

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING  
TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY  
AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY  
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION SETTINGS IN VIETNAM

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Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (EDUCATION)

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## STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby certify that the work embodied in the thesis is my own work, conducted under normal supervision.

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted, or is being examined, for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University's Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968 and any approved embargo.

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THI QUYNH NI PHAM

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## ABSTRACT

Challenging behaviour (CB) in students with intellectual disability (ID) remains one of the most pressing and problematic issues for teachers in special education settings. Students' CB may prevent them from maximising engagement with learning activities and social interaction within and beyond the classroom. Thus, schools and teachers need practical and effective approaches to support students with ID and CB.

CB in students with ID is still reported as a complex issue in special education settings in Vietnam. Although in recent years many efforts in research and practice have been made to support these students, there is still an implementation gap between research on behaviour management, and practice in addressing CB for students in classrooms. Teacher professional development and learning is considered an essential framework that bridges this gap.

This current research project comprised two studies that investigated the outcomes and implementation aspects from the Multi-component teacher professional development and learning (MTPDL) program on Function-based intervention in Vietnamese special education settings. The purpose of Study One was to pilot the research design and instruments which were used in Study Two. Six students with ID and CB from six special education classrooms in the Central Coast region, Vietnam, their twelve teachers and six parents participated in the project. A modified parallel mixed methods design formed by merging quantitative and qualitative data in case studies was used in this project. For quantitative data, a multiple baseline across participant single-case design was used for Study One and an AB single-subject design was employed for Study Two. For qualitative data, individual interviews and observations were conducted before, during and after the MTPDL program to explore how teachers changed after the

program. An interview with parents and teachers using an open-ended questionnaire was also conducted to examine the social validity of this project.

The findings suggest that teachers with little or no background in special education can practice Function-based Intervention successfully after their participation in the MTPDL program which combined the intensive training, ongoing coaching, job-embedded practice and ongoing evaluation. After the MTPDL program, participating teachers improved their understanding and level of confidence in addressing CB in their classrooms. Also, teacher strategies changed in a positive way but inconsistently. Students' CB decreased, and the replacement behaviours increased after the MTPDL program, but this outcome did not remain when the intervention ended.

The outcomes support using Function-based Intervention and Function-based Intervention Decision Model to address CB in students with ID and CB, and using an alternative model in conducting teacher professional development and learning. Some difficulties during the practice such as using Functional Behaviour Assessment and fundamental concepts and some obstacles from the MTPDL program such as workload issue and family cooperation, were also noted in this project.

These findings are very meaningful because the project provided an original evidence in using Function-based Intervention and an alternative teacher professional development and learning model in Vietnamese special education settings. In the discussion, some implications and recommendations for further research, policy development and practice are suggested.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABA	Applied Behaviour Analysis
CB	Challenging behaviour
CBCL-V	Child Behaviour Checklist-Vietnamese version
FBA	Functional Behaviour Assessment
ID	Intellectual disability
IQ	Intelligence quotient
MTPDL	Multi-component teacher professional development and learning
PBS	Positive Behaviour Support
TPDL	Teacher professional development and learning
VABS-VN	Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales-Vietnamese version
WISC-IV-VN	Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, 4 <sup>th</sup> edition, Vietnamese version

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