview to troubleshoot any technical computer, web camera, or microphone difficulties. The facilitator, notetaker were the only people in the private Zoom room at the time of each interview. Zoom settings were configured which allowed only the facilitator the ability to grant entry into the room.

Research Design

Researchers used a qualitative interpretive design to guide their research processes. Interpretive research is a paradigm based on the expectation that social reality is not singular or objective, but that it is shaped by human experiences and social contexts (Lincoln et al., 1985). This method was chosen since a great deal of focus was placed on participants' perspectives, their meanings, and their subjective views. Questions explored during interpretive research aim to understand specific issues or topics that often relate to the exclusion of individuals or other inequities in our society. Interviews were utilized to capture a deep and rich understanding of the participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2018; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

Procedure

Data Collection. Researchers conducted interviews during the data collection process to gain a rich understanding of the social phenomena being studied (Van Manen, 2017).

Researchers utilized specific interviewing techniques, such as probes to increase the depth of responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The facilitator recorded the interviews using Zoom's recording function. Predetermined, open-ended interview questions allowed participants to provide varied and elaborate responses on the effects of including students with ID in their university courses. The predetermined questions were developed based upon previous literature and a pilot study conducted at the same University. Prior to administering these questions, they were reviewed by several faculty members in the University's Department of Special Education. Additional probing questions were utilized when deemed appropriate by the facilitator. The notetaker took notes on participant responses, body language, facial expression, and tone. At the end of the interview, the facilitator and the notetaker thanked the participants for participating in the study. Recordings were collected using Zoom's recording feature. The Zoom transcription feature was utilized to create text versions of the recorded interviews. This transcription feature was reliable. The facilitator reviewed the transcripts while listening to recordings to make minor corrections to the transcripts.

Data Analysis. The researchers used Saldaña's (2016) guidelines, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, to analyze the data. In Vivo coding was used throughout data analysis. Descriptive coding was also utilized. The researchers shared data on a secure, password protected drive and met regularly via Zoom to discuss their analysis of the data. A process for code checking suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was utilized in this study. A coding matrix was developed based on expected themes determined by previous literature. The coders reviewed data independently from each other, marking the data with corresponding codes or

themes. Then the coders reviewed their work together to identify a level or percentage of reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The coders continued to use this process until they reached 90% reliability in code identification within the body of the data.

Respondent verification was conducted to ensure researchers were grasping the intended meaning of participants' responses and in doing so provided increased levels of credibility. Each participant was sent a transcript of their interview to review for accuracy. According to Maxwell, respondent verification is the most effective way to ensure researchers are understanding the intentions of what their participants are attempting to communicate (Maxwell, 2013).

Findings

Faculty expressed a variety of benefits and challenges that they encountered while teaching an inclusive course. Additionally, these faculty members provided several recommendations they expect would be beneficial for colleagues who will teach future inclusive courses. Identified benefits included inclusivity, increased awareness of disability, increased engagement, and a focus on improving teaching skills. Faculty stated that they struggled with a lack of awareness, worrying about making mistakes, and practical concerns such as grading and the amount of feedback that should be provided. Faculty recommended that future instructors be prepared with strong pedagogy, structured classroom management plans, and be provided the opportunity to meet students with ID prior to future inclusive courses.

Benefits Gained from Including Students with ID in University Courses

Inclusivity

Inclusivity was the most common theme which emerged from the data. It was directly mentioned by seven out of eight participants. Participants interestingly connected the inclusion of individuals with ID to the inclusion of individuals from other underserved populations.

Participants also focused their discussion on the idea that inclusivity is an active process in which all must be engaged.

Marcus, a Professor of English, was one of the first faculty members at this University to welcome a student with ID into a course. During that early experience, a young man with ID and a passion for film and theater enrolled in Marcus' highly interactive course that focused on the interpretation of drama. A few years later, Marcus had a different student with ID take the same course. He explained that both students interacted with the class in very different ways, but were both well accepted by their classmates. Marcus shared that he has always had very strong feelings about inclusion of all kinds and that he had been dismayed at the lack cultural and racial diversity on campus, and that he is happy to see that diversity on campus appears to be expanding rapidly. Marcus shared that including students with ID in college is something that we can and should make room for as an educational institution and that this is the next step to creating a more inclusive society on a larger scale. After a moment of reflection, he stated, "Here online, and at [the grocery store], and I think that it has a really critical thing, and maybe the most impactful and long-range beneficial element of what you guys do."

Marcus expressed that he believed his experiences with inclusive classes changed perspectives regarding people who are different for both himself and his students. Marcus shared, "Maybe this is the greatest thing, to make room for another kind of discourse, to make room for another kind of learning. I think that there is an ongoing education among the rank and file professorial in our country. I think we are all reconsidering this and processing new information about ID students all the time."

Amelia, a Professor of Art, who hosted three students with ID in her courses over the past few years was an outlier in this study in the sense that she was the only participant who reported

never having interacted with individuals with ID prior to accepting students into her course. Amelia shared her belief that everyone has the responsibility to create a more inclusive society. She led by example in her classroom and soon saw her students without ID interacting with the student with ID. Other students began taking on the roles of friend or mentor without prompting.

Delaney was the only participant who held the rank of instructor at the time of teaching a course in which a student with ID was included. Delaney taught a highly interactive course which focused on providing university students the opportunity to develop their leadership and collaboration skills. This course was often taken by students who faculty identified as having the protentional to become strong leaders on campus and in society. Delaney shared, “I think this was something that allowed the students to grow in. The environment was a lot more inclusive than typical in the class.”

Naomi was a lab researcher turned university professor. She had previous experience with individuals with disability in research settings but not in the class room setting. Naomi discussed how although the two students with ID in her courses were challenging academically, they were very naturally included socially. According to Naomi, “They all sat together and they were always just very nice. Both of them talked a in class and I actually didn't even know who it was for a while.”

Increased Awareness

Faculty who participated in this study shared that the inclusion of students with ID in their courses provided increased levels of awareness regarding people with disability for both themselves and the students who were in class alongside those with ID.

Wesley, an experienced professor, had included students with ID in his honors level science and social studies courses for more than five years. Wesley also volunteered to serve as a

faculty mentor to students in the IPSE program. Wesley explained to researchers that the teaching experience, “opened me up a bit to just kind of understanding and accepting and kind of realizing that disability isn't kind of an inability it's just, it's just, you know it's something different.” When remembering the first student with ID in one of his classes, Wesley shared, “He was fantastic and the class, I mean he was there regularly, he is a good student, you know, and he asked questions in class too, and they were good questions, so I appreciated having him there. It was a good experience all around.”

Amelia shared a similar sentiment while discussing her first experiences interacting with individuals who have ID. She told researchers, “These people have potential and, this is their potential and I would like to showcase their potential more to the other students.” Amelia has also expressed a great deal of interest in learning more about individuals with ID.

Sydney, whose training in the field of special education had a different viewpoint on awareness than other participants. She was impressed with the student’s awareness of his own needs, challenges, strengths, and self-determination skills. “His awareness of his own cognition was quite amazing to me where he would be an advocate.”

Increased Engagement

Increased levels of engagement among students with and without disability emerged numerous times during data analysis. Participants shared, rather happily, that the addition of students with ID in class appeared to encourage their classmates without disability to participate, collaborate, and ask questions, all while feeling less inhibited than they normally would in a class. Faculty also expressed the inclusion of students with ID did not dilute or lower the level of interaction occurring in their courses.

Savannah taught in the K-12 school system for many years prior to joining the university. She now prepares future teachers to enter the classroom. Savannah recently welcomed two students with ID in a very interactive and hands-on class where undergraduates were learning about engaging elementary students in the fine arts. Savannah shared that the inclusion of students with ID added to her class. She explained that she observed her students interacting, getting to know about each other's lives, and making connections with their classmates who had ID during cooperative learning activities. Savannah explained that these inclusive experiences had the additional benefit for the pre-service teachers in her class of preparing them to teach in inclusive classrooms. Savannah wrapped up her interview by sharing that her pre-service teaching students “understand how that impacts people's lives and how important that is, so I think everyone benefits.”

Drew taught a variety of courses related to history and human rights to both undergraduate and graduate students. Drew has included students with ID in general history courses in the past. During the semester prior to this study, a student with ID took a class with Drew that covered highly sensitive topics and often included emotional discussions. Drew stated the most recent student, “was fantastic in the class. I mean he asked questions in class too, and they were good questions, so I appreciated having him there. He was engaged and insightful with the other students.” In addition, it was noted that students without disability in these inclusive classes were observed initiating not only friendships with their classmates, but also took on informal mentoring roles to support classmates with ID.

Sydney included a young man with ID in a class that was taught virtually as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students logged in from physical locations around the country to weekly synchronous classes. Sydney shared that the student with ID was eager to participate and

ask questions. Sydney expressed that the openness of the student with ID encouraged another student in the course to participate more frequently. She also mentioned that the student with ID was comfortable asking questions that provided necessary reinforcement for his classmates. Sydney stated, “It was actually very useful to the academic environment because I was able to provide for the clarification, not just for him, but for the students who might have not understood as well, but we're not willing.”

Improved Teaching

The participants in this study were diverse and have an array of teaching experience. Yet, many participants commonly shared how including students with ID in their courses made them take some time to step back, reflect upon their instruction, and in many cases make some adjustments that they expected would benefit all of their students. Participants shared a renewed sense of focus on utilizing strong pedagogy and classroom management skills.

Delaney, who taught an undergraduate leadership course explained that inclusivity was actually a topic built into the course. Learning alongside a classmate with ID made the teaching of this concept much more meaningful to the students. Delaney also explained that she provided prompts and simplified instructions for students with ID. However, she soon discovered that these strategies were also beneficial for other students in class.

Savannah shared that using a non-traditional class structure allowed for higher levels of engagement. Upon reflection, she realized that a comfortable, interactive classroom environment greatly benefited not only the students with ID, but her pre-service teachers as well.

Naomi, an experienced researcher and teacher shared how the experience affected her methods teaching and evaluation. Naomi explained that it was important to her to learn whether

or not all students were learning in her class. She plans to collect and utilize that information to guide future instruction.

Impressed with Students and Program

Although this was not an identified benefit, a final positive theme which emerged from the data was one of awe and even a little surprise. Participants shared how impressed they were not only by each of their students with ID, but also by the IPSE which supported them during their experience and by the post-secondary institution itself by taking such huge strides toward providing a truly inclusive educational experience for all.

Marcus became a strong supporter of the students with ID and the IPSE program. Marcus explained to researchers that his viewpoint regarding individuals with ID expanded based upon his classroom experiences. At the end of Marcus' interview, he shared, "A cognitive impairment really in many, many ways is sort of an alternative way of looking at and talking about the world."

Sydney had more professional experience and knowledge of disability than any other participant in the study. Sydney recently had a young man with ID join a course that she was teaching about early childhood education since his career goal is to work with young children in some capacity. The mode of instruction for this course was synchronous virtual instruction as a result of COVID-19. Sydney shared that she was amazed by the level of metacognition and self-advocacy displayed by the student. She also mentioned that she was impressed by the support provided by the IPSE in which the student was enrolled.

Wesley, who typically teaches some of the most academically advanced students in the University stated, "You really could see that there was this incredible contribution like we weren't doing him a favor by having him in the class, he was there as part of us, and he was

really contributing.” The student mentioned above actually took several courses with Wesley over the years. At the time of the study, Wesley shared that he hoped to attend the student’s upcoming commencement ceremony.

Challenges Experienced When Including Students with ID in University Courses

Uncertain of Expectations

Although faculty who accepted students with ID at this University do receive support from IPSE staff, several participants still expressed concerns regarding their preparedness to teach such cognitively diverse students.

Delaney taught classes on leadership skills to undergraduate students. She was also highly involved in promoting campus life activities. Delaney had less teaching experience than the other participants in this study. However, she had previous volunteer experience with individuals who had ID. Delaney shared concerns about fulfilling expectations and ensuring that students were getting the most out of their experiences. Concerns regarding the expectations for grading and feedback were also noted.

Naomi taught a course related to human development. She had previous experience with individuals with ID in research settings, but only recently had her first experience working with individuals with ID in a practitioner setting. Two students with ID took a course with Naomi about two years apart. The first student chose to take the course for a grade, while the second chose to audit the course. Naomi explained that it was very important that her classes were meaningful to students with ID. However, she was not confident in how much or what type of feedback would be most appropriate and beneficial for students with ID.

Worries

A few participants had worries stemming from their engagement in this new experience that, until recently, was not expected of university faculty. Worries about making mistakes during instruction, worries about a student with ID feeling left out, worries about saying something that a student with ID may have found offensive.

Amelia, as mentioned earlier, had no previous experience with individuals who had ID. She showed higher levels of worry and concern related to her own performance than any other participant. Amelia shared during her interview that she doesn't ever want to make a student with ID feel like they are less than one of their classmates without disability. "I don't know if I'm always doing it correctly." She also shared that she feels unprepared to meet the needs of individuals with ID and worries about making mistakes.

Although Drew shared that he was a strong supporter of the IPSE program and its students, he did share one concern. He worried that the addition of students with ID in certain classes may have taken away seats or spaces in those classes that were needed by degree-seeking students.

Faculty Suggestions for Improving the Experience

Faculty experiences including students with ID in their courses were overwhelmingly positive. However, there is always room for improvement. Several recommendations were made to improve the inclusive teaching experience for faculty members who welcome students with ID into their classrooms during future semesters. Those suggestions included providing strong pedagogical instruction, implementing structured behavior management plans, and taking the time to get to know the students.

Naomi requested to receive input from the students with ID at the end of each semester on how well they believed they learned during the course. She would use that information to

improve instruction for future students with ID. She was also concerned about grading properly and providing an appropriate amount of meaningful feedback on assignments.

Savannah, who made a point of using person-first language throughout her interview, recommended that faculty develop a classroom management plan that establishes rules and boundaries. She explained that boundaries are important since some students with ID tend to share too much. Savannah also discussed the importance of using strong pedagogy when planning and delivering instruction to ensure students with ID grasp the material to the best of their ability.

Discussion

This study utilized qualitative methods to explore the perceptions of university faculty regarding the inclusion of students with ID in their courses. The findings from the interviews demonstrated common themes across participants. The data supported the benefits of inclusion in the university classroom, regarding both faculty and student growth, as well as building larger inclusive communities.

Building Inclusive Communities

The findings indicated that adding new depths of diversity in university classrooms provided faculty and students with not only increased awareness of individuals with ID, but also meaningful engagement with those individuals. Neurodiversity is yet another type of diversity that has previously been overlooked on college campuses (Jones et al., 2016; Kearney et al., 2021). By increasing the inclusive environment in college classrooms, faculty and students gain increased levels of comfort interacting with individuals with ID. These findings support and reinforce previous research related to building inclusive communities on college and university campuses. Researchers have identified positive outcomes for all stakeholders at colleges and

universities, including faculty (O’Conner et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2016; Hall et al., 2021). The faculty members interviewed in this study mirrored sentiments noted in previous research: increased levels of interaction led to increased levels of appreciation regarding the commitment and persistence displayed by students with ID. (O’Conner et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2016; Hall et al., 2021). Student input, although perhaps not necessarily desired at the beginning of the semester, was valued and appreciated as the semester went on. Faculty uniformly expressed the positive impact students had on their pedagogy skills, content discussions, and overall classroom climate.

Additionally, it was noted that an understanding of diversity occurred from these real-life interactions that is difficult to develop from simply reading textbooks or listening to lectures. Several participants from various disciplines including Science and Education saw the long-term benefits that these inclusive interactions potentially have for all involved as faculty and students with and without disabilities grow and expand their roles within communities side by side.

As IPSE programs continue to expand across the country, more faculty members will continue to be approached to include this new kind of diversity in their classroom. Historically, faculty members have been hesitant to welcome students with diverse learning needs into their classroom (Sniatecki et al., 2015), but the findings of these interviews demonstrate that increased interactions with students with ID lead to increased positive perceptions of inclusion of all types of diversity. As emphasized in these interviews, all stakeholders in the educational process can benefit from an inclusive college campus (Jones et al., 2016, Hall et al., 2021). Faculty members experience numerous benefits from involvement in an inclusive classroom. Some of the identified benefits outlined in this study that mirror findings in other literature are the enhancement of their pedagogical skills and personal growth.

Faculty expressed that one of the advantages of this experience was alteration of their teaching methods to meet the needs of all of the students in the classroom. This finding supports recent research which expressed that faculty members learned new teaching techniques that were beneficial for students both with and without disabilities (Hall et al., 2021). Faculty identified as being more student-focused rather than content-focused in the inclusive classrooms. Originally, faculty may have shifted their teaching style to accommodate the student with ID, but they affirmed the shift was beneficial for all the students in the classroom, reinvigorating their teaching styles.

Faculty also expressed an increase in personal growth. Faculty interviewed commented on their increase in knowledge of university-wide diversity needs. Multiple interviews expressed concern regarding the limited diversity on campus. Faculty discussed expanding their own perceptions around who should have access to education and who should be able to pursue betterment of self. The researchers contend, as expressed by Marcus in his interview, that there is room for everyone in this world.

Limitations

A potential limitation is based upon relationships. The familiarity of the researcher and/or notetakers with most of the faculty involved in this study may contribute to the participants' willingness to answer questions in-depth. An individual's willingness to elaborate on questions may be limited if the participant is unfamiliar with the facilitators and notetakers.

Another potential limitation is the sample size utilized in this study. A relatively low percentage of faculty at the university have included students with ID in courses, limiting the participant pool and therefore possibly not reflecting upon the experiences that would have be found across the larger institutional context.

Implications

Research

The results of this study demonstrated perceptions of faculty at one university. Future researchers should consider involving faculty from across universities that offer inclusive coursework because the characteristics of these faculty could be unique to each college. Additionally, these faculty agreed to include students with ID in their courses. Future researchers could consider measuring the perceptions of faculty that have either denied or have yet to participate in inclusive courses. These perceptions would be an alternative insight on how to properly prepare faculty that are not as receptive to inclusive coursework. In gaining this insight, the researchers could reveal further shortcomings of traditional non-inclusive practices at the post-secondary level and assist in normalizing inclusive courses.

Practice

The experience shared and lessons learned by faculty who included students with ID in their courses in the past are valuable for faculty who will be including students from this population in future courses. As it is anticipated that the number of IPSE programs will continue to increase, more faculty will be provided with these types of inclusive experiences. Faculty now have the knowledge to help them learn and grow from the experiences of their peers.

This study also exposed the need for more in-depth faculty training regarding disability and the needs of students with disability. It is recommended that universities develop structured training materials and/or programs for faculty members. Multiple faculty members interviewed expressed their desire to learn more about students' unique learning needs prior to their enrollment in their class. Faculty members requested knowing more about university-level and department-level expectations for both themselves and the students. IPSE programs should

consider creating a handbook of expectations coupled with a primer of ID for faculty members interested in including students with ID in their general courses (Morina et al., 2015).

Jones and colleagues (2016) emphasized the importance that faculty play in the classroom culture. Faculty attitudes create a warm and welcoming place of learning, or a cold unwelcoming gauntlet to education (Jones et al. 2016). Providing faculty with professional development opportunities coupled with systematic introduction of more diverse student populations can result in positive and productive educational experiences for all learners.

Policy

University administrators across the country are finding themselves reviewing applications to develop or expand programs for individuals with ID on their campuses. This study provides feedback from university faculty from various departments regarding their unprecedented inclusive experiences. Faculty are expected to do more than ever before to meet promotion and tenure requirements (Blankenship-Knox et al., 2017). Given this, it is understandable that faculty lacking experience with students with ID may be hesitant to include diverse learners into the classroom. However, these interviews resoundingly support the same findings from previous research: inclusive classrooms enhance learning for all students. Participants claimed there was no downside to classroom inclusivity. Promoting diversity of all kinds across the college campus increases collegiality among faculty members. These lived experiences should be taken into consideration during the program acceptance and development process.

Conclusion

Individuals with ID have historically been excluded from inclusive post-secondary education until recent years. Legislation and a nationwide push toward providing inclusive

educational settings continue to provide expanded options for students with ID in university settings. With this expansion comes the responsibility to explore the perceptions and needs of stakeholders within those universities as they relate to students with ID. University faculty who include students with ID in courses reported the experiences were beneficial for themselves and their students. However, faculty expressed the need for training and support, particularly in the areas of grading and providing feedback to students with ID.

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Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Participant Name (pseudonyms utilized for privacy)	Gender	Rank	College	Previous Experience w/ Intellectual Disability
<i>Currently Teaching at University</i>				
Amelia	F	Instructor	Honor's College	None
Drew	M	Associate Professor	Arts & Letters	Mentoring
Marcus	M	Associate Professor	Honor's College	Family Connection, Previous Students
Naomi	F	Associate Professor	College of Science	Professional - Research Related
Savannah	F	Professor	College of Education	Professional - Teaching Related
Sydney	F	Associate Professor	College of Education	Professional - Research & Teaching
Wesley	M	Professor	Honor's College	Mentoring, Previous Students
<i>Previously Taught at University</i>				
Delaney	F	Instructor	Campus Life	Family, Volunteer

Table 2
Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1.	What courses do you currently teach at the university? a. How long have you been teaching in the post-secondary setting?
2.	Can you describe the environment of your courses? a. Are they student-led? b. How do the students interact with each other? c. How do the students interact with the professor?
3.	What previous experience (if any) do you have interacting with individuals who have ID or other disabilities?
4.	What stands out the most to you about having a student with ID in your class?
5.	Have there been any benefits of including a student with ID in your course?
6.	Have there been any challenges of including a student with ID in your course?
7.	How did you adjust your teaching style to meet the needs of the student with ID?
8.	How would you improve the experience of including a student with ID in the future?
9.	What advice do you have for faculty teaching students with ID for the first time?
10.	Would you include students with ID in your future courses?
11.	Is there anything else that you wish to share with the researchers?