

ProuD to Teach All

- ProuD is a European project that aims to support educational professionals in developing a professional vision conducive to inclusion, including a commitment to see diversity as an asset for enhancing learning; and to promote whole-school approaches that strengthen the interprofessional collaboration between learners, families, teachers and other actors.
- The partner countries are Belgium, Latvia, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the UK.
- A central objective of ProuD is to develop a professional development program (PDP) and implement it in professional learning communities (PLCs) in all participating countries. The flanking training for school coaches strengthens teachers' interprofessional collaboration skills in inclusive networks. It enhances the coaching skills of experienced teachers, school leaders and other senior educational professionals.
- Strongly based in a process of a collaborative action, the PDP development and implementation is grounded on professional development strategies that are effective, feasible and replicable. To that end, existing PDPs were scrutinized and confronted with results from a survey on the needs of the professionals in the schools. These needs were analyzed and form the base of these research and policy recommendations for promoting effective professional development for inclusion.
- Three levels of analysis led to the recommendations:
 1. A literature overview on good practices, combined with a systematic review of studies on the implementation of PDPs focusing on an inclusive pedagogy and collaborative practices,
 2. A country analysis of local policies as well as partner institutions' PD materials.
 3. A survey targeting professional learning needs for inclusion in schools.

On all three levels, the Profile of Inclusive Teachers (EASNIE, 2012) was used as a framework to map the professional learning needs, according with four core values and areas of competence (figure 1).

Valuing learner diversity conceptions of inclusive education and views of learner differences	Supporting all learners promoting academic, practical, social and emotional learning of all learners and effective teaching approaches in heterogeneous classes
Working with others working with parents and families and working with a range of other educational professionals	Personal and Collaborative professional development reflective practices and ongoing professional learning and development

Figure 1. Core values and areas of competence of the Profile of Inclusive Teacher (EASNIE, 2022).

The recommendations for promoting effective professional development for inclusion summarized here are also documented on www.proudtoteachall.eu.

Policy recommendations

Focusing on professional development for inclusion

Recommendation 1. To reinforce professional learning tracks towards a broader conception of inclusive education concerned with all aspects of diversity (beyond special education approaches).

- Inclusive education is conceived as a matter of providing high quality education responses to the needs of all learners. A broad conception of inclusive education, concerned with all aspects of diversity, has been receiving an echo in the literature and in the policies of different countries across the EU. Therefore, inclusive education responses have been going beyond a special-educational needs-approach.
- There is a need to reinforce professional learning tracks towards a broader conception of inclusive education concerned with all aspects of diversity, namely through a disattachment of categorical approaches to enact supports.
- To expand this broader concept of inclusive education not only within school policies, but also within professional development policies at all levels (pre-service, post-graduate and in-service), is

required to respond to the increasing diversity of 21st century classrooms.

- Examples from different European countries and in diverse local contexts might be inspiring to share across countries. The exchange of PD programs and learning materials within EU- communities focusing on teachers' inclusive competences can generate an important impact on learners.

Recommendation 2. To reinforce a policy strategy that supports teacher professional learning for inclusion, including pre-service and in-service stages.

- Within pre-service or initial teacher education (ITE) there is no prescribed curriculum for or regulation to include inclusive education content in courses or units. The approach to inclusion and diversity throughout teachers' qualification varies widely among courses and higher education institutions within and across EU countries.
- The development of educational professionals' inclusive competencies highly depends on their continuing professional development (CPD) activities.
- Efforts are required to improve government and institutional levels of commitment on prompting and supporting inclusive values and areas of competence for an inclusive pedagogy throughout all stages of teacher education and professional development.

Recommendation 3. To reinforce the development of schools' annual planning for professional training aligned with the school-needs, in which diversity and inclusion are part of.

- Continuing professional development is a self-directed pathway, with actions defined by each educational professional that should be embedded in the school community and in the school's needs.
- Peer-coaching and sharing good practices should be enhanced as a part of the school' system for staff development.

Recommendations 4. To reflect on the meaning of school success and how to plan actions towards that.

- To reconstruct the image of their own school to be aligned with inclusive values.

Focusing on interprofessional collaboration

Recommendation 5. To support a continuing professional development focusing on interprofessional collaboration for inclusion.

- The provision of support to teach all learners often demands the involvement of different professionals (teachers, assistant teachers, special educational and other support professionals).
- Interprofessional collaboration (with teachers, other educational professionals, researchers...) is, then, a key element defining CPD for inclusion. Interprofessional collaboration is a means for teachers' autonomy and authority in their own practice.
- Collaborative practices as coaching, mentoring and lesson study are successful approaches to promote informed decision making and problem-solving, particularly when responding to individuals' needs and contexts and when built on existing skills and experiences of the learning professionals.
- These collaborative practices should be reinforced as a collective and joint endeavor, with a shared ownership of the outcomes rather than efforts within specific subjects or disciplinary areas.

Recommendations 6. To recognize for career valorization, the collaborative and collective formats of professional learning, embedded within one's social context.

- To create informal spaces and time to connect teachers and other professionals.
- To include the quality of collaborative partnerships as a target of schools' self-reflection and assessment practices.
- To include collaborative target actions as part of the school practices assessment (e.g., identification of professional dilemmas, defining common goals, shared activities...).
- To monitor factors impacting collaboration, namely the development and implementation of safe forums for practices' exchange.
- To include ALL staff in the process of learning.
- To promote metacognitive skills in collaborative learning with others including parents and learners (e.g., reflect on their cognitive activities during problem solving - understanding of goals and the problem; recalling and organizing previous knowledge; and thinking about strategies to solve the problem).

Research recommendations

Focusing on diversity

Recommendation 1. To maintain the focus on the values and areas of competence of ‘Valuing learner diversity’ and ‘Supporting all learners’ in educational professionals’ development programs.

- ‘Valuing learner diversity’ and ‘supporting all learners’ are the areas of competence most valued by the teachers in the analysis of their needs and in the existing PDPs.
- Within ‘Valuing learner diversity’, a focus on thematic areas like inclusion, diversity, policies, legislations and social justice have been recognized in the existing PDPs.
- Contents guided by specific aspects of diversity, such as socio-cultural consciousness, disability perspectives and gender approaches, are also part of the existing PDPs, with a different expression according to local and country policies.
- The professionals’ needs analysis confirms the importance of ‘valuing learner diversity’, namely being prepared “to support learners in understanding/ becoming aware of their own social identity”, “to prevent and combat behaviours of exclusion and discrimination” and “to implement equal opportunities at school”.
- For ‘Supporting all learners’, some of the thematic areas most emphasized in the existing PDPs are: curriculum and instruction design, differentiation (e.g., differentiated lesson planning, principles of learning and teaching) and enabling environments (e.g., support systems, UDL-universal design for learning guidelines).
- The professionals’ needs analysis confirms the importance of ‘Supporting all learners’, namely being prepared “to adapt activities for enhancing the learners’ motivation to participate”, “to build positive relationships with learners”, “to understand learners’ behaviours in different contexts” and “to manage challenging behaviours in an effective manner in the classroom”.

Recommendation 2. To promote teachers’ critical reflection on their personal biography and narrative (What is their history? What are their personal experiences with diversity, in-and exclusion within learning and teaching processes).

- Self-reflection on educational professionals’ own attitudes towards diversity and inclusion is a training strategy found in some PDPs. Educational professionals’ view or image of learning plays a fundamental role in their openness to inclusion and to differentiation methods.
- The focus of PDPs to explore one’s own identity and become aware of one’s personal vision, needs to be expanded. Drawing on teachers’ prior experiences and knowledge is a critical strategy for success.
- To recognize their own preconceptions/ bias, get aware of their own thoughts and attitudes of discrimination.

Recommendation 3. To use a broad, intersectional approach of diversity in the research on PD, enhancing the understanding that inclusion is broader than SEN or culture/ethnicity only.

- Many studies describing PDP’s impact on inclusion focus on teachers’ preparedness to respond to special educational or additional support needs, related to disabling environments.
- The broader approach represents a reality in which many aspects of diversity intersect, including diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, gender or LGBTIQ-related issues, high or lower levels of cognitive functioning, disability as well as diversity in general. This approach needs to be reinforced and expanded in the research literature.

Focusing collaboration in team

Recommendation 4. To develop inspiration and professional learning activities focusing on ‘Working with others’ and on ‘Personal professional development’ for all professional developmental stages.

- To promote eagerness to work with others and motivation for personal professional development is a challenge for the development of PDPs for inclusion.

- Some approaches of 'Working with others' are already reflected in the contents of the existing PDPs, but should be reinforced, e.g., collaboration with families, coaching, collaborative teamwork and interdependency.
- Thematic areas reflecting 'Personal professional development' were also recognized in some PDP, but they should be more widely integrated in PD programs, e.g., reflective practice, development of research communities and implementing inquiring practices in education.
- Interprofessional collaboration should be reinforced in both pre- and in-service programs, through didactical methods like coaching and collective learning in a professional learning community (PLC) or a community of practice (COP). This prompts educational professionals' collaborative competencies and their learning to take agency over their own professional development.
- The use of tools seems to be beneficial to scaffold professional learning, e.g., a record sheet supports to implement lesson study, videoclips are powerful resources for discussions in post-lesson coaching,...

Recommendation 5. To reinforce the use of reflective activities as key Professional Development methods and strategies.

- Preparing lessons plans, using a reflective journal, developing a portfolio and an action plan in self-assessment, and developing an educational inquiry are examples of reflective inquiring practices that are included in some PDP. Their implementation should be reinforced to develop an inclusive pedagogy within an interprofessional collaboration context.

Recommendation 6. To reinforce the use of teamwork activities as key professional development methods and strategies.

- Professional development activities can promote collective learning in meetings by including regular member checks to reflect, plan, implement and monitor one's progress on personal goals.
- Also, cooperative learning techniques, shared problem-solving opportunities, small group work, peer assisted learning, co-teaching and coaching should be expanded.
- To promote collaborative professional development – working with others for your professional development.
- To promote collective efficacy – believe that together they can make a difference to the students they teach, no matter what.

Recommendation 7. To include coaching and professional learning communities as key practices of effective professional development, in which the collaborative learning is embraced as both a goal and a teaching strategy.

- Coaching skills, coaching practice standards, models using universal design for learning in coaching, co- and team-teaching models are examples of contents found in some PDPs for inclusion. These need to be reinforced and expanded in PD objectives.
- To reinforce and expand strategies for composing a professional learning community, for promoting activities of observation and feedback.
- Meeting with critical friends of the team, composing a PLC, activities that develop observation and feedback skills, and composing diverse co-facilitator dyads are examples of strategies used in some PDPs focusing on inclusive competencies. These need to be reinforced and expanded.

Recommendation 8. To consider the educational systems in which teachers and other professionals are acting, developing feasible and applicable PD aligned with teachers and stakeholders' real learning needs.

- Exclusion and exit practices are still inherent in some of our countries educational systems.
- The use of the real context and of real-life professional challenges in continuing professional learning, facilitates the application and maintenance of new skills, promoting a sustained pedagogical change and learning for inclusion.

Focusing on collaborating with learners/families

Recommendation 9. To enable ALL teachers, across different subjects, to speak with their learners about social justice and children's rights to a valued and good life.

- To promote teachers' competences to embrace a human rights approach.

Recommendation 10. To promote skills for grounding educational practices on ALL learners' and families' voices as a key factor for an effective interprofessional collaboration.

- In the existing PDPs, only a limited emphasis on cooperation with learners and parents was found.
- Some PDPs focus on understanding the cultural and socio-economic needs of families and how to provide support, on understanding family characteristics and parents' roles, and on incorporating family's knowledge into the curriculum. These need to be reinforced and expanded.
- Communicating with parents in a constructive way and integrating learners and parents into interprofessional collaboration practices are contents found in some PDPs. These need to be reinforced and expanded.
- To know how to support and empower families to know and apply their rights.

Recommendation 11. To consider the impact of a professional development program on learners' feelings and their experience of being included as a critical outcome.

- So far, the impact of a PDP is mainly evaluated by teachers, through assessing what positive influence it had on their learning.
- If teachers change their attitudes, knowledge and skills, the critical outcome of PDP implementation should be how learners experience inclusion in the classroom. Future research could focus on learner experiences too.

Project: Proud to Teach All: Professional Development Strengthening Competencies to Teach All Learners in an Inclusive Learning Environment

Website: www.proudtoteachall.eu

Partners: Porto Polytechnic Institute and Artevelde University of Applied Sciences Ghent, together with www.proudtoteachall.eu/en/about/our-partners