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The Impact of Special Education Professional Development on New, Intermediate, and Veteran General Education Teachers' Self-Efficacy Regarding Instructing Students with Disabilities and Implementation of Accommodations

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Abstract

When it comes to instructing students with disabilities (SWDs), there is a trend of general education teachers feeling a lack of preparation (Kings-Sears et al. 2012; Scruggs et al., 1996; Schumm et al. 1994). This quantitative study aimed to further explore this trend through the following research questions: 1) How do years of teaching experience predict general education teachers' confidence (self-efficacy) in teaching SWDs in an inclusive general education setting? 2) How do years of teaching experience predict general education teachers' confidence (self-efficacy) and knowledge with accommodation implementation in an inclusive general education setting? 3) How can Special Education professional development (PD) impact general education teachers, who vary in years of teaching experience, with their confidence (self-efficacy) in teaching SWDs as well as their confidence (self-efficacy) and knowledge with accommodation implementation in an inclusive general education setting? The researcher outlined this study in two stages. The first stage involved participants filling out a pre-survey in order to address the first two research questions. The second stage addresses the third research question, where participants received a Special Education PD and filled out a post-survey. Results indicate that teaching experience (i.e. New Teachers, Intermediate Teachers, Veteran Teachers) can act as a predictor for confidence levels, for certain areas of the surveys, and was most significant for New Teachers. Additionally, the PD had a positive effect on general education teachers overall and was most significant for New Teachers. Limitations and further implications of these findings are discussed as well.

Keywords: self-efficacy, confidence, general education teachers, students with disabilities, professional development, special education, accommodations, new teachers, experienced teachers, TSDES