



SPECIALIZED VOCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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Abstract

This article explores the importance of specialized vocational education services tailored to children with special educational needs (SEN). It highlights how adapted vocational training programs help overcome barriers faced by students with cognitive, physical, or emotional challenges. The article discusses methods such as personalized instruction, assistive technologies, and partnerships with local businesses that enhance the effectiveness of these programs. It emphasizes the role of inclusive school environments in fostering skill development, self-confidence, and future employment opportunities. The article concludes by advocating for greater policy support and resource allocation to ensure equal access to vocational education for all learners.

Keywords: Special educational needs (sen), vocational education, inclusive education, specialized support, skill development, assistive technologies, life skills, job coaching, educational equity.

Introduction

Employment is a deliberate effort performed by an individual to attain desired outcomes. The components involved in employment activities include consciousness, preparation, outcomes, and a sense of accomplishment. Work represents a crucial element of human life, as it provides for the satisfaction of basic needs and determines a person's social standing within the community. Before engaging in a job, an individual must possess preparedness—this refers to a level of personal maturity necessary to engage in and carry out specific tasks. As stated by Sofyan (1992) [1], job preparedness is an individual's capability to perform a task or duty effectively, without significant difficulties, and with optimal outcomes.

As individuals enter the productive phase of life, they are expected to engage in employment. By being employed, a person earns an income, enabling them to satisfy their daily needs. In today's era, the rise in job market competition requires individuals to possess specific skills and competencies. To fulfill the expectations of stakeholders, qualities such as commitment, diligence, and integrity are essential in the workplace. A person's experience and expertise can enhance and broaden their work capabilities. The more frequently a person performs a task, the more proficient and efficient they become at completing it. Improvement in job performance is





influenced by the diversity of tasks completed and the breadth of professional experience. Every individual is entitled to employment, including children with special needs (Aji & Haryani, 2017) [2]. Workplace equality is a fundamental right; all individuals deserve fair treatment in employment settings (Pradana, n.d.), (Huripah, 2015). Everyone should have access to job opportunities, regardless of their economic status, disability, gender, or other personal attributes, and be able to contribute and participate in the labor force according to their abilities, including individuals with special educational needs (Tampubolon, 2019) [3]. In recent years, the importance of inclusive education has gained global recognition, emphasizing the need to provide equal learning opportunities for all students, including those with special educational needs (SEN). Among the key components of inclusive education is vocational training, which equips learners with practical skills that enhance their employability and independence. Specialized vocational support is essential for children with SEN, as it helps address their unique learning needs and prepares them for meaningful participation in the labor market (UNESCO, 2020) [6]. According to Ainscow and Miles (2008) [4], inclusive practices must extend beyond academic instruction to include life and work skills that promote full social inclusion.

Literature Review and Methodology

The growing complexity of the job market has further highlighted the need for tailored vocational programs that foster competence, self-confidence, and adaptability among students with disabilities (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2018). Effective vocational support involves individualized instruction, hands-on training, and collaboration with employers and community organizations (Wehman, 2013) [7]. These initiatives not only empower learners with SEN but also contribute to a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Therefore, investing in specialized vocational education is a critical step toward ensuring equal opportunities and lifelong success for all learners.

This article seeks to explore vocational training programs that are appropriate for implementation with children who have special needs. A literature review method is utilized to explain the concept of vocational education and its connection to the employment preparedness of children with special needs. Through this descriptive analysis, it is intended to serve as a reference or recommendation for educational institutions to better support vocational training initiatives aimed at enhancing the future job readiness of students with special needs.





The method used in collecting data for this study is to do a Systematic Literature Review. During the study, 11 articles were reviewed regarding special educational support for children with special educational needs.

Results and Discussion

EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN Education is the basic need of every human being in ensuring his survival. Therefore, the government must provide quality educational education services to every citizen without exception. Inclusive education is a special education service system that allows all children with special needs to be served in public schools together with their peers. The implementation of inclusive education is one of the conditions that must be met to build an inclusive society (Sunardi, 2009) [8].

Improving special education is challenging. All school districts want to close the achievement gap and improve outcomes for students with special needs and for students who struggle, but school and district practices are not always aligned to meet this objective most effectively [9].

But there is reason to be hopeful. Best practices exist that, when implemented well with a systems-thinking approach, can help school districts of all sizes and types achieve dramatic gains in achievement and inclusion in achievement and inclusion and expand services for students with disabilities. DMGroup has developed top 3 best practices for improving special education based on extensive research by the What Works Clearinghouse, the National Reading Panel, John Hattie's Visible Learning, numerous major research studies, and our own hands-on work with hundreds of school districts.

Provide extra instructional time every day for students who struggle

Students who have difficulty achieving grade-level standards often need more time for instruction to catch up and keep up with their peers. At both the elementary and secondary levels, this additional time can be used to pre-teach materials, reteach the day's lesson, address missing foundational skills, and correct misunderstandings.

In many high schools, struggling students are provided extra adults but not extra time. Struggling learners may receive additional support from a teaching assistant, paraprofessional, special education teacher, co-teacher, etc., while staying in the same classroom as their peers for the same duration. Some high schools have specialized instruction in place, but it is typically not in addition to the regular period. Struggling students, for example, may be assigned to a "replacement" class, a lower-level general education class that covers less content with less rigor. Extra "help time" should not





be confused with extra instructional time. It is common for students with special needs to have a resource room period or a support period where a special education teacher provides ad hoc help or test prep across multiple subjects, grades, and courses. This is not the same as a daily dedicated extra period focused explicitly on math skills, for example.

Districts that have successfully closed the achievement gap and significantly raised the achievement of students with and without special needs provide extra instructional time each day in addition to core content instruction time [10].

Allow special educators to play to their strengths- Districts that have made strides in improving services for struggling students have focused on ensuring that teachers are able to play to their strengths. For example, some special education teachers may have expertise in specific content areas, while others may be very efficient and skilled in assessing and managing the IEP process [10].

Pedagogical Expertise

Teachers with pedagogical expertise should coach general education teachers on accommodating the needs of students with disabilities and on using scaffolding, differentiation, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), chunking, and other teaching strategies.

Social-Emotional Expertise

Special education teachers with a strong background in providing social-emotional or behavioral supports to students should focus on delivering these important supports.

Case Management Expertise

Some special education teachers are particularly efficient and effective in managing the IEP process. These teachers should focus on case management responsibilities and thereby allow other special education teachers more time to serve students.

Provide high-quality in-district programs for students with more severe needs- In the past, many mid-sized and smaller districts decided against providing in-house special education programs; these districts felt they lacked sufficient numbers of students at any given grade level to justify the cost of such services. This needn't be the case. If a district has at least three students with similar needs within the same age range, it may be more cost-effective to establish an in-house program than to place the students in an out-of-district program. Of course, the savings





resulting from decreased tuition payments and transportation costs must be invested in providing enhanced in-district services. The key to providing effective and cost-effective programs is to hire staff with the right skills and training, to adjust staffing levels throughout the year as enrollment shifts, and to provide dedicated leadership for these programs.

Vocational education services are an integral part of the national education framework, playing a crucial role in the development of a skilled workforce (Cawley, Kahn, & Tedesco, 1989) [12]. It is a form of education aimed at helping individuals acquire proficiency in specific practical skills. Through vocational education services, the goal is for children with special needs to become capable and active contributors to the broader community (Fasching, 2014) [13]. The objective of vocational education is to ensure that children with special needs develop the skills and qualities necessary for self-reliance. Vocational education services should be made accessible to children with special needs, starting from secondary education through to higher education. These services can be offered in both formal and non-formal educational settings. Formal vocational education can take the form of an apprenticeship or direct placement in the workplace, while non-formal vocational education takes the form of special institutions and training, community learning activity centers, job training centers, and other institutions that provide skills-based education. Vocational education for children with special needs must focus on local needs/wisdom while still meeting national or international needs, given that vocational education is closely related to the economy and employment (Malle, Pirttimaa, & Saloviita, 2015) [14].

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, it can be concluded that vocational education within special schools and inclusive education settings plays a critical role in enhancing the skills and capabilities of children with special needs. These educational services are instrumental in helping these students develop the necessary competencies to function effectively in society. Therefore, vocational education programs within the realm of special education must be further developed and adapted to meet the specific needs of these students, preparing them for future employment and enabling them to achieve greater independence.

In addition to taking into account the individual talents and interests of children with special needs, vocational education must also address their unique requirements and abilities when fulfilling job expectations. This includes tailoring training programs to suit their learning styles, offering supportive tools, and considering the challenges they may face in the workplace. A comprehensive approach to vocational education is





essential, ensuring that children with special needs are not only ready to enter the workforce but are also capable of thriving in it, contributing to their personal growth, social inclusion, and economic independence.

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