Identifying inclusive training needs with the inclusive practices in English language teaching observation scale

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Abstract

Quality inclusive education has been guaranteed at the international policy level, but for inclusive education to be realized, teachers must be prepared to teach students with a wide variety of support needs. With well over a billion English language learners worldwide, and considering the fact that language learning can present many unique barriers to students with disabilities, the TESOL field has a growing need to consider how to best train teachers to teach inclusively. English language teachers (ELTs) generally lack training to teach students with disabilities, and little research has been done to identify specific training needs. If language learning environments are to honor the human right to inclusive education, then this is a critical research gap to close. This study reports on the use of a novel instrument, the Inclusive Practices in English Language Teaching Observation Scale (IPELT), in combination with post-observation interviews, to determine specific training needs among ELTs working at the postsecondary level in Japan. Magnitude coding of IPELT results and thematic analysis of field notes and interview data from 13 participants suggests that ELTs in this particular context would likely benefit from training in differentiation and specific considerations for teaching students with disabilities, as well as identifying possible students with disabilities. The participants also demonstrated a foundational skill set to create inclusive learning environments despite a general lack of relevant training.

Keywords: EFL, Higher education, Inclusive education, Teacher training, TESOL

In an attempt to safeguard the human right to quality inclusive education worldwide, the United Nations incorporated Sustainable Development Goal 4 in the broader 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Part of this Goal is to "ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities," as well as to "substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers" (United Nations, 2023). General Comment No. 4 to the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities further elaborates on this right and provides a roadmap to implementation in both policy and practice at various levels. One way in which it does this is by reiterating a distinction between *accessibility* and *accommodations* made in the earlier General Comment No. 2:

Accessibility benefits groups of the population and is based on a set of standards that are implemented gradually. Disproportionality or undue burden cannot be claimed to defend the failure to provide accessibility. Reasonable accommodation relates to an individual and is complementary to the accessibility duty. An individual can legitimately request reasonable accommodation measures even if the State party has fulfilled its accessibility duty. (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016, p. 8)

In other words, accessibility refers to a default state in an educational environment that allows persons with disabilities to access education and learning, whereas accommodations are specific, additional actions taken by educators to adapt to the specific needs of an individual or group in an educational setting.

General Comment No. 4 also provides the most functional definition of inclusive education currently available to policy makers and practitioners alike. This functionality stems from its multidimensional character: inclusive education is simultaneously defined here as a human right, a means of realizing other human rights, a principle prioritizing learners' wellbeing, and, finally, "the result of a process of continuing and pro-active commitment to eliminate barriers impeding the right to education, together with changes to culture, policy and practice of regular schools to accommodate and effectively include all students" (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016, p. 4). It is this fourth and final dimension of this definition that teachers can apply to their actual practice by using the concepts of accessibility and accommodations to remove barriers to learning and instigate change within their school culture.

Language learning and disability

With the number of English language learners worldwide estimated to be over 1.5 billion (Noack & Gamio, 2015) and as much as 16% of the world's population living with some form of disability (World Health Organization, 2023), there is a clear need for English language learning environments to be more accessible. In accordance with international policy guidance, this means that English language teachers (ELTs) should be adequately trained to teach students with disabilities (SWDs). This need is exacerbated by the fact that SWDs, in particular students with specific learning difficulties (SLDs), can encounter several unique barriers to language learning in both the cognitive and affective domains (Kormos, 2017; Liu & Huang, 2011). Students with dyslexia, for example, may experience greater difficulty understanding and internalizing syntactic and phonological rules when learning a foreign language (Sparks et al., 1991). Students with SLDs also experience heightened foreign language anxiety and lower language learning self-efficacy compared to their peers without SLDs (Chen & Chang, 2008; Javorsky et al., 1992; Kormos, 2017). Furthermore, barriers in the cognitive and affective domains can be self-reinforcing, turning into a spiral that negatively impacts motivation, acquisition, and achievement in language learning (Kormos, 2017; Liu & Huang, 2011).

ELTs' readiness to teach SWDs

There is also a substantial body of evidence indicating that ELTs working in a variety of different contexts lack training in special or inclusive education, and sizable percentages have reported feeling unprepared to teach or accommodate SWDs (Ali,

2018; Cimermanová, 2017; Fernández-Portero, 2022; Francisco et al., 2023; Hale & Ono, 2019; Razmjoo & Sabourianzadeh, 2018; Smith, 2006, 2008; Sowell & Sugisaki, 2020). Similar deficiencies have also been previously noted in the present research context of postsecondary English-language learning environments in Japan. Through interviews with five ELTs working at the postsecondary level in Japan, Lowe et al. (2021) found that, prior to teaching SWDs, all five teachers had positive attitudes about including such students in their instruction, but were concerned about being able to properly accommodate them. In a survey of 32 postsecondary ELTs in Japan with students with hearing impairments, Iwata et al. (2015) found that these teachers had generally positive views towards their students and were willing to make accommodations, but lacked confidence to do so. Similarly, Yphantides (2022) found through a narrative study that eight postsecondary ELTs in Japan had low inclusive practices self-efficacy and desired greater communication and collaboration with professionals within their institutions to better accommodate students with SLDs.

While not related to English language teaching specifically, a recent survey by Tăbăcaru et al. (2022) provides some insight into inclusive teaching preparedness and training needs for postsecondary teachers teaching foreign language students. Respondents to this survey were 158 teachers from a variety of disciplines working in higher education institutions and adult education organizations in Belgium, Finland, Greece, Romania, and the United Kingdom. Half of these teachers reported low confidence in teaching SWDs. Importantly, respondents also reported different training needs to better teach domestic and foreign students with SLDs. The most reported training needs for the latter group were for more knowledge about teaching and assessment methodology, knowledge about SLDs, and adequate support from their institution (Tăbăcaru et al., 2022).

Aside from self-reports from teachers, a small number of studies have made third party assessments of ELTs' capacity for inclusive instruction. Nyikes (2019), for instance, observed and interviewed three primary EFL teachers in Hungary and found that despite having no training in teaching students with SLDs, the teachers differentiated instruction, used multisensory teaching approaches, and created supportive learning environments. In a classroom observation of 17 secondary Israeli EFL students, 16 of whom had SLDs, Cohen (2011) attributed a high degree of participation to the teacher's ability to modify, scaffold, and present multisensory texts using assistive technology. In observations and interviews of four Iranian EFL teachers, all of whom reported a lack of training to teach SWDs, Razmjoo and Sabourianzadeh's (2018) observed supportive learning environments and a small degree of differentiated instruction. Wijaya et al. (2020) observed and interviewed a secondary-level ELT in Indonesia in order to investigate his classroom management of a class with a student with a physical disability; they found that the teacher created a comfortable learning environment, organized the classroom with the student's disability in mind, and routinized activities and instructions to include the student. Also in Indonesia, Lintangsari and Emaliana (2020) observed a university ELT who was able to reduce barriers to learning for a blind student by changing the seating arrangement, using multimodal support, differentiating materials, and modifying how she gave instructions for tasks.

There is also some evidence to suggest that most graduate degree (MA) programs in TESOL pay little attention to preparing their pre-service teachers to teach SWDs. In a survey of 241 MA TESOL programs worldwide, Stapleton and Shao (2018) categorized 3,877 courses within those programs into 15 knowledge fields. Among the 3,877 courses categorized, the knowledge field of specific learner groups, which included special education, had a .10 frequency rate among compulsory courses and a .19 frequency rate among elective courses. Because this category of specific learner groups contained other groups, for example adult learners or young learners, the number of courses on teaching SWDs specifically was likely even lower. It is of course possible, however, that some training in inclusive practices was included in other coursework, though this is not supported by the various investigations of in-service ELTs' preparedness to teach SWDs discussed above.

Despite all the evidence indicating a lack of inclusive knowledge and skills across the TESOL field, little has been done to identify specific training needs, though Ali's (2018) survey of 218 in-service ELTs at the primary level in Egypt is the most comprehensive attempt to inventory such needs. In this survey, respondents reported the highest need for in-service training on inclusive teaching methods, making instructional and curricular adaptations, developing inclusive education plans, using peer-mediated and cooperative learning, using multisensory input, and providing scaffolding and learning strategies. Respondents also reported the need for training on how to use strategies to gain students' attention, providing resources, and using technology, as well as expressed difficulty individualizing instruction in large classes and "differentiating between learning disabilities and language and communication disorders" (Ali, 2018, p. 175). In follow-up interviews with eight in-service ELTs who did not take the initial survey, a number of topics as potential foci for ongoing professional development were mentioned: "[e]valuation strategies; planning lessons for individualized instruction; instructional strategies; and strategies for dealing with behavioral problems of SEN [special educational needs] students as well as negative attitudes of normal students towards SEN students" (Ali, 2018, p. 173).

There is, therefore, a clear need to understand more about ELTs' specific training needs when it comes to implementing inclusive education. Improvement in inclusive training for both pre- and in-service ELTs would help ensure quality inclusive education as a human right across the TESOL field. Additionally, more comprehensive external investigations into ELTs capacity to teach inclusively can provide further and more thorough understanding of their inclusive training needs, including consideration of context-specific factors. The present research was therefore undertaken in an effort to gain such an understanding, especially with regard for the specific case context. To this end, the following research question was drafted: What are ELTs' training needs to more effectively include SWDs in their instruction?

Methods

Case context and participants

Case context

The case context for the present study is postsecondary education in Japan. It is important to note that at the postsecondary level in Japan, SWDs enjoy a policy of

selective inclusion, meaning that SWDs have the right to anonymity and only receive accommodations from their institution if they disclose their disability. This is different from the primary and secondary levels, wherein the parent(s) or guardian(s) of SWDs are legally required to disclose their disability to their school at the time of enrollment (Young, 2021). As such, teachers at the postsecondary level may have SWDs present in their class who have not disclosed a disability; for those students who have disclosed a disability, it is common practice for institutions to report specific support needs to their teachers, though the degree of support for both students and their teachers can vary greatly from institution to institution (JASSO, 2023). The total number of disclosed SWDs in Japanese higher education was 49,672 in 2022 (JASSO, 2023), though given the policy of selective inclusion, as well as the possibility that students may have undiagnosed SLDs, the number of actual SWDs is certainly higher. It is also worth noting that in this case context, language teachers do not require any specific teaching licenses. Institutions have their own individual employment criteria, though typically require an MA degree at a minimum, though not necessarily in a teaching-related field.

Participants

Participants for the current study were recruited using convenience sampling by contacting various postsecondary English language programs and professional associations for ELTs in Japan. Fifty-one teachers volunteered to participate, though due to a combination of institutional and scheduling restrictions, ultimately only 13 were able to participate. Informed consent from participants, as well as institutional approval, were gained in all cases. These 13 participants came from a variety of public and private universities in the Kyushu, Chugoku, Chubu, Kanto, and Tohoku regions of Japan. There were three Japanese and ten foreign national participants, and all held at least an MA degree in TESOL, Applied Linguistics, or Education, with five holding PhDs in the same field(s). Two of these teachers reported receiving pre-service training to teach SWDs as part of an MA degree, while the remaining 11 reported receiving no pre-service training to teach SWDs. Conversely, 11 participants reporting receiving in-service training in the form of attending relevant presentations or workshops conducted either in their workplace or at a professional conference, engaging in a community of practice, or doing independent research, while two reported no ongoing professional development focused on teaching SWDs.

There were nine male, three female, and one nonbinary participant; ages ranged from two participants in the their 30s to two who were over 60. To preserve anonymity, participants have been lettered A through M. Class sizes ranged from two students (Participant H) to 44 (Participant A). In all cases, English was the primary language of instruction and course and lesson aims related to improving English language proficiency. Proficiency levels also ranged from false beginner (Participant F) to highly advanced (Participants G, K, and M), though most were in the intermediate range. One observed class was in a hybrid format with one student attending via Zoom (Participant G), while all others occurred on campus as traditional in-person instruction.

Data collection and treatment

The inclusive practices in english language teaching observation scale

Data was collected using the Inclusive Practices in English Language Teaching Observation Scale (IPELT, see Appendix), a new instrument modified from Sharma and Sokal's (2016) Inclusive Practices Classroom Observation Scale, the New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education's (2010) Quality Indicators for Effective Inclusive Education Guidebook, and inventoried inclusive practices from Smith (2018) and Grace and Gravestock (2009) to be contextually-sensitive to the TESOL field. The IPELT consists of 40 inclusive behaviors related to inclusive lesson design and delivery. These 40 behaviors were also grouped into 10 pedagogical domains to help with subsequent analysis: learning environment, classroom management, materials, task organization, communication, assessment, student development, teacher development, differentiation, and specific considerations for SWDs. These domains were determined following similar groupings in the New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education's (2010) Quality Indicators for Effective Inclusive Education Guidebook for their ability to target individual areas of improvement when creating less restrictive environments for SWDs. In order to determine which, if any, inclusive practices occurred as standard accessible practice as opposed to accommodations, participants were only observed teaching classes in which there were no students with disclosed disabilities enrolled.

As 22 of the 40 inclusive behaviors were determined to be directly observable, data on the presence of these behaviors was captured and rated using the IPELT during direct lesson observations. The remaining 18 items were captured and rated through a set of structured questions during post-observation interviews. Eschewing the 5-point scale in Sharma and Sokal (2016), all 40 items on the IPELT were rated on a 4-point scale for subsequent magnitude coding after the New Jersey Quality Indicators (New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education, 2010) for ease of use and to reduce rater drift over time, as there was concern that understanding of the differences between "infrequently" and "sometimes" and between "sometimes" and "frequently" were more prone to drift over multiple observations compared to the difference between "partially" and "substantially".

In addition to rating the prevalence of these behaviors, detailed field notes were kept on each teacher's actions throughout the lesson. These notes took two concurrent forms. First of all, teaching actions or lesson components that directly related to one of the 40 inclusive behaviors were noted, for example, how lesson materials were formatted. Secondly, a running notation of each teacher's actions throughout the lesson was kept in an open notes section so that these could later be coded and analyzed for possible emergent patterns or themes. In some cases, clarifying questions related to the 22 observable behaviors were asked during the post-observation interview before rating a behavior. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using the voice-to-text application Otter. The transcripts were then manually revised to check for errors in the automatic transcription. Field notes and interviews for each participant were then combined into text files for analysis in Dedoose.

Critical incident technique

This arrangement of lesson observations and interviews conducted as post-observation conferences (POCs) was designed to follow the critical incident technique (Flanagan,

1954), wherein each lesson could be regarded as the central *activity* composed of various *critical incidents*, with the 40 inclusive behaviors regarded as *critical behaviors* that were in alignment with the central *aim* of determining the inclusive character of each participants' instruction to help identify training needs. For example, to determine the extent to which participants exhibited the inclusive practice of routinizing instructions and tasks (a critical behavior), all participants were asked "do you follow a routine when it comes to instructions and the organization of activities? If so, what is the routine and do you ever break it?". When answering this question, participants were invited to connect their answer to a specific example (a critical incident) from the observed lesson (the activity). This method of data collection was selected for two reasons. First was its ease and flexibility of implementation, especially with regard for extending beyond a behavioral focus to account for the cognitive and affective dimensions of activities, as well as its compatibility with grounded theory (Hughes, 2007). Secondly, POCs were assumed to be a familiar form of reflection on teaching for most ELTs that also have a well-documented history of prior use for research inquiries into teaching practice within the TESOL field, including the use of the critical incident technique (Farrell, 2018).

Data analysis

Field notes and POC transcripts were then thematically coded and analyzed following Braun and Clarke (2006). First cycle coding was primarily done deductively using a combination of structural coding, wherein concept-based codes are applied to longer strings of text for indexing purposes, and provisional coding (also known as a priori coding), wherein a start list of anticipated codes is generated in advance of data collection; emergent themes not included in the start list were captured using in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2021). Magnitude coding (Saldaña, 2021) with a range of zero to three was used for 40 codes corresponding with the critical/inclusive behaviors that comprise the IPELT to generate averages across the group of 13 teachers and identify which behaviors were more or less common. Field notes for the 22 observable behaviors were thematically coded and analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965), meaning that each new code application could be compared to previous instances of the same code and follow recommendations from Braun and Clarke (2006) to determine if there were any commonalities in how these behaviors were or were not realized. Simultaneous coding (Saldaña, 2021), meaning multiple codes could be applied to a single string of text, was also employed, as responses to several questions were related to observable inclusive practices.

Axial coding was employed for second cycle coding because it allows relational analysis of first cycle categories and subcategories, as well as their properties and contextual dimensions (Boeije, 2010; Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2021). This was deemed especially important given that field notes from the classroom observations and POC interview data were combined for first cycle coding and contained simultaneous magnitude and thematic codes. It was hoped, then, that axial coding would allow for reorganization of the first cycle codes in order to define clearer parameters for these codes and their relationships with each other. All data collection, coding, and analysis was done by a single researcher. Prior to this data collection, the IPELT was piloted with one volunteer ELT, and peer debriefing regarding data collection occurred with this volunteer and another

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research advisor. This research advisor also participated in peer debriefing on data treatment.

Results and discussion

IPELT results

Mean magnitude coding weights from the IPELT were calculated and sorted from high to low to provide insight into the character of participants' inclusive practices. These coding weights are provided in their original sequence in Table 1 and sorted from high to low mean weights in Table 2.

Table 2, which shows the mean IPELT magnitude codes weights sorted from high to low, indicates which behaviors and pedagogical domains might require more or less attention in any disability-related training for ELTs, at least in the present context. Viewing this table, we can see that twenty-eight behaviors have a mean weight of two or higher, meaning that the ELTs in the present study frequently demonstrated the ability to include SWDs in these specific ways, while 12 other behaviors have a mean weight below two, meaning that participants rarely demonstrated these behaviors. Looking at the pedagogical domains for these behaviors makes it possible to determine which areas of teaching require greater inclusivity, at least among the current data set. An examination of the pedagogical domains in Table 2 reveals that these 13 participants were more effective at including SWDs in their task organization, communication, and learning environment in the observed lessons. Certain behaviors related to student development, classroom management, and assessment were observed with less consistent frequency, while those related to differentiation and specific consideration for SWDs were among the least frequently observed by noticeable margins.

If these findings are representative of ELTs in the broader case context or the field at large, than they suggest that training in differentiation and specific consideration for SWDs is starkly needed for ELTs to more effectively include SWDs in their instruction. As will be discussed below, POC interview data supports this interpretation of the data in Tables 1 and 2. Before proceeding, however, it should not be overlooked that ELTs appear to have a foundational skill set for including SWDs in their instruction, even if this inclusion appears to be incidental. Behaviors related to communication and task organization, for instance, are likely common in English language classrooms owing to the fact that language classrooms by their very nature attend to communication, and so language teachers are likely better equipped to communicate across language barriers and organize tasks that impart similar skills to their students. Where ELTs appear to fall short, however, is modifying their instruction for specific, disability-related needs.

Training needs identified through thematic analysis

When asked to identify their own training needs in relation to teaching SWDs, two participants were unable to identify any specific needs, while thematic analysis of the remaining 11 participants' responses revealed several needs that could be grouped into two general categories: increased knowledge and skills about teaching SWDs and training on identifying SWDs in the classroom. Participants had a range of ideas about how to best meet these needs, which were occasionally linked to specific forms of disability, contextual factors, and inclusive behaviors.

Table 1 Mean IPELT magnitude coding weights

Pedagogical Domain	Inclusive Teaching Behaviors	M	SD
Learning environment	- Arranges the classroom with physical and sensory impairments in mind (e.g. by providing enough space to move and by minimizing distraction)	2.46	0.52
	- Creates a safe learning environment where students feel encouraged to take risks	2.85	0.38
	- Uses available technology in lessons to enhance student learning when appropriate	2.54	0.66
Classroom management	- Has established standards of conduct and they are clear to students	1.62	1.45
	- Uses a number of strategies to prevent behavioral disruption	1.54	0.78
Materials	- Uses appropriate fonts and formatting in materials	2.23	0.73
	- Uses multisensory and multimodal materials and tasks during activities (e.g. by using visual organizers and manipulatives)	2	0.91
Task organization	- Routinizes instructions and task structures	2.77	0.6
	- Designs learning experiences that connect new learning to prior learning	2.54	0.88
	- Scaffolds activities to help students meet learning objectives	2.31	0.85
	- Relates learning activities to students' personal experiences (e.g. by providing rich, meaningful input)	2.23	0.93
	- Links different skills in and across activities	2.31	0.48
	- Provides reasonable time allocations to achieve the learning goals and adjusts if students need more or less time	2.69	0.48
	- Allows collaborative pair- and group-work	2.23	0.6
	- Forms small groups of students who differ in ability and interests to work in joint learning activities	1.77	0.73
Communication	- Articulates high expectations for students	2.23	1.01
	- Presents clear criteria for activities	2.54	0.66
	- Modifies directions to meet the diverse learning needs of students (e.g. rephrasing, giving written and spoken directions, modeling or providing an example)	2.23	0.83
	- Provides alternate explanations or examples when students are confused	2.77	0.6
	- Asks effective questions that match instructional goals	2.31	1.18
	- Provides equal opportunities for students to ask questions	2.62	0.77
	- Responds appropriately to students' questions/comments	2.92	0.28
Assessment	- Uses assessment outcomes to inform instruction	1.77	1.01
	- Uses a variety of assessment strategies to measure student progress	2.15	0.8
	- Makes assessment accommodations when necessary	2.23	0.83
Student development	- Tolerates learner error	3	0
	- Recognizes and respects affective factors of learning	2.77	0.44
	- Provides frequent and appropriate feedback during class activities	2	1
	- Encourages students to reflect on what they have learned	1.23	0.83
	- Helps learners develop learning strategies and metacognition	1.31	1.03
	- Uses strategies to motivate learners	2.15	0.38
Teacher development	- Collaborates with colleagues to share best practices	2.15	0.8
	- Reflects on teaching with regard for individual student needs	2.08	0.95
Differentiation	- Differentiates learning materials and tasks	1.23	0.6
	- Selects curricular materials and resources that align with student learning goals	1.15	0.9
	- Plans instruction to address students' individual strengths and weaknesses	1.46	0.78
	- Plans instruction to address interests of students	1.54	0.66

Table 1 (continued)

Pedagogical Domain	Inclusive Teaching Behaviors	M	SD
Specific consideration for SWDs	- Considers the possibility of SWDs in their classroom and the barriers they face	2.31	1.03
	- Takes specific pedagogical approaches to accommodate SWDs	0.77	1.09
	- Considers institutional/national/global policy guidance on accommodating SWDs	0.77	0.73

Increased knowledge and skills about teaching SWDs

Firstly, nine of the 13 participants expressed the need for more knowledge and skills about teaching SWDs, though there were a number of different ways in which these participants preferred to gain such knowledge and skills. Participant J, for instance, wanted written case studies of practical ways to include SWDs along with "a clear set of principles to create inclusivity," while Participant K felt the need for training on how to best teach and manage students experiencing poor mental health and students with ADHD. Participant D stated that a three-day workshop on inclusive practices and greater knowledge of the latest research on teaching SWDs would help make up for a perceived inability to best accommodate SWDs. Participant I desired "more materials on the students' perspective" because she wanted to know if her accommodations were actually helping. Participant M, in connection to a number of complaints about the support for SWDs at their institution, wanted more information about on-campus services and provisions for support so they could pass this information on to students. Some other inclusive behaviors on the IPELT that participants connected to their own lack of inclusive knowledge and skills were creating accessible materials, differentiating materials and tasks, and establishing and communicating standards of conduct, specifically with regard to a lack of knowledge about inclusive language.

Four participants in the present study also expressed the need for more frequent and formalized collaboration as a means of overcoming their own lack of inclusive knowledge and skills. Two of these four wanted to share best practices in the form of regular teachers' meetings or lesson observations with colleagues, while the other two wanted to collaborate with experts from other fields. Other researchers have suggested that collaboration, both with other teachers and outside experts, as a means of ongoing professional development would help satisfy this need for more inclusive training and knowledge among ELTs (Ali, 2018; Fernández-Portero, 2022; Yphantides, 2022). Participant G, for instance, specified that she "would like to be able to collaborate with psychologists, because they've seen a lot more cases than I have, and I would like to hear their feedback on what they think is necessary to do to support students." In a similar vein, Participant H posited that

> I think that inclusivity and differentiation should be part of all aspects of teaching. On the ESL side of things, I don't think we have the knowledge base to effectively promote differentiation and inclusivity. And I think that in secondary teaching, I think there is a vast reservoir of collective knowledge relating to all aspects of language teaching, which we do not tap into, particularly because we are university teachers, and I think there's maybe an aspect of status involved. I think there are some teachers

Table 2 Individual IPELT magnitude codes sorted by mean weights, high to low

Pedagogical Domain	Inclusive Teaching Behaviors	*M*	*SD*
Student development	Tolerates learner error	3	0
Communication	Responds appropriately to students' questions/comments	2.92	0.28
Learning environment	Creates a safe learning environment where students feel encouraged to take risks	2.85	0.38
Communication	Provides alternate explanations or examples when students are confused	2.77	0.6
Student development	Recognizes and respects affective factors of learning	2.77	0.44
Task organization	Routinizes instructions and task structures	2.77	0.6
Task organization	Provides reasonable time allocations to achieve the learning goals and adjusts if students need more or less time	2.69	0.48
Communication	Provides equal opportunities for students to ask questions	2.62	0.77
Learning environment	Uses available technology in lessons to enhance student learning when appropriate	2.54	0.66
Communication	Presents clear criteria for activities	2.54	0.66
Task organization	Designs learning experiences that connect new learning to prior learning	2.54	0.88
Learning environment	Arranges the classroom with physical and sensory impairments in mind (e.g. by providing enough space to move and by minimizing distraction)	2.46	0.52
Task organization	Scaffolds activities to help students meet learning objectives	2.31	0.85
Communication	Asks effective questions that match instructional goals	2.31	1.18
Task organization	Links different skills in and across activities	2.31	0.48
Specific consideration for SWDs	Considers the possibility of SWDs in their classroom and the barriers they face	2.31	1.03
Materials	Uses appropriate fonts and formatting in materials	2.23	0.73
Communication	Articulates high expectations for students	2.23	1.01
Communication	Modifies directions to meet the diverse learning needs of students (e.g. rephrasing, giving written and spoken directions, modeling or providing an example)	2.23	0.83
Task organization	Allows collaborative pair- and group-work	2.23	0.6
Task organization	Relates learning activities to students' personal experiences (e.g. by providing rich, meaningful input)	2.23	0.93
Assessment	Makes assessment accommodations when necessary	2.23	0.83
Assessment	Uses a variety of assessment strategies to measure student progress	2.15	0.8
Student development	Uses strategies to motivate learners	2.15	0.38
Teacher development	Collaborates with colleagues to share best practices	2.15	0.8
Teacher development	Reflects on teaching with regard for individual student needs	2.08	0.95
Materials	Uses multisensory and multimodal materials and tasks during activities (e.g. by using visual organizers and manipulatives)	2	0.91
Student development	Provides frequent and appropriate feedback during class activities	2	1
Task organization	Forms small groups of students who differ in ability and interests to work in joint learning activities	1.77	0.73
Assessment	Uses assessment outcomes to inform instruction	1.77	1.01
Classroom management	Has established standards of conduct and they are clear to students	1.62	1.45
Differentiation	Plans instruction to address interests of students	1.54	0.66
Classroom management	Uses a number of strategies to prevent behavioral disruption	1.54	0.78
Differentiation	Plans instruction to address students' individual strengths and weaknesses	1.46	0.78
Student development	Helps learners develop learning strategies and metacognition	1.31	1.03
Student development	Encourages students to reflect on what they have learned	1.23	0.83
Differentiation	Differentiates learning materials and tasks	1.23	0.6

Table 2 (continued)

Pedagogical Domain	Inclusive Teaching Behaviors	*M*	*SD*
Differentiation	Selects curricular materials and resources that align with student learning goals	1.15	0.9
Specific consideration for SWDs	Takes specific pedagogical approaches to accommodate SWDs	0.77	1.09
Specific consideration for SWDs	Considers institutional/national/global policy guidance on accommodating SWDs	0.77	0.73

> *who want to view themselves as more like professors, whereas I think we should view ourselves more like teachers, and we should be accommodating our students more like teachers who are operating in the West and we should be, we should tap into that reservoir and freely use that knowledge base because it is there, but we don't.*

For Participant H, the ability to teach SWDs among postsecondary ELTs in Japan is inhibited by a self-imposed insularity that prevents some teachers from looking outside their field or teaching context to benchmark inclusive teaching practices. Echoing Participant H's desire to look beyond borders, Participant F, who had previously noted that as the parent of a child with a disability frequently attends online seminars about disability in education, shared that "I think Japanese inclusive education is very, very out of date. And because when I read some paper, article in English, they're saying totally different things."

Identifying students with disabilities

In addition to this assortment of training needs related to the knowledge and implementation of inclusive practices, three participants wished to know more about how to identify students with disabilities enrolled in their classes. Participant J, for instance, thought he could benefit from the use of "a sensitive framework for discerning potential disabilities in the classroom," while Participant E wanted "the ability to tell the difference between, like, what's bad behavior and what's something to do with a disability." This need is linked to participants' concern for issues related to diagnosis and/or disclosure of SWDs under a policy of selective inclusion, as has been previously reported by other studies in the same research context (Ruddick et al., 2021; Yphantides, 2022). However, taking a more accessibility-focused approach to education would not only diminish such concerns, but also reduce the need for training on identifying SWDs and the associated risks of exclusion under a policy of selective inclusion.

Similar needs to those discussed immediately above have also been identified as being high priority among ELTs in the same context (Lowe et al., 2021; Ruddick et al., 2021; Yphantides, 2022) as well as with ELTs working at the primary level in Egypt (Ali, 2018), ELTs trained in the U.S. (Sowell & Sugisaki, 2020), and postsecondary educators with foreign language students in five European countries (Tăbăcaru et al., 2022). While several of the training needs identified in the current research inquiry have been noted in similar previous studies, others were not, indicating that such needs are somewhat context dependent. No teachers in Ali's (2018) study, for instance, expressed a need for training in diagnosis and identification of needs, which, as was just noted, is likely related to the policy of selective inclusion in Japanese higher education. Other prevalent

training needs, namely those related to differentiation and instructional strategies for teaching SWDs, are likely more common across the TESOL field. As such, the current data set suggests that some inclusive training needs for ELTs are more universal, while others are more context-dependent.

Conclusion

Limitations and suggestions for further research

There are some interrelated limitations to the current study. Firstly, when attempting to measure inclusive education, there is a "high likelihood of encountering a lack of contextual sensitivity in measurement instruments, no matter what the method or criteria chosen" (Loreman et al., 2014). For instance, background information about participants' total teaching experience was not collected, though such information could have better informed the current findings. As for the IPELT itself, some behaviors are not fully qualified through both observation and participants' self-reporting in the POCs. For example, when asking teachers to report about how they set expectations for the class, many said they do this on the first day of class, but the instrument was unable to capture how effectively this was communicated. Some items that were initially thought to be directly observable could also be better contextualized through direct dialogue with the participants. Because participants were not asked to elaborate on the in-class observed behaviors on the IPELT, there was less scope for these behaviors to be reflected on in the POCs by the teachers, and thus less likelihood that they could be linked to broader concerns or contextual factors though the critical incident technique. A more comprehensive understanding of these teachers' approaches could have been gained through additional questioning. As such, any future use of the IPELT should invite teachers to elaborate on all 40 behaviors.

More significantly, when interpreting results from the IPELT, it must be noted that rendering any definition of inclusive education into actual practice is value-laden and subjective (Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2021), meaning that the instrument, the 40 inclusive behaviors it contains, and the individual assessments of the research subjects' ability to perform these behaviors is based on a subjective notion of inclusion and "best" inclusive practices. In other words, the IPELT itself implies a certain paradigm or idea(l) of inclusion that may not reflect the best form of inclusion for every classroom being observed. For example, some participants received lower magnitude code weights for not maximizing pair- or group-work when they allowed independent work that could have been collaborative, but this weighting rests on the assumption that collaborative group work is always more inclusive. However, some students may benefit more from independent work time. This also raises the likelihood that some participants performed inclusive behaviors, perhaps intentionally, that were not captured by the IPELT at all. As such, the IPELT's 40 inclusive behaviors may require revision, including by addition or deletion, to be more contextually sensitive.

Related to these limitations, a single rater allows more bias to influence the interpretation of critical incidents during observations and POCs and increases the possibility of rater drift in magnitude coding. These limitations should have been

minimized during second cycle coding, but could be further mitigated through the presence of additional expert raters who have critical discussions of the IPELT itself and its implementation before deciding how to interpret critical incidents and what final magnitude code weights to assign for each behavior.

Implications for ELT training

Even with these limitations in mind, the findings reported above indicate that ELTs would likely benefit from additional and targeted training in differentiation and specific considerations for teaching SWDs, as well as identifying possible SWDs. To a lesser extent, inclusive skills and knowledge related to student development, classroom management, and assessment would also likely be of value for many ELTs. These findings corroborate similar conclusions that ELTs and their students would benefit from more structured and systematic institutional support when teaching SWDs, including but not limited to clear communication from higher education institutions about support provisions, opportunities for formalized collaboration with colleagues and other specialists, and in-service training on inclusive practices (Ali, 2018; Kasparek & Turner, 2020; Ruddick et al., 2021; Scott & Edwards, 2012; Smith, 2006; Stinson, 2018; Young & Schaefer, 2019; Young et al., 2019; Yphantides, 2022). Importantly, however, based on both the above analysis and its comparison to similar previous studies, specific inclusive training needs for ELTs appears to be context-dependent. In-service training programs should take this fact into account, as well consider looking beyond their field or teaching context for insight on how to create more accessible learning experiences and accommodate a variety of learning needs.

The above findings also suggest that many ELTs likely already have a foundational skill set to create a more inclusive learning environment, and may simply need a greater awareness of how do this for a greater variety of support needs. Pfingsthorn (2022), furthermore, argued that in order to be more inclusive, pre-service foreign language teacher training may need to "critically reflect on the organisation of teaching in terms of the degree of autonomy, need for structure, range of attitudes, amount of discipline and self-organisation that can and should be expected and/or required of students" (p. 189). With this in mind, it is hoped that the IPELT might serve as a baseline from which to construct more customized sets of inclusive practices for language teachers working in any given context, as any implementation of inclusive education must necessarily be adapted to suit the local circumstances (Forlin, 2018; Gordon-Gould & Hornby, 2023; Graham, 2020; Hunt, 2019). Finally, the IPELT also has potential to be used as a reflective tool, as teachers could assign their own magnitude code weights or do so with a critical partner to reflect on the efficacy of their teaching with regard for including or accommodating SWDs. As such, the IPELT could also be used for pre- or in-service professional development in a variety of English-language teaching contexts.

Appendix

Inclusive practices in english language teaching observation scale

Not observed	Partially	Substantially	Fully
The behavior is never observed despite opportunities for its presence	The behavior is evident in few applicable activities observed in the class; there is substantial room for improvement	The behavior is evident in most applicable activities observed in the class; there is some room for improvement	The behavior is evident in all applicable activities and forms an integral part of the lesson; there is little to no room for improvement

Teacher's name:

  Institution:

  Course title:

  Number of students:

  Date of observation:

  Lesson objectives:

  Class characteristics:

  Script to read to teachers before interview:

Thank you for letting me observe your teaching and for participating in this interview! The interview should take between 45–60 min in total. First, I am going to ask you some simple questions about your teaching in general terms. These questions are intended to help me gain a better understanding of your pre-teaching process, for example lesson planning. Many of these are simple yes/no questions, and there is no need to elaborate, though you may if you like. Next, after those questions, I will invite you to elaborate further through a short series of more open-ended questions. Do you have any questions before we begin?

	Behaviors Observed in Lesson	NO	P	S	F
1.	Uses multisensory and multimodal materials and tasks during activities (e.g. by using visual organizers and manipulatives) Notes:				
2.	Uses appropriate fonts and formatting in materials Notes:				
3.	Arranges the classroom with physical and sensory impairments in mind, e.g. by providing enough space to move and by minimizing distraction Notes:				
4.	Creates a safe learning environment where students feel encouraged to take risks Notes:				
5.	Uses available technology in lessons to enhance student learning when appropriate Notes:				
6.	Scaffolds activities to help students meet learning objectives Notes:				
7.	Articulates high expectations for students Notes:				
8.	Presents clear criteria for activities Notes:				
9.	Modifies directions to meet the diverse learning needs of students (e.g. rephrasing, giving written and spoken directions, modeling or providing an example) Notes:				
10.	Provides alternate explanations or examples when students are confused Notes:				
11.	Asks effective questions that match instructional goals Notes:				

Behaviors Observed in Lesson	NO	P	S	F
12. Allows collaborative pair- and group-work Notes:				
13. Relates learning activities to students' personal experiences (e.g. by providing rich, meaningful input) Notes:				
14. Links different skills in and across activities Notes:				
15. Provides reasonable time allocations to achieve the learning goals and adjusts if students need more or less time Notes:				
16. Tolerates learner error Notes:				
17. Recognizes and respects affective factors of learning Notes:				
18. Provides frequent and appropriate feedback during class activities Notes:				
19. Encourages students to reflect on what they have learned Notes:				
20. Helps learners develop learning strategies and metacognition Notes:				
21. Provides equal opportunities for students to ask questions Notes:				
22. Responds appropriately to students' questions/comments Notes:				

Notes:

Behaviors Determined through Post-Observation Interview	NO	P	S	F
23. Selects curricular materials and resources that align with student learning goals *(To what extent do you select materials and resources so that they align with student learning goals [as opposed to your own or curricular goals for their learning]?)*				
24. Plans instruction to address students' individual strengths and weaknesses *(To what extent do you plan lessons to address students' individual strengths and/or weaknesses?)*				
25. Plans instruction to address interests of students *(To what extent do you plan your lesson to address or include students' interests?)*				
26. Designs learning experiences that connect new learning to prior learning *(To what extent do you plan your lesson to connect new learning to prior learning?)*				
27. Routinizes instructions and task structures *(Do you follow a routine when it comes to instructions and the organization of activities? If so, what is the routine and do you ever break it?)*				
28. Differentiates learning materials and tasks *(How often do you differentiate learning materials and tasks? In other words, do you ever give different materials or tasks to individual students based on their needs?)*				
29. Forms small groups of students who differ in ability and interests to work in joint learning activities *(How do you determine how to pair and group students?)*				
30. Uses assessment outcomes to inform instruction *(To what extent do you use assessment outcomes to inform your instruction?)*				
31. Uses a variety of assessment strategies to measure student progress *(How do you measure students' progress both within a lesson and across the term of the course?)*				
32. Makes assessment accommodations when necessary *(Do you ever make assessment accommodations for students? If so, why do you make such accommodations?)*				
33. Has established standards of conduct and they are clear to students *(Have you established standards of conduct and communicated those to students? When and how did you do this?)*				
34. Uses a number of strategies to prevent behavioural disruption *(What strategies do you use to prevent disruption in class?)*				

Behaviors Observed in Lesson	NO	P	S	F

35. Uses strategies to motivate learners   .
(What strategies do you use to motivate learners?)

36. Collaborates with colleagues to share best practices
(How often do you collaborate with colleagues to share best practices?)

37. Reflects on teaching with regard for individual student needs
(How often do you reflect on the efficacy of your teaching with regard for individual students' needs? What is the mode of reflection [e.g. critical friend groups, teaching journal, etc.]?)

38. Considers the possibility of students with disabilities (SWDs) in their classroom, and the barriers they face
(Do you actively consider the possibility that students with disabilities may be present in your class? [If yes: Do you think about how their experience of learning might compare to other students in the class, and do you do anything in particular as a result of this consideration?])

39. Takes specific pedagogical approaches to accommodate SWDs
(Do you take any specific pedagogical approaches to accommodate students with disabilities? [If yes: What approaches?])

40. Considers institutional/national/global policy guidance on accommodating SWDs
(To what extent do you consider policy guidance from any level [i.e. from your institution, the Japan government, or international policy] on including or accommodating students with disabilities?)

Additional questions:
• For you, what problems or difficulties in teaching English to students with disabilities are the most significant? (If nudge needed: these could be related to language learning, the classroom environment, your institution, or really anything. They could be based on your own experience, or the experience of others, or simply your understanding and knowledge of the topic.)
• To what extent do you feel prepared by your qualifications and training to teach English to students with disabilities?
• Have you participated in any professional development aimed at teaching students with disabilities? If so, how would you characterize that experience?
• What are your current training needs when it comes to teaching students with disabilities? In other words, what knowledge or skills do you think your need in order to teach such students?
• To what extent do you feel supported by your institution to accommodate students with disabilities enrolled in your classes?
• Is there anything you think is important that we haven't talked about?

Notes:

(modifed from Grace & Gravestock, 2009; New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education, 2010; Sharma & Sokal, 2016; Smith, 2018)

Abbreviations
ELT(s)   English language teacher(s)
IPELT   Inclusive Practices in English Language Teaching Observation Scale
POC(s)   Post-observation conference(s)
SLD(s)   Specific learning difficulty(ies)
SWD(s)   Student(s) with disabilities
TESOL   Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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