

The Ineffectiveness of Workshops in Capacitating Teachers for Inclusive Education Curriculum Implementation

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Received: October 5, 2025

Accepted: November 20, 2025

Online Published: April 10, 2026

doi:10.5430/jct.v15n2p1

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v15n2p1>

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors contributing to the failure of workshops as a model for capacitating teachers to implement inclusive education in South Africa. Despite the use of various workshop formats such as short-term sessions on curriculum differentiation, special education needs, and inclusive teaching strategies, these professional development initiatives have not resulted in effective inclusive practices. Teachers continue to struggle to integrate diverse learners in mainstream classrooms, highlighting the inadequacy of these workshops. A qualitative research methodology was employed, using a case study design with ten teachers, each having over ten years of experience. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using Luckett's (1995) theory of modes of learning and thematic content analysis. The findings revealed three key issues: inadequate content knowledge, insufficient time allocation, and unqualified facilitators. These results suggest that the current workshop models, including one-day training sessions and multi-day seminars, are ineffective in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and strategies to implement inclusive education. The implications of this study emphasise the need for comprehensive, ongoing professional development programs that provide relevant content, adequate time for learning, expert facilitators, and continuous support to ensure the effective implementation of inclusive education in schools.

Keywords: inclusive education, teacher development, workshops, professional development, curriculum differentiation, special education needs, teacher training, South Africa

1. Introduction

Since the 1994 Salamanca Conference, inclusive education has gained global momentum as a system that promotes social justice, equality, and equal access to education for all learners (UNESCO, 2020). Inclusive education seeks to break the historical barriers of exclusion and marginalisation based on race, ethnicity, cognitive or physical abilities, and socioeconomic status. It aims to create learning environments where diverse learners, regardless of their background or abilities, are educated together in a single setting. This vision has been reinforced by international conventions such as the 1994 Salamanca Statement, the 2000 Dakar Framework, the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, which emphasise the importance of inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all (United Nations, 2021).

While many countries, particularly in the Global North, have made significant strides in implementing inclusive education policies, progress in Africa has been relatively slow. In South Africa, inclusive education was officially introduced through the Education White Paper 6 in 2001, which called for a comprehensive system to address the diverse needs of all learners (Department of Basic Education, 2021). However, despite more than two decades of policy efforts, the successful implementation of inclusive education in the country remains elusive. Teachers, who are critical agents of change in this initiative, often lack the necessary knowledge, skills, and strategies to manage inclusive classrooms effectively (Ngcobo & Muthukrishna, 2011). This gap in teacher preparedness has been one of the major obstacles to fully realising inclusive education in South African schools.

In response to this challenge, the South African Department of Basic Education has adopted workshops as the

primary method of professional development to equip teachers with the competencies required for inclusive education (DoBE, 2023). These workshops are intended to build teachers' capacity to differentiate instruction, Inclusive education pedagogies, and create inclusive learning environments. However, despite years of workshops and professional development programs, there has been limited progress in improving teachers' ability to implement inclusive education effectively (Mabasa-Manganyi, 2023). Teachers continue to report feeling underprepared and unsupported in their efforts to manage diverse classrooms, and research suggests that the current workshop model may not be meeting the needs of educators (Mitchell, 2024).

This study sought to investigate the factors contributing to the failure of workshops as a model of professional development for inclusive education in South Africa. By exploring the experiences of teachers who have participated in these workshops.

The study aims to identify the specific challenges that hinder their effectiveness and offer recommendations for enhancing professional development programs to better support teachers in implementing inclusive education.

2. Literature Review

The success of inclusive education depends significantly on effective teacher professional development. Globally, teacher development is understood as an ongoing process of equipping educators with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to respond to diverse classroom needs (OECD, 2021). Professional development encompasses formal programs, such as workshops, seminars, and in-service training, designed to improve instructional practices and enhance teachers' ability to accommodate all learners, including those with special educational needs (Florian, 2015).

2.1 Professional Development in Schools

Professional development is critical in helping teachers meet the growing demands of inclusive education. It involves activities designed to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills, classroom management, and the ability to work with diverse learners (Mireille et al., 2020). Continuous professional development (CPD) in inclusive education aims to bridge the gap between policy and practice, enabling teachers to implement inclusive teaching strategies effectively. However, the literature indicates that teachers in many contexts feel underprepared to meet the needs of learners with disabilities or other barriers to learning (Sayed & Ahmed, 2022). Despite policy mandates, such as South Africa's *Education White Paper 6*, progress in inclusive education has been hindered by the lack of comprehensive and sustained teacher development programs (DoBE, 2021).

2.2 Workshops as a Model for Teacher Development

Workshops are a widely used model for professional development, especially in contexts like South Africa, where teachers must quickly adapt to new educational reforms. Workshops typically involve short-term training sessions that focus on specific aspects of inclusive education, such as curriculum differentiation and special education strategies (Mabasa-Manganyi, 2023; Sepadi & Themane, 2025). However, despite their popularity, research highlights the limitations of workshops in effecting long-term changes in teacher practice. Studies indicate that workshops often lack the depth and follow-up necessary to reinforce new skills, leading to superficial learning that does not translate into classroom application (Jita & Mokhele, 2014).

One of the key critiques of the workshop model is its "one-size-fits-all" approach, which often fails to account for the varying levels of teacher experience and the specific needs of different schools (Tshiloane & Sefotho, 2025). Workshops are frequently too short and focus more on theoretical knowledge rather than practical strategies for handling real classroom challenges (Villegas-Reimers, 2021). Additionally, many workshops are led by facilitators who lack specialised expertise in inclusive education, further reducing their effectiveness (Ngcobo & Muthukrishna, 2022). As a result, teachers report feeling ill-equipped to manage diverse classrooms, particularly in rural or resource-constrained settings (Mitchell, 2024).

2.3 Empowering Teachers for Inclusive Education

Empowering teachers to implement inclusive education requires more than just workshops; it necessitates a holistic and sustained approach to professional development. Research suggests that successful professional development programs are those that are ongoing, collaborative, and context-specific (Florian, 2015). Teachers need opportunities to engage in reflective practice, collaborate with peers, and receive continuous support from experts in inclusive education (Sayed & Ahmed, 2022). Furthermore, empowerment is linked to teachers' sense of competence and confidence in addressing the diverse needs of learners, which can only be achieved through continuous and practical

training experiences (Tvaltchrelidze, N., & Safarova, 2018)

Recent studies advocate for professional development programs that integrate workshops with mentorship, peer collaboration, and classroom-based coaching (Jita & Mokhele, 2014). Such programs allow teachers to apply new skills in real time, receive feedback, and adjust their instructional methods to suit the needs of their students. This approach aligns with the global trend towards developing schools as learning organisations, where teachers are active learners who continuously improve their practice (OECD, 2021).

The literature suggests that while workshops are a common form of teacher professional development, they are insufficient on their own to prepare educators for the complexities of inclusive education. There is a growing consensus that professional development must be sustained, practical, and context-sensitive to be effective. To fully support teachers in implementing inclusive education, professional development programs need to move beyond the traditional workshop model and provide ongoing support through mentorship, collaboration, and reflective practice.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Lockett's (1995) Theory of Modes of Learning, which proposes an epistemologically diverse curriculum that emphasises four ways of knowing: propositional knowledge, learning by doing, experiential learning, and epistemic cognition. This theory is particularly relevant in understanding the professional development of teachers within the context of inclusive education, where diverse and complex learning needs require teachers to master different types of knowledge and apply them effectively in varied classroom environments.

Lockett's framework highlights the importance of combining theoretical knowledge with practical, hands-on learning experiences, a critical element in the context of inclusive education. In this study, the framework is used to evaluate the effectiveness of workshops as a form of professional development for teachers. Workshops, as they are currently implemented, tend to focus primarily on propositional knowledge, imparting theoretical concepts such as curriculum differentiation and inclusive teaching strategies. However, teachers often struggle to apply these theories in practice, suggesting a disconnect between the workshop content and the practical realities of the classroom.

The first mode of learning propositional knowledge refers to theoretical understanding and conceptual learning. In the context of inclusive education, this includes knowledge about policies, legal frameworks, and definitions of inclusion. The workshops currently offered to South African teachers focus heavily on this mode, providing definitions and policy frameworks, but failing to equip teachers with practical skills. As a result, teachers report feeling underprepared to manage diverse classrooms effectively (Mabasa-Manganyi, 2023).

The second mode, learning by doing, is particularly critical for professional development in inclusive education. Inclusive teaching requires teachers to experiment with different strategies, adapt their teaching methods, and continuously reflect on their practice. However, workshops often lack opportunities for teachers to practice these skills in real or simulated classroom environments, contributing to the ineffectiveness of this model of professional development (Amponsah, Ampadu, & Thomas, 2023).

The third mode of experiential learning involves learning through reflection on experience, which is vital for teaching in inclusive classrooms. Inclusive education is context-specific, and teachers need to engage with their own teaching environments and reflect on how theoretical principles apply to their unique classroom situations. The current workshop model, which is typically short-term and isolated from daily practice, does not provide teachers with the time or support necessary for this type of learning (Mitchell, 2024). The absence of ongoing mentorship and follow-up support further diminishes teachers' ability to implement what they have learned.

Finally, epistemic cognition, the ability to think critically and reflexively about one's own knowledge, requires teachers to engage in continuous self-reflection and to question how their teaching aligns with the goals of inclusive education. For inclusive education to succeed, teachers need to be empowered to think critically about their role and the impact of their teaching strategies on diverse learners (Sayed & Ahmed, 2022). The current workshop model does not adequately foster this type of critical reflection, as it tends to be transactional and focused on immediate information delivery rather than long-term teacher growth and reflection.

By applying Lockett's (1995) modes of learning, this study aims to explore the shortcomings of workshops in developing teachers' capacity to implement inclusive education. The framework allows us to assess whether these workshops are supporting teachers not only in understanding the theoretical aspects of inclusive education but also in applying, reflecting on, and adapting these principles in their everyday teaching practices. It further highlights the need for workshops to evolve into more comprehensive and continuous professional development programs that integrate practical experience, mentorship, and reflective learning.

4. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, allowing for an in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of workshops in fostering inclusive education (Yin, 2020). A case study is beneficial for examining complex, real-world situations, providing insight into how teachers understand and respond to professional development models in their specific educational settings (Creswell & Poth, 2021).

4.1 Sampling

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants who were most likely to provide rich, relevant, and diverse insights into the effectiveness of the 2018 inclusive education workshop. Selection was guided by four clear criteria designed to strengthen the information richness of the sample. First, participants (10) were required to have completed the 2018 short course on inclusive education, ensuring that all respondents had direct and comparable exposure to the same training programme. Second, teachers needed to have a minimum of five years of professional teaching experience, enabling them to provide informed reflections on both pre- and post-training classroom practice. Third, the sample intentionally included teachers from a range of school types, including special schools, full-service schools, and ordinary mainstream schools, to capture variation in inclusive education implementation contexts. Finally, participants (10) were required to be actively teaching learners with diverse needs at the time of the study, ensuring that their reflections were grounded in ongoing classroom realities. These criteria collectively enhanced the study's depth and allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of how workshop-based training influences inclusive education practice across different school environments (Etikan, & Bala, 2017).

4.2 Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis, each method providing complementary insights. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to share their personal experiences and views, creating a nuanced understanding of the challenges and successes they associate with workshops as a form of professional development (Creswell, 2020). Additionally, document analysis was conducted on training materials and relevant policy documents, comparing their content to the actual workshop objectives. This analysis helped assess the alignment between workshop content and the practical needs of inclusive classrooms (Merriam & Grenier, 2022).

4.3 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to organise and interpret the data, enabling the identification of recurring themes that reflect teachers' views on workshop effectiveness. The thematic analysis process involved coding and categorising data from the interviews and documents, generating patterns that highlight key issues in workshop content and delivery (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This approach allowed the study to focus on patterns that reveal the gap between the intended and actual outcomes of professional development workshops (Nowell et al., 2020).

4.4 Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the reliability and validity of the study's findings, trustworthiness was established through the criteria of dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 2021).

Dependability emphasises the consistency of the study's findings over time, ensuring that similar results would be obtained if the study were repeated under the same conditions (Kvale, 2020). This study enhanced dependability by meticulously documenting the research process, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Each step was clearly communicated and maintained with transparency, making the study's methods replicable by other researchers interested in the professional development of teachers for inclusive education.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts (Shenton, 2022). To enhance transferability, this study provided a detailed description of the research context, participants, and sampling methods, allowing readers to determine how findings might be relevant to other educational settings. By giving in-depth accounts of teachers' experiences, this study offers insights that other researchers can apply in similar educational contexts, particularly those facing challenges in implementing inclusive education.

Confirmability addresses the objectivity of the research, ensuring that findings are shaped by the participants' responses rather than the researcher's biases (Nowell et al., 2020). To promote confirmability, the researcher maintained reflexive notes and an audit trail, which documented decisions made throughout the study. This audit trail allowed for transparent examination of how data were interpreted and supported by evidence from participants' experiences. Regular member checks with participants further helped verify that the findings accurately reflected their perspectives and experiences.

By integrating these quality criteria, the study's trustworthiness is reinforced, ensuring that the findings are both

credible and applicable to other research contexts in inclusive education.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to key ethical principles to protect participants' rights and integrity. Informed consent was obtained by fully explaining the study's purpose and allowing participants to withdraw at any time. Permission was secured from the University of Limpopo's Research Ethics Committee and the Department of Education in Limpopo to ensure procedural compliance and participant safety. Voluntary participation was emphasised, with participants informed of their freedom to limit or end their involvement without any consequences. To uphold privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality, participants' identities were protected using pseudonyms, and access to data was restricted to the researcher and supervisor, ensuring sensitive information was handled respectfully.

5. Results

This study explored factors that contribute to the ineffectiveness of workshops as a professional development model for teachers in inclusive education. The three themes identified in this study, inadequate content knowledge, insufficient time allocation, and unqualified facilitators, align directly with the four modes of learning outlined in Luckett's (1995) framework. This framework helps illuminate how weaknesses in the current workshop model constrain teachers' access to propositional knowledge, learning by doing, experiential learning, and opportunities for epistemic cognition.

5.1 Theme A: Inadequate Content Knowledge

This theme aligns with Luckett's concept of propositional knowledge, which refers to the theoretical and conceptual foundations necessary for informed practice. Participants consistently reported that workshops foregrounded definitions, policy terminology, and surface-level descriptions of inclusion, but did not provide the depth of theoretical understanding required for teachers to apply inclusive strategies confidently.

Participant 1 explained:

"In the workshops I have attended, I was not adequately taught about the strategies or skills needed to teach or assess the different learners in our classrooms."

Similarly, Participant 3 highlighted the overemphasis on theoretical abstraction:

"Most of the workshops we attended in my circuit were focused on definitions and examples within inclusive education, but there was little taught on how to apply these ideas in real-life classroom contexts."

Participant 4 reiterated the gap between theory and application:

"I often hear about curriculum differentiation, adaptation, and flexibility when they talk about inclusive education, but I was hoping the workshops would show us how they work in real classrooms, but they didn't."

These sentiments suggest that teachers are not receiving the robust propositional grounding needed to support higher-level modes of learning such as practical engagement or reflective reasoning. As a result, the theoretical content remains disconnected from classroom realities (Amponsah, Ampadu, & Thomas, 2023).

5.2 Theme B: Insufficient Time Allocation

The second theme relates directly to learning by doing and experiential learning, both of which require sustained engagement, practice, and opportunities for reflection. Participants described workshops as short, infrequent, and rushed features that prevent teachers from practising inclusive strategies or engaging deeply with new concepts (Mireille et al., 2020).

Participant 2 noted:

"The last workshop I attended lasted only four and a half hours, which is not enough. We really do not have time."

Participant 5 echoed this sentiment:

"Workshops are half-day and held far apart. For instance, you can attend one in March and the next one in June. We need more frequent meetings and extended sessions."

Participant 7 emphasised the need for ongoing practice:

"Continuous workshops or training in this inclusive education need to happen frequently so that we as teachers can adjust and align our teaching methods for the benefit of learners."

Because workshops do not allow for iterative practice, modelling, or reflective engagement with real classroom

experiences, teachers cannot progress through Lockett's practical modes of learning. This severely limits the transfer of theoretical knowledge into usable inclusive pedagogy (Maebana, 2021).

5.3 Theme C: Unqualified Facilitators

The third theme maps onto the fourth mode of learning epistemic cognition, which requires knowledgeable facilitators who can support teachers' critical reflection, challenge assumptions, and guide professional reasoning. Participants frequently expressed concern that facilitators lacked the expertise necessary to model inclusive teaching or respond meaningfully to context-specific challenges.

Participant 5 questioned the credibility of workshop leaders:

"The facilitators themselves seem to lack the skills they are supposed to teach us. How can we learn inclusivity from people who aren't trained in it?"

Participant 6 added:

"The workshops feel like they are for everyone, with no focus on actual classroom realities we face. Facilitators don't seem to have experience in inclusive education, which leaves us with little to take back to our schools."

In the absence of expert facilitators, teachers are deprived of opportunities to develop epistemic cognition the reflective, critical thinking required to evaluate and refine their inclusive practices. Consequently, workshops remain generic and informational rather than transformative or capacity-building (Tshiloane & Sefotho, 2025).

Across all three themes, it becomes clear that current workshops fail to activate the full spectrum of Lockett's modes of learning. Teachers receive limited propositional knowledge, almost no opportunity for learning by doing, insufficient space for experiential reflection, and minimal exposure to the epistemic guidance needed for professional growth. These systemic weaknesses help explain why workshops, despite being widely implemented, do not lead to sustainable improvements in inclusive education practice.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine why workshops, as the dominant model of professional development in South Africa, continue to fall short in capacitating teachers for inclusive education. By interpreting the findings through Lockett's (1995) modes of learning, the discussion reveals how structural weaknesses in workshop content, duration, and facilitation collectively hinder teachers' access to propositional knowledge, practical engagement, experiential reflection, and epistemic development. These shortcomings explain why workshops have not translated into meaningful improvements in inclusive classroom practice.

6.1 Inadequate Content Knowledge

The first theme demonstrates that the workshop model fails at the foundational level of propositional knowledge, which includes essential concepts, theories, and principles underpinning inclusive education. Teachers' reports that workshops emphasise definitions and policy statements rather than deep conceptual understanding suggest that the cognitive base required for informed teaching is not being established. Without a robust theoretical grounding, teachers cannot progress to the higher modes of learning, particularly learning by doing and experiential reflection, because they lack the conceptual frameworks needed to interpret learners' needs or make informed instructional decisions (Florian, 2015).

This disconnect between policy-driven theoretical input and classroom realities is well documented in inclusive education literature, which highlights the need for strong conceptual clarity as the basis for effective practice. Thus, the findings reaffirm that propositional knowledge, when inadequately developed, becomes an obstacle rather than a catalyst for change (Jita & Mokhele, 2014).

6.2 Insufficient Time Allocation

The second theme, insufficient time allocation, fundamentally limits teachers' opportunities for learning by doing and experiential learning, the modes of learning that require sustained practice, feedback, and reflection. Short, episodic workshops prevent teachers from experimenting with inclusive strategies, observing their effects, or refining their approaches through guided practice (Mireille et al., 2020)

Inclusive education requires iterative learning teachers must trial differentiation methods, attempt adaptations, and reflect on learner responses within their own classroom ecosystems. However, the fragmented schedule of workshops, often months apart, denies teachers the continuity necessary to integrate new skills. Without the time to practise, conceptual exposure remains abstract, and teachers are unable to internalise or contextualise new knowledge.

The literature is clear that durable changes in teaching behaviour emerge from extended, cyclical engagement with new practices, not from once-off information sessions (Sepadi, 2023). Thus, time constraints directly undermine the modes of learning most vital for shifting teacher behaviour (Maebana, 2021)

6.3 Unqualified Facilitators

The third theme highlights the critical role of facilitator expertise in cultivating epistemic cognition, the mode of learning that enables teachers to evaluate their own knowledge, interrogate their assumptions, and engage in reflective reasoning. Teachers' experiences with facilitators who lack specialised training in inclusive education reveal that workshops often do not offer the intellectual scaffolding needed for teachers to develop reflective,

Epistemic cognition is not automatically triggered by information delivery. It emerges when teachers are guided by experts who can contextualise content, pose challenging questions, provide examples from practice, and model reflective thinking. Without such leadership, workshops become transactional and generic, rather than transformative. This finding is consistent with research emphasising the necessity of expert-led professional development in specialised areas such as inclusive education (Tvaltchrelidze & Safarova, 2018).

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of professional development workshops in supporting inclusive education:

7.1 Implement Practical, Context-Specific Training

Workshops should be redesigned to include practical components that focus on classroom-based strategies for diverse learners, such as curriculum differentiation and individualised assessment. Incorporating real-world scenarios and hands-on activities would help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

7.2 Increase Duration and Frequency of Training

To address time constraints, professional development should be structured as an ongoing process rather than limited to short, sporadic sessions. Schools and educational departments could consider implementing continuous learning opportunities, including follow-up sessions, that allow teachers to build and reinforce their skills progressively.

7.3 Employ Qualified, Experienced Facilitators

Workshops should be facilitated by individuals with specialised knowledge and practical experience in inclusive education. Policymakers and educational institutions are encouraged to establish standards for facilitator qualifications to ensure that trainers can provide relevant, actionable insights that directly benefit teachers in inclusive classrooms.

7.4 Incorporate Mentorship and Peer Support

Professional development programs should integrate mentorship and collaborative peer learning opportunities, such as professional learning communities (PLCs), where teachers can discuss challenges, share strategies, and receive feedback. This would foster a supportive network for continuous skill development.

7.5 Conduct Ongoing Evaluation of Workshop Effectiveness

Educational authorities should regularly evaluate the impact of workshops on teachers' abilities to implement inclusive education practices. Feedback from teachers should be gathered and used to refine and adapt training programs to better meet their evolving needs

8. Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have several important implications for policy, practice, and future research in teacher professional development, particularly in the context of inclusive education. By highlighting the shortcomings of workshops as the primary model for professional development, the study underscores the need for a more robust and practical approach to equipping teachers with the skills required for inclusive classrooms.

8.1 Implications for Policy

This study highlights key implications for improving professional development in inclusive education. Policymakers are urged to restructure professional development by incorporating extended, practical training with ongoing mentorship and by setting qualification standards for facilitators to ensure expertise. Schools should adopt a multi-faceted approach, such as professional learning communities and classroom-based coaching, to bridge the gap

between theory and practice and provide continuous support for teachers. Future research should explore the effectiveness of blended professional development models and the impact of facilitator expertise on teacher outcomes. These changes would better equip teachers to foster inclusive and equitable classroom environments.

9. Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insight into the challenges associated with workshops as a model for teacher professional development in inclusive education, several limitations must be acknowledged.

First, the study's sample size was relatively small, focusing on ten teachers from a specific province. Although this is consistent with qualitative case study designs that prioritise depth over breadth, the findings may not be fully generalisable to all South African schools or other educational contexts with differing resources, policies, or training structures. Future research could expand sampling across multiple districts or provinces to capture a wider range of experiences.

Second, the study relied primarily on participants' self-reported experiences, which may be influenced by personal perceptions or recall bias. However, qualitative inquiry values subjective meaning-making, and the use of rich, detailed interviews allowed the study to capture participants' authentic interpretations of their training and classroom practices.

Although the training under investigation took place in 2018, the time elapsed before data collection does not invalidate the findings. Instead, the delay offers a unique advantage: it allows teachers to reflect on the enduring impact or lack thereof of the workshops on their long-term classroom practice. Retrospective accounts often provide deeper insight into whether professional development experiences result in sustained behavioural change or fade due to structural weaknesses in the training model. In this study, the extended time frame enabled participants to evaluate how well the 2018 training had translated into actual instructional practice over time, thereby revealing persistent gaps in knowledge, practical skills, and support systems. Moreover, teachers had multiple years of continued engagement with inclusive education policies and classroom realities, which strengthened their ability to articulate the shortcomings of the workshop model. Memory-related bias was also mitigated through the use of documentation, school-based processes, and repeated exposure to inclusive education demands, which kept key workshop concepts active in their professional routines. Therefore, rather than weakening the study, the time gap enhances its ability to assess the lasting effectiveness of the training model, an aspect that short-term post-workshop evaluations cannot capture.

Finally, this study focused specifically on workshop-based professional development and did not examine other models such as mentorship, coaching, or professional learning communities. As a result, the findings speak primarily to the limitations of workshops and may not reflect the potential of alternative or blended professional development approaches. Future research could compare different training models to determine which strategies most effectively build teachers' capacity for inclusive education.

Overall, despite these limitations, the study offers meaningful insights into why workshop-based professional development remains inadequate for preparing teachers to implement inclusive education and highlights avenues for strengthening teacher training policy.

10. Conclusion

This study examined why workshops remain ineffective as a model for capacitating teachers to implement inclusive education, despite their widespread use in South Africa's teacher development system. By analysing teachers' experiences through Lockett's (1995) modes of learning, the study revealed that inadequate content knowledge, insufficient time allocation, and unqualified facilitators collectively hinder teachers' access to the theoretical, practical, reflective, and epistemic learning necessary for inclusive practice.

These findings have significant implications for teacher training policies and the broader inclusive education agenda. When workshops fail to equip teachers with deep conceptual understanding, practical competencies, and reflective capacity, they inadvertently reinforce the gap between inclusive education policy and classroom reality. The current training model, therefore, risks perpetuating superficial compliance rather than supporting genuine pedagogical transformation. Policies that continue to rely heavily on once-off workshops without ensuring content depth, qualified facilitators, and sustained follow-up limit teachers' readiness to respond to diverse learner needs and undermine the system's long-term commitment to inclusive education as envisioned in White Paper 6.

For inclusive education to advance meaningfully, teacher development must shift toward a more comprehensive,

practice-based and evidence-informed model aligned with all four of Luckett's modes of learning. This requires policy reform that prioritises continuous professional learning, mentorship, classroom-based coaching, and the professionalisation of facilitators. Strengthening these elements would not only enhance teacher competence but also support the national push toward an equitable, inclusive schooling system where all learners can thrive.

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Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge and thank all the teachers who participated in this study.

Authors contributions

Both authors were equally involved in the production of this paper.

Funding

No funding was received for this study.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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