

Professional Development Needs of Mississippi School-Based Agricultural Education Instructors When Working with Students with Special Needs: A Pilot Study

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Introduction

- Hoerst and Whittington (2009) found that 80% of agricultural teachers indicated the need for more training to implement teaching techniques related to inclusion.
- Teixeira and Edwards (2020) found more remains to be done for special education students within SBAE, while professional development events may bridge the gap in teacher experience and training needs.

Methodology

- Data was collected electronically using a Qualtrics survey instrument with a response rate of 18% from 25 respondents.
- Data was analyzed using SPSS version 26 and Microsoft Excel (McKim & Saucier, 2011) to determine the Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score (MWDS) for each of the presented disability types.

Theoretical Framework

- The Borich (1980) needs assessment model served as the framework for the study.
- The Borich (1980) model serves as a two-step response where participants rank their perceived relevance and perceived competency of the presented disability type.

Rank	Type of Special Need	MWDS
1	Blindness/Visual Impairment	5.71
2	Deaf/Hearing Impairment	5.43
3	Autism Spectrum	4.86
4	Traumatic Brain Injury	4.84
5	Emotional or Behavioral Disorder	4.51
6	Specific Learning Disability	3.42
7	Speech or Language Disability	3.23
8	Intellectual Disability	2.78
9	Orthopedic Impairment	2.65
10	Other Health Impairments	2.62
11	Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder	2.20

Table 1. Mean Weighted Discrepancy Scores for Professional Development Needs for Working with Students with Special Needs

Conclusions/Recommendation

- Findings of this study indicate a high need for professional development opportunities across many disability types.
- We recommend providing targeted professional development events focused on method of inclusion and accommodation methods based on the highest rated disabilities.
- It is also recommended the study be replicated with a larger population size.