Abstract

Public policy and current educational reforms have challenged schools to close the achievement gap for all students, including those with disabilities as required under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. As schools seek to implement sound instructional practices for students, technology has become a dominant force in schools and society. The focus of improving instruction and meeting the needs of diverse learners has not yet blended with the technology capabilities that are more readily available in schools. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) seeks to build an inherent flexibility into the curriculum and to utilize technology to accommodate diverse learners.

The purpose of this study was to analyze how UDL training impacted school personnel’s perceptions of inclusion, instruction, student engagement, and the use of technology to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. The sample consisted of faculty from 50 Indiana schools, and analysis was completed based on respondents’ level of UDL training. Significant differences were found in perceptions that the primary responsibility for accommodating classroom activities for students with disabilities lies with the special education teacher, as well as whether accommodations designed for students with disabilities create increased opportunities for all learners. Significant differences were also found in how technology is used to provide choice and flexibility to students and differentiate instruction. There were significant differences in faculty perceptions that choice and technology impacted students’ levels of engagement. Significant differences were found among variables based on respondents’ categorization as general education or special education, as well as categorization as administrators or teachers.