

Rethinking Teaching Strategies: Considerations for Promoting Equity, Diversity, And Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) significantly enhance educational opportunities for all learners and prepare socially and economically inclusive societies. Classrooms are increasingly diverse as difference is an essential part of human life, in the past, current, and future. The ideas of teaching for diversity, equity, and inclusion complement each other and enhance educational opportunities for all pupils when simultaneously engaged. This study examines primary school teachers' views on their continuous professional development (CPD) needs to ensure all pupils are supported for quality education. Studies implemented mainly focus on the perspectives and beliefs of mainstream or special education teachers about inclusive education. Yet, teachers' voices about their own CPD needs to improve their inclusive practice remained overlooked. This study, therefore, adopts a qualitative approach where 76 respondents were purposely sampled from five national schools in Malaysia. Semi-structured interviews of focus groups and individuals were implemented; with 10 classroom observations executed before the individual interviews. Data were analysed thematically using qualitative analysis software. The study shows that teachers view CPD as a strategy to drive change and improve teachers' practice as professionals and effective CPD activities focus on addressing the belief and knowledge of teachers in improving their teaching strategies to tackle all pupils. This article provides a useful guide for school leaders in planning, implementing, and culture the CPD activities. Infusing EDI in CPD is essential for promoting an inclusive learning environment and is conducive to ensuring that all pupils could achieve their optimum potential with teachers' enhanced teaching strategies.

Keywords: Equity; Diversity; Inclusion; CPD; Teaching Strategies

1. Introduction

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are fundamental values in inclusive education. Within the concept of inclusive education, teachers have to recognise the diversity of pupils, ensure the inclusion of varied pupils, and promote equity for all (OECD, 2003). There is a great deal of time and energy on issues of “what” pupils should be learning and then probing the extent to which pupils are learning these things. Moreover, there has been an increased focus over time on the “how” of teaching, with attention to questioning the efficacy of traditional or typical teaching methods and exploring new teaching techniques to support pupils more effectively. However, the aspect of classroom teaching that seems to be consistently underappreciated is the nature of “whom” the teaching is done.

Because of colonialism, Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual country (Salleh, 2019). The national education system, therefore, focuses on developing pupils holistically with a strong sense of national identity to succeed in the 21st century (MOE, 2013).

In 2013, Malaysia Education Blueprint is developed as a systematic and comprehensive plan to achieve the system transformation for the betterment and raise the standard to be at par with international standards.

Declaration of dedication to the values of equity, diversity and inclusion has been highlighted in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (MOE, 2013). The Blueprint focuses on access to education, improving standards (quality), bridging achievement gaps (equity), strengthening unity among pupils, and optimising system efficiency (MOE, 2013). It outlines the vision and aspirations for each pupil and the education system that can meet the needs of the country in the future. This is in line with the 4th Sustainable Development Goal that aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (United Nations, 2015). However, inclusive education is defined as “mainstream schools that integrate one to five students with special needs into mainstream classes” (MOE, 2013c, p. 4-17), which is a narrow definition (Booth and Ainscow, 2002).

Malaysia also aspires to achieve an economically advanced inclusive community in the 21st century (EPU, 2015; Salleh, 2022). To achieve this inspiration, teachers play a crucial role as agents of change. They have the power to influence and shape the learning experiences of their pupils, as well as the overall education system. This is highlighted in the Blueprint and emphasis is given to the development of high-quality teachers via school-based continuous professional development. The MOE targets “every teacher equipped with basic knowledge of special education” (MOE, 2013, p. 4-17) is impressive but uncertain in terms of the policy and its implementation (Salleh, 2022). Scholars such as Florian (2012) emphasises that it is important to prepare teacher in an increasingly diverse classroom. Shuelka (2018) assert that having teachers who are trained in inclusive pedagogy and view it as their role to teach all learners in a diverse classroom is one of the key dimensions for establishing inclusive education.

1.1. Problem Statement

Most studies suggest professional development that departs from a distinct and exclusive approach to a more complex and ongoing approach that allows for reflection, discussion, collaboration, and practice (Salleh, 2022). The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2013 also suggests that teachers benefit from and have a more positive impact on teaching practice with school-embedded continuous professional development (CPD) (OECD, 2014; Salleh, 2022). However, studies on CPD for inclusive education in Malaysia is limited and still in its early stages. Researchers, Jantan (2007); Jelas and Mohd Ali (2014); Bailey et al. (2015) argue the need for CPD to bridge the gap between theory and practice in inclusive education. Jamil et al. (2007) analysed the issues and challenges of teacher professional development, yet do not discuss the recent national education agenda and inclusive education. Awang Hashim et al. (2019) assert that CPD programmes are essential to equip educators at higher institutions with knowledge and skills to handle issues related to diversity, achieve equity and increase participation of all learners.

1.2. Research Objective

This study aims to explore teachers' needs for professional development to understand the need to strengthen teacher support and successfully promote inclusive education in primary schools. Its primary purpose is to explore teachers' views on school-based professional development requirements in order to improve inclusive practice. This paper focuses on what in-service professional development is needed to enhance the inclusive practice of teachers.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are principles and practices aimed at creating a more fair, representative, and welcoming environment in various settings, such as workplaces, educational institutions, and communities. These principles are receiving considerable attention in higher (Fuentes et al., 2020) and lower education. Human beings are unique and diverse in terms of many aspects such as social economy biographical, biometrics, and abilities. Difference is an ordinary aspect of human development, thus, appreciating, celebrating and valuing the diverse individual is essential. Embracing diversity involves recognising and valuing these differences, and understanding that they contribute to the richness of a community or organisation. This includes recognising that different individuals or groups may require different levels of assistance to overcome systemic barriers or historical disadvantages. Such equity involves ensuring fairness and justice by providing everyone with the resources, opportunities, and support they need to thrive. Research also shows that the inclusion of some does not hold progress but others, instead everyone would benefit from an inclusive environment and condition of learning. However, there is variability in the practice of inclusion throughout the world (Rosmalily & Woollard, 2019); knowing what constitutes good practice is vital. It is imperative to extend what is ordinarily available as opposed to doing something ‘additional to’ or ‘different from’ for some and avoid the repetition of exclusion. The Index for Inclusion developed by Booth & Ainscow (2011) is a guideline for any school to check its inclusive practice.

2.2. Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a concept closely related to children with special needs (or formerly known as disabled children) and special education (Salleh & Woollard, 2019; Salleh, 2022). The importance of historical context (Armstrong et al., 2011; Clough & Corbett, 2000; Doveston, 2005; Gibson, 2015) to theoretical and empirical transformation is emphasised in literature reviews, although it is not a linear process (See Figure 1).

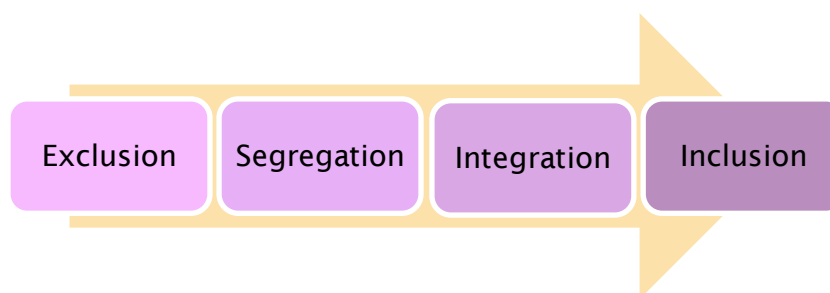


Figure 1. The development of inclusive education

Source: (Rosmalily & Woollard, 2019; Salleh & Woollard, 2019; Salleh, 2022)

The continuous debate about the concept has led to the evolution of the concept (Salleh, 2022). Consequently, inclusion means all pupils must be supported and facilitated to prosper, rather than emphasis on special educational needs (SEN) and focus on deficits (Farrell, 2000; Salleh, 2022). To further understand the concept and terminologies, Rosmalily (2018); Salleh (2022) illustrate Figure 2 below.

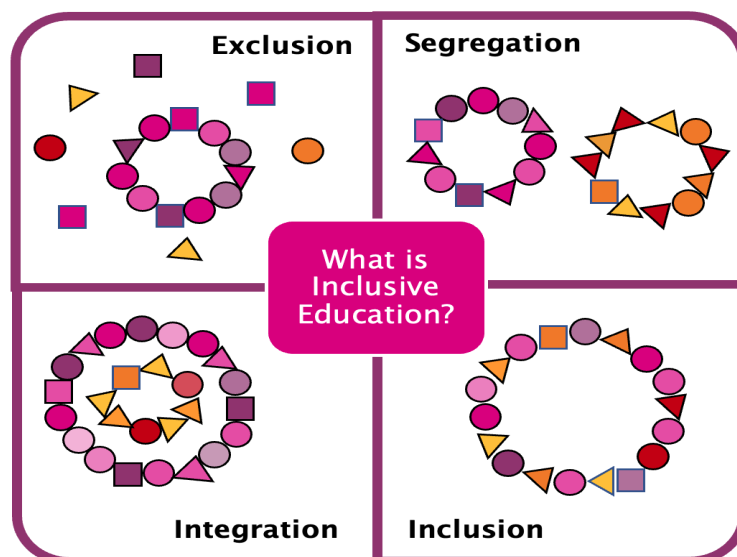


Figure 2. What is inclusive education?
Source: (Rosmalily, 2018; Salleh, 2022)

The colour of pink tone represents typical people, and the yellow represents people with SEN. Different shapes and shades show diverse people and that everyone is unique. Exclusion, as shown in the diagram, is a denial of access to the mainstream. Messiou (2006) points out that all pupils, not only pupils with SEN may also be at risk or vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation. Segregation emphasises SEN, focuses on deficits, and is supported by the medical disability model (Clough & Corbett, 2000; Winter & O'Raw, 2010). Integration is the placement of pupils with SEN in existing mainstream education/schools, as long as they qualify (Farrell et al., 2004), and is based on the assimilation model (Winter & O'Raw, 2010). However, inclusion means all pupils must be supported and facilitated to thrive (Farrell, 2000). It's not just about physical location but full pupil participation (Jorgensen & Lambert, 2012) to experience all aspects of school life and get a quality education to reach their optimum potential. Thus, inclusion involves educational equity and equality (Allan, 2000), for all pupils regardless of their differences (Rosmalily & Woollard, 2019; Salleh & Woollard, 2019). From this wider perspective, the education system transformation and emphasis on inclusive practice (Mel Ainscow, 2014; Farrell, 2000) are essential for inclusive education (Salleh, 2022).

2.3. Teacher CPD

Professional and quality teachers are very important for any educational reform (UNESCO, 2015). Teachers are considered 'agents of change' (Day et al., 2007), therefore must be prepared with multiple roles to respond to increased diversity in the classroom (Allan, 2015) beyond their initial training.

Teacher's CPD includes all-natural learning experiences and conscious, planned activities intended to directly or indirectly benefit individuals, groups, or schools and to contribute, through them, to the quality of education in the classroom (Day, 1999). Guskey (2000) argues that these processes and activities are designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators so that they can improve pupil learning. Thus, the result of teachers participating in CPD activities is change; changes in classroom practices, attitudes and beliefs that support pupils' learning (Abakah, 2023).

Globally, governments harness teacher CPD to enhance teacher quality, improve pupil learning, and improve educational outcomes (Abakah, 2023). This is because improved teacher quality correlates strongly with pupil learning and achievements and schools' quality (Borghouts et al, 2021, Melesse & Gullie, 2019). Therefore, increasing the support and effectiveness of CPD is fundamental to developing quality teachers.

Since the world enters the 21st century due to its ever-expanding, global, and interactive nature, providing quality education and pupil achievement is a complex issue. There are many key challenges in the 21st century that have a profound impact on the education system. For example, technological advancement, globalisation, information overload, mental health and well-being, environmental challenges, inequality and access, demographic changes, and lifelong learning. The rapid changes and increased complexity of today's world present new challenges and put new demands on the education system. Addressing these challenges requires collaboration among policymakers, educators, parents, and communities to ensure that education systems evolve to meet the needs of the 21st century and equip pupils with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in a rapidly changing world.

This puts pressure on the relationship between professionalism and teacher autonomy in turn to the question of existing teaching ability, pedagogy suitability and teacher knowledge repository (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007). Therefore, teachers as professionals must change (Evans, 2008). Teachers are responsible for their self-efficacy and self-directed learning through constant reflective activities (Muijs et al., 2014). By empowering themselves, teachers could highly empower their pupils (Rosmalily & Woollard, 2019). They must become "active agents of their own professional development" (Schleicher, 2012, p. 73). Moreover, the requirement for effective participation in today's technology- and knowledge-based economy and society implies the growing importance of voluntary learning and development (Collin et al., 2012).

3. Research Methods

This research takes an ethnographic approach to studying a phenomenon and uses an interpretive qualitative research methodology with multiple methods. The empirical results drawn from this Malaysia context are analysed and the discussion draws a connection between the finding and the international academic and professional literature on inclusive education.

3.1. Research Structure

There are semi-structured interviews of individuals and focus group engagement with teachers. Interviews are used as they are flexible and can effectively obtain detailed answers to research questions (Creswell, 2014). Individual interviews and focus group interviews are combined to serve the dual purpose of investigating phenomena of interest and supplementing or confirming data from the group and individual perspectives (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008). Individual interviews of 60 minutes; the questions were informed by classroom observation of the same participant. The focus group interviews of 90 minutes each consist of five to seven participants per group. To avoid the language barriers, interviews are conducted in Malay language, the national language and recorded with the consent of participants. Ethical approval from both the UK and Malaysia authorities was obtained prior to the fieldwork.

3.2. Sample

Respondents are sampled using the purposive sampling strategy (Cohen et al., 2011). Data was collected from five national schools in Kinta District, Perak: three schools with Special Education Integration Program (SEIP) and two non-SEIP schools. Respondents involved in this study include head teachers, senior assistants, mainstream and special education teachers (only in schools with SEIP). Those involved in individual interviews would not participate in focus group interviews. There were two groups of respondents of focus group interviews for School 1, School 4, and School 5. Table 1. shows the distribution of participants.

Table 1. Distribution of participants

School		Number of Respondents		Total of Respondents
SEIP	Non-SEIP	Individual Interview	Focus Group Interview	
School 1		11	7	24
			6	
School 2		0	7	7
School 3		2	5	7
	School 4	6	6	19
			7	
	School 5	6	6	19
			7	
Total 5 schools		Total 25 interviews	Total 8 focus group interviews	76

3.3. Data Analysis

Data were analysed thematically through an inductive approach using NVivo 11 software for computational qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) through the lens of interpretivist and constructivist approaches (Saldaña, 2015). The coding process involves the segregation and grouping process for evaluating codes, categories and themes (Bazeley, 2013). The coding approach uses the teacher professional competence model Cognitive Activation and Teacher Professional Competence in the Mathematics Classroom (COACTIV) (Baumert & Kunter, 2013). This model combines the theory of professionalism and the competence literature. According to this model, through professional development, educators should develop four dimensions of competency: beliefs, values, and goals. motivational orientation; professional knowledge; and self-regulation. Data analysis was conducted in Malay language.

4. Results and Discussion

Interview excerpts are presented without altering the meaning and purpose conveyed by the respondents. Respondents' views on the need for effective continuous professional development to improve teachers' inclusive practices were influenced by their understanding of inclusive education practices in Malaysia. A pseudonym was used and the '*' symbol represents the special education teacher. Individual interviews are marked with "II" and focus group interviews are marked with "Fg". Figure 3 illustrates the themes related to the context of this paper.



Figure 3. Considerations for promoting EDI

4.1. Consideration 1: Develop CPD activities that infuse EDI

Respondents express the need for subject-based CPD which they think helpful to them rather than the general CPD activities. They mentioned that school-based CPD only focus on core subjects and administrative matters. Ziqri, specialising in elective subjects, had a different opinion:

Though, irrelevant, something relates... Teaching technique is beneficial regardless of respective field. I could try in my classrooms, see whether it works – practise if it's effective. I agree with the headteacher for setting the rules (mandatory to attend LADAP). (II, S1, Ziqri)

Ziqri also implied the idea of reflective practice. Here, he mentioned about trying and practising the teaching methods learned in school-based CPD sessions (with reference to Latihan Dalam Perkhidmatan, LADAP) although about other subjects.

A typical view was of the need for theory and practice in school-based CPD:

Fara: Courses on inclusive education.

Norm: Theory and practice.

Fara: Yes, experience the real thing. Not just theory.

Norm: We wouldn't be in doubt.

Reja: Practicum with the special education teachers' support. (FGb, S1)

Participants signified that having supported practice allowed them to experience reality and rehearse knowledge. They implied connecting issues from theory and the input from school-based CPD activities to their classroom practice. It is suggested that mainstream teachers teach more inclusive classrooms comprise of pupils of typical and with SEN.

Great CPD, which consistently features the characteristics of effective CPD, leads to great pedagogy (Stoll *et al.*, 2012). Lessing and De Witt (2007) argue that CPD activities such as workshops on supporting pupils with learning difficulties are worth teachers' time and sacrifices and valuable. Interestingly, they (p. 53) conclude that the principles of CPD for teacher practice are: 'I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.' As Barber and Mourshed (2007) suggest, concrete [school-based] CPD and classroom-based is significant, building practical skills (Bryant *et al.*, 2001; Meeus *et al.*, 2008)

4.2. Consideration 2: Uphold belief, inclusive values and foster positive attitude

Some participants believed that teachers need to be positive and more open-minded to enhance their inclusive practice. A few acknowledged that their prior acceptance of pupils with SEN had reservations, because of the challenges that teachers faced:

Sofia: Teachers should be open-minded. Special education pupils in mainstream classrooms, yes, we've accepted them, but we must..., because previously the way...; but, there're many limitations.... So, we're like... (FGa, S2)

Understanding inclusive education as the inclusion of pupils with SEN into mainstream classroom, all participants agreed that teachers must acquire positive thinking. Another point was made:

We need LADAP to change teachers' attitude. We've been in the 'A' system for too long. Exam-oriented. With less 'A', our father would say, 'you wouldn't become a person growing up'. Instilled from our parents. (II, S1, Murni, SAPA)

Murni pointed to the need for teachers' change to the attitudes and values about achievement that were inculcated by their parents. She explained that parents believe that academic achievement is vital to be successful in life, therefore want their children to focus on getting A grades.

Three extracts demonstrated participants' views of the requirement to change teachers' beliefs towards pupils with SEN, and to change their values. According to some, the embedded beliefs and values about learning disabilities and the emphasis on academic achievement had significantly affected them. With difficulties, limited resources and no support, they felt helpless and overburdened. Pupils with SEN were perceived as having bad behaviour and not contributing to academic results. This put pressure on teachers to achieve good results. Therefore, school-based CPD to change teachers' beliefs, values and attitudes was perceived to be a requirement to enhance their inclusive practice. As Rufqa summarised and emphasised:

Teachers' attitude is very crucial. First, attitude – positive thinking, and understand what they're doing. Because teachers, even without knowledge, but with good attitudes, would provide the effort to learn. We must realise why they want to become teachers, what they want to do, or just become the 25th-date teachers, waiting for payday. How can we change their attitude towards professionalism? The roles as teachers to all pupils. That's the most important thing. As I said, they can, willing to (study), for their own sake; non-graduate to graduate teachers! (II, S5, Rufqa, Headteacher)

Rufqa believed that teachers' attitudes portrayed the outcomes of their work as professionals. She commented on their values, mindset and attitudes, and questioned their motivational orientation to take responsibility and engage in professional development, whether to improve their teaching practice or just secure better pay through their advanced certificates. Positive attitude is seen the substantial element for learning to enhance teacher inclusive practice.

4.3. Consideration 3:

Tuah asserted a need to determine self-regulatory activity in determining his personal standards and wider contextual standard, monitoring his own behaviour and reflecting on his self-efficacy to meet pupils' needs:

We've to always revitalise, refresh knowledge, because as time passes, we become obsolete, forgetful and slower. So, with enlightenment, although it's not our specialisation, we should accept others' views, information and knowledge they share. Perhaps, we could revive, gain new knowledge, apply them in our teaching practice. (II, S1, Tuah, SASE)

Clearly, attributes from school-based CPD are necessary to enhance teachers' inclusive practice.

4.4. Consideration 4: Collaboration and building professional network

The need for collaboration was commonly viewed as requirement of school-based CPD to develop teachers' inclusive practice, and participants believed in a whole-school sense where teachers cooperate to generate a positive work culture. Thus, collaborative school-based CPD would have a greater positive impact in achieving school objectives:

Anusha: We must put aside certificate or excellent service awards. We need to tackle teachers first, especially the younger, who need to understand school culture, so, we can work together to achieve objectives.

Zara: We shouldn't push the junior teachers too much. Softly. Don't simply declare they cannot do work. You're seniors, experts. As seniors, be modest to them, guide them stage by stage. Administrators should also trust their working ability. (FGa, S5)

This group discussed the cooperation between teachers; novices and experts, juniors and seniors. Another view was the need for collaboration with other agencies:

Perhaps teachers have support from the SISC+, something which benefits the pupils. With LADAP, we share the information and knowledge, because, there are many school support services. We have SISC+, Excellence Teacher, School Inspectorate, PPD (District Education Office), benchmarking and others. We also have PIBG (parent teacher association). (II, S1, Tuah, SASE)

Tuah revealed support for School Improvement Specialist Coaches, known as SISC+. The SISC+ is a government initiative to guide and assist schools in improving performance by recognising what is working well for teachers (Izab, 2015), and this implied that collaboration in school-based CPD was not yet successful. Tuah suggested that the collaboration with all teacher support services should be enhanced.

Another viewpoint considered that collaboration with higher education institutions would be beneficial. On prompting, Sam shared the school's plan to collaborate with a university:

Yes, invite them to school... Do something related (with syllabus). We'll have a joint venture with UTP (a university). (II, S3, Sam)

It is perceived that collaboration with a higher education institution would inspire teachers to be creative in their teaching and to be more effective and inclusive. Advocates including Bolam *et al.* (2005) argue that PLC practice can foster and promote various positive professional interactions and practice among teachers. It is a way for teachers to come together continuously in a group setting to examine, re-evaluate, refine and improve knowledge and teaching strategies to ensure pupils' achievements.

4.5. Consideration 5: Supportive policies and leadership

Zara: The system itself must emphasise inclusive practice. Then we could implement. When everything is provided, materials and complete support, we would try our best.

Fuad: Everything is complete, we will implement – follow.

Anusha: We're just a policy implementer.

Zara: Indeed, teachers are significant.

Anusha: If the main is right, as implementers, we would... positive impact to pupils' outcomes. (FGa, S5)

Participants believed in the continuity of policy and efforts to achieve its objective. With clear policy and support for the implementation of inclusive education, teachers could develop inclusive practice and positively affect pupils' outcomes. Many participants emphasised administrators' roles for the efficiency and efficacy of school-based CPD. Headteachers were perceived as responsible for planning and implementing school-based CPD activities to accommodate teachers. Identifying teacher CPD needs was seen as essential. They implied that the result would be school-based CPD that is helpful to promote inclusive education:

The headteachers should play their roles. The basic, the top (person) must be active; proactive. God willing, the lower level will be smooth. No problem. That's the requirement of organisations. The management; to plan relevant LADAP in achieving the school's goal. (II, S1, Tuah, SASE)

The administrator was said to be active and effective in managing and leading the school as an organisation. Tuah, as an administrator himself, emphasised the significance of leadership in contributing to a more helpful school-based CPD in promoting inclusive education.

Adam, talking about the effect of school-based CPD and the challenges to implement the input, said:

I don't want to blame anybody but that happens because of the higher-ups. Many of them, with different orders and usually without asking teachers. I'm not sulking, but it's the reality in education. Not just to me but, all new teachers... Some senior teachers don't like to listen to newer, younger teacher ideas. Their acceptance isn't good, that's an obvious barrier, besides the input. (II, S1, Adam)

Moreover, some participants pointed to difficulties in expressing their views; often the administrators' decisions went unchallenged as shown:

Nora: LADAP isn't what we require.

Daxia: Everything is from the higher-ups.

Nora: So, disassociate from teachers' PdP. Furthermore, LADAP isn't about all subjects; focuses only core subjects.

(FGb, S5)

4.6. The group expressed frustration at the core subject-focused CPD.

The teaching profession is exciting, rewarding, uplifting and challenging. Ayers (2001) refers to the profession as a journey, the concept used for inclusive education by many researchers. As a journey, according to him, teaching is exploratory, provisional and uncertain; it seems easy at times but hard at others, and teachers learn by living it and practising it. They are 'learning specialists' who have knowledge, are able to use the research-based principles of effective teaching and have professional responsibility that comprises a sense of obligation and commitment, as well as a willingness to hold themselves accountable (OECD, 2014a, p. 3).

Therefore, to be effective, to value all pupils and hence promote quality inclusive education, teachers need to continue to develop and extend their competencies (European Commission, 2013). Teachers in terms of professional as well as personal, need to always upgrade, update, reskill and upskill their knowledge and skills to improve their inclusive practice and provide effective instruction and support to their pupils.

Education reform is needed to achieve an inclusive education system; promotes equity, diversity and inclusion. Various factors have been identified and emphasised in the literature, and the main significant factor at the implementation level is teachers. Teachers as active agents need to consistently engage in learning and develop professionally with the dynamic of the education system. They need to keep up with the evolving educational practices with new research, methodologies, and technologies. Technologies could be used to leverage the world which is more inclusive. Teachers could integrate technologies to ensure EDI and improve the quality of pupils' teaching and learning activities. The reflection and self-regulation on teaching practice, discussing and collaborating with fellow teachers as well as responding to pupils' views would inspire teachers to engage in experimenting with teaching strategies and respond better to pupils regardless of the changes taking place in the world. The reflective practice promotes professional growth, enhances teaching effectiveness, and ultimately benefits students' learning experiences. Discussion and implementation of best practices proven by research enable teachers to enhance their inclusive practice and create a learning environment that respects and supports the diverse needs of pupils; ensuring equity and inclusion of diverse learners.

Professional networks and learning communities provide opportunities for teachers to network and collaborate; foster the exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices. Thus broadening their perspectives, gaining new insights, and building a supportive professional community. Teachers must also believe in their pupils' ability to learn and their capability to teach all learners and transform pupils' capacity to learn. Every pupil has their own strength and has different potentials; with the support and facilitation they could succeed and be able to, not only survive but contribute to family, society and country. Every child could be 'Anak yang Baik, lagi Cerdik' (ABC) a slogan that emphasises an individual that acquire an intact core, superior spiritual fortitude, self-skills, commendable character and stability of identity in addition to cognitive and psychomotor excellence. The slogan inspired by the Director General of Education Malaysia is aligned with the current MOE cores that focus on 'karamah insaniah' aspects. Indeed, aligned with the National Education Philosophy that every Malaysian teachers must uphold; continuously supporting pupils to develop holistically.

5. Conclusion

This study was implemented to understand Malaysia teachers' requirements of CPD in promoting inclusive education better by focusing on their perspectives on inclusive education, their practice and their experience of school-based CPD. It was found that teachers believe and need any school-based CPD that is academically robust and professionally helpful. It was discovered the need for more attention to be paid to pedagogy, through appropriate teaching and learning strategies. This research reveals views of school leaders, mainstream, and special education teachers, which are often neglected.

However other stakeholders' views would be informative, hence serve as triangulation. The study was also limited to National primary schools. This study was carried out before the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, to continue the supportive and effective CPD, more studies are needed. Further potential research includes studies that consider the views of more heterogenous respondent of various stakeholders. Studies could also be carried out on inclusive pedagogy and CPD activities that infuse the EDI.

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