IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION. AN EXAMPLE OF AN EXPERIENCE-GROUNDED MODEL

LUCIA DE ANNA, MARZIA MAZZER
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA «FORO ITALICO»

Research questions

■ How to deliver high quality, efficient and most of all engaging training for today's teachers that are supposed to deal with an increasingly heterogeneous school population?

■ How can we train teachers not only able to answer to the SEN of their students but also competent to make students' diversity a valuable resource and a stimulus to globally transform and innovate the learning environment for the benefit of all the pupils?
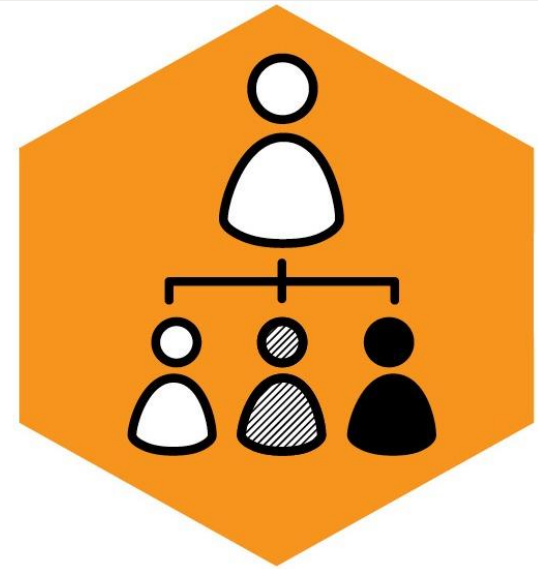
Teaching All Students

A definition of **Continuing Professional Development** (CPD)

- CPD is a **planned, continuous and lifelong process** whereby teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities, and to improve their knowledge, skills and practice, leading to their empowerment, the improvement of their agency and the development of their organisation and their pupils (Padwad & Dixit, 2011)
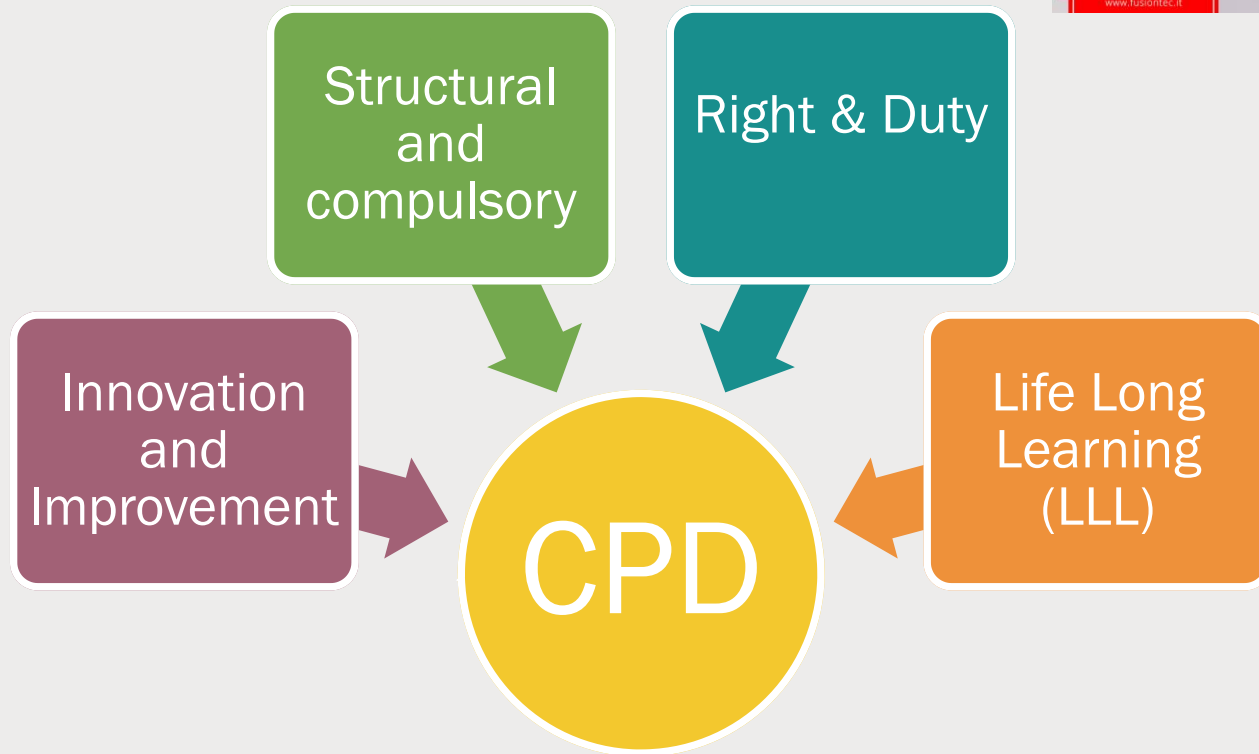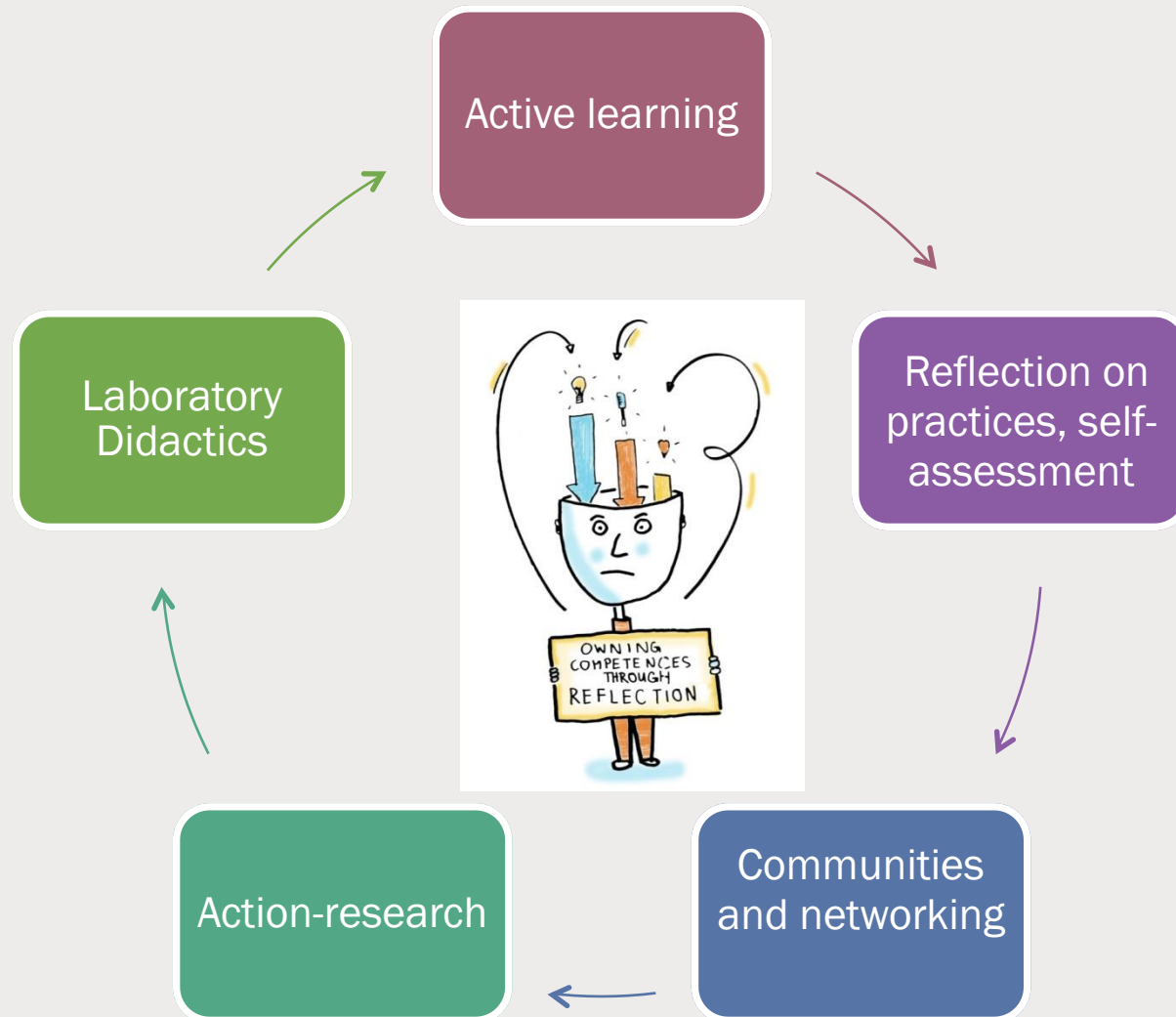
Factors affecting CPD's success

- it is seen by teachers to be **relevant to their needs** and those of their students

- **teachers are centrally involved** in decisions about the content and process of CPD

- **collaboration and the sharing of expertise** among teachers is fostered

- CPD is a collective enterprise supported by schools and educational systems

- expert internal and/or external support for teachers is available

- CPD is situated in schools and classrooms

- CPD is recognised as an integral part of teachers' work

- **inquiry and reflection are valued** as central professional learning processes

- teachers are engaged in the **examination and review of their beliefs**

- student learning provides the motivation for professional learning

- CPD is seen as an **ongoing process** rather than a periodic event

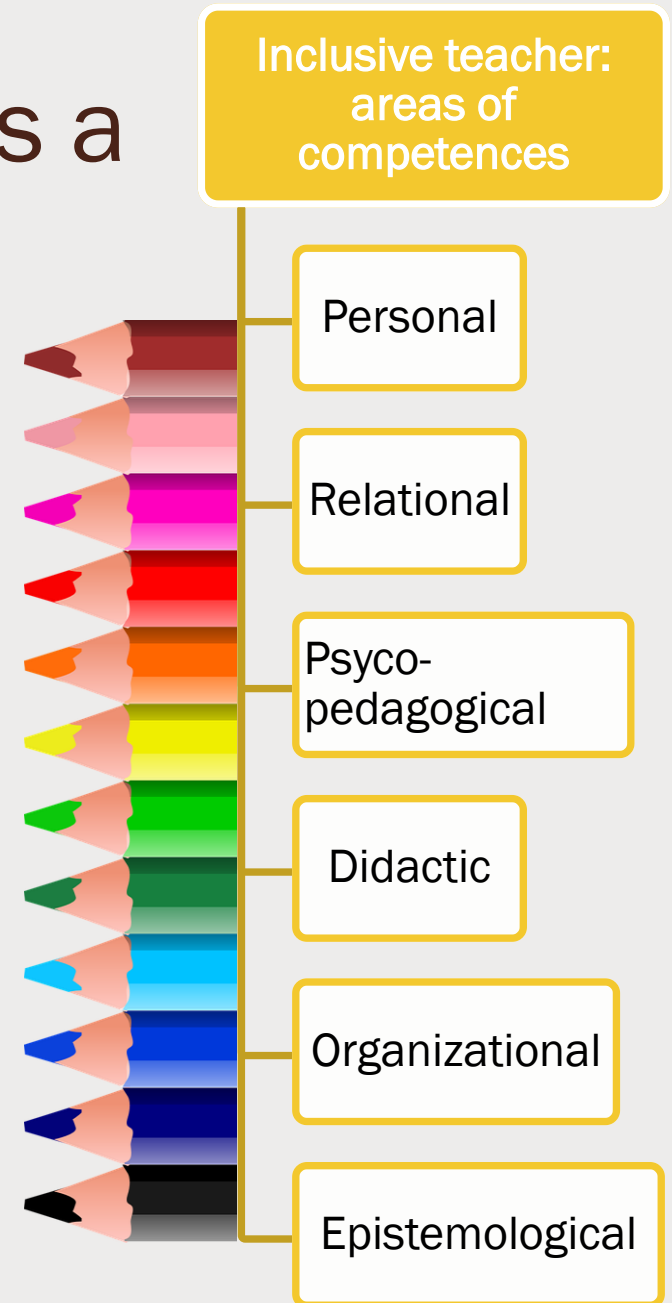- there is strategic leadership within schools.

CPD in Italy

Structural and compulsory

Right & Duty

Innovation and Improvement

CPD

Life Long Learning (LLL)

National Teachers'Training Program 2016-2019 (Law 107/2015)

Which training model for CPD?

Inclusive education as a transversal issue

■ "Attention to inclusion and diversity should be understood not as a specific professionality for students with Special Needs, but as a "normal" professional attitude able to "modulate" the intervention in relation to the individual characteristics of each student"(National Teachers'Training Program 2016-2019)

Inclusive teacher: areas of competences

Personal

Relational

Psyco-pedagogical

Didactic

Organizational

Epistemological
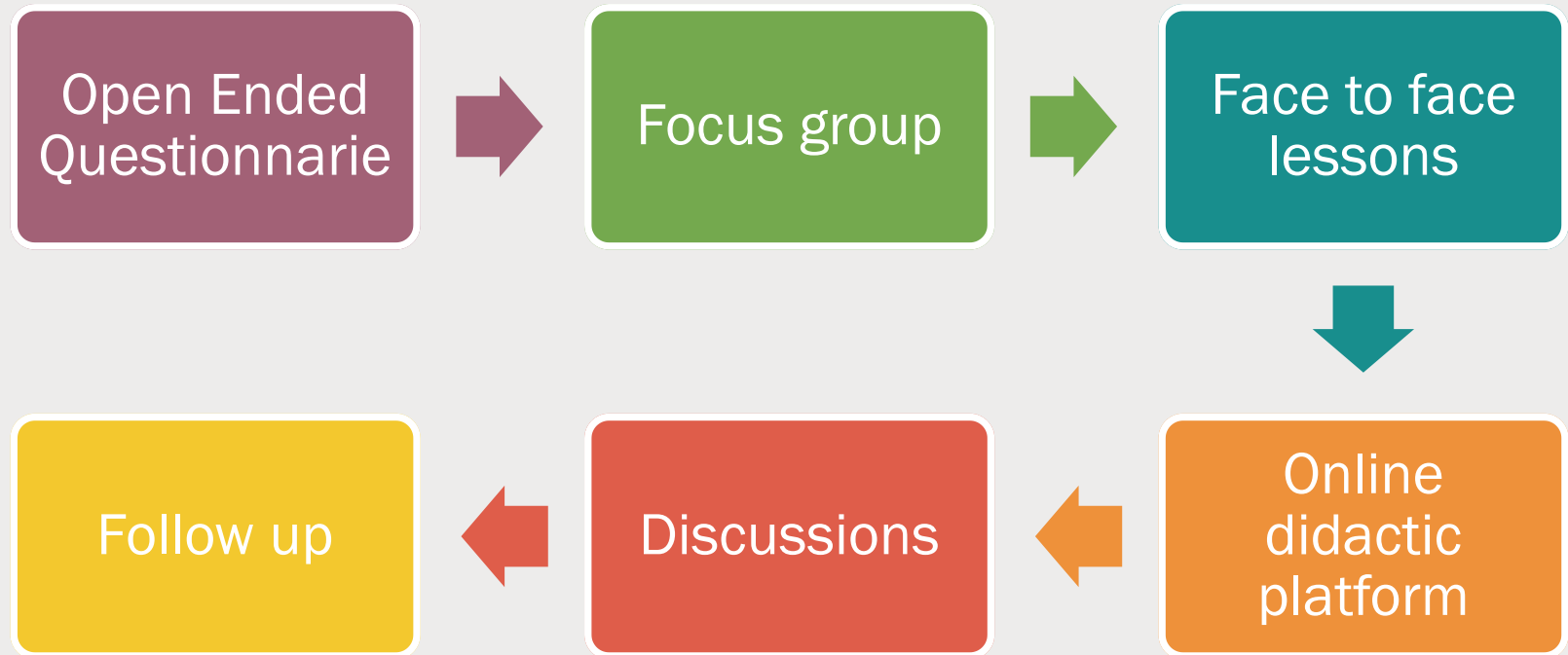
An example of an experience-grounded course

Course Name: «Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: how to foster successful learning and inclusion»
Duration: 32 Hours
Trainers: Research group of Didactics and Special Ed of University of Rome «Foro Italico»

Open Ended Questionnarie → Focus group → Face to face lessons ↓

Follow up ← Discussions ← Online didactic platform

Our research

Qualitative research

Sample size: small group of teachers

7 open-ended questions about their experiences, perceptions and understanding of the subject (inclusion of students with ASD)

Data analysis: content analysis as the basis of coding categories

Sample characteristics

Educational level
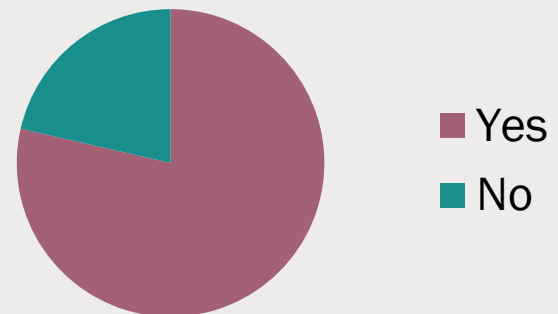
- Primary
- Lower Secondary
- Upper Secondary

Teachers' role

- General teachers
- Special Ed teachers

Special Ed training?

- Yes
- No

Collaboration between General Ed teachers and Special Ed teachers
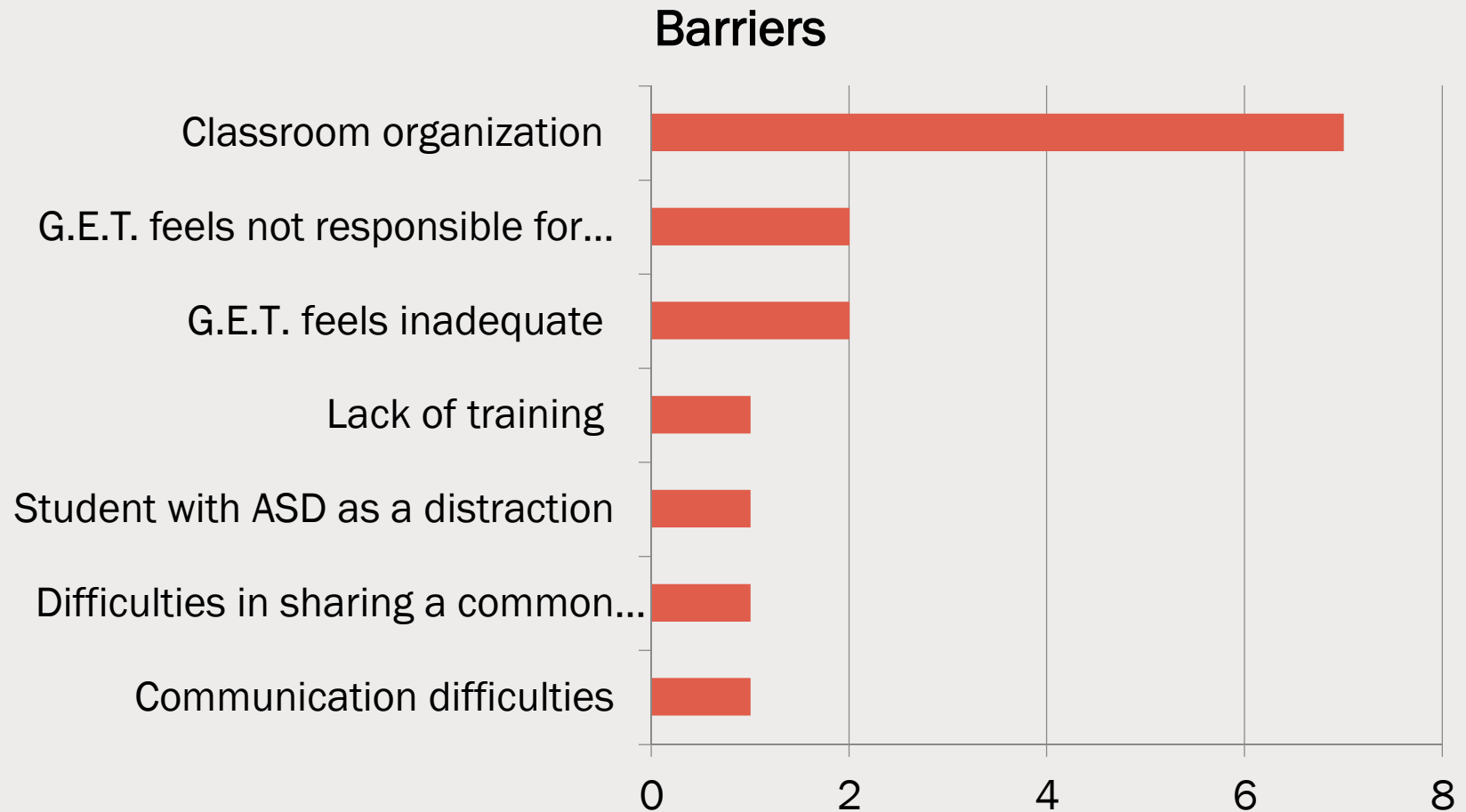
Barriers

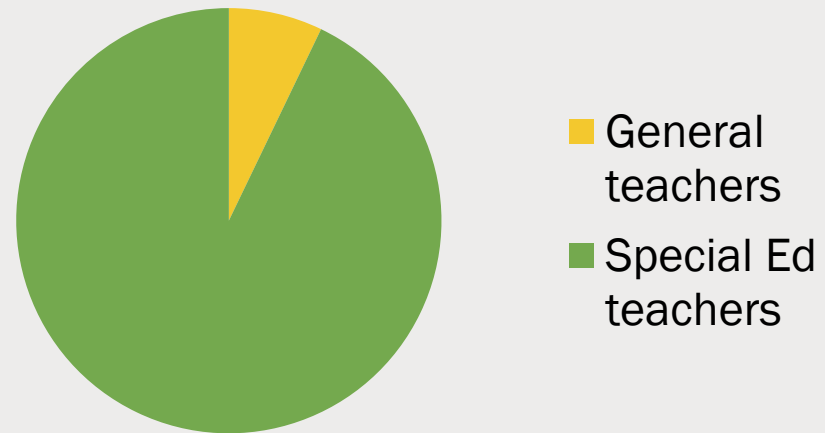# Collaboration between General Ed and Special Ed teachers

Facilitators

Category	Value
Special Ed teachers as mediator	7
Co-planning didactic	5
Sharing of information	2
Team of special ed teachers	1
Sharing of strategies for behavioural...	1
Intervention of and expert	1
Disability awaress training	1
Sharing of competences	1
Alliance with Principal/ SEN Coordinator	1
Teachers more available as model	1

0 2 4 6 8
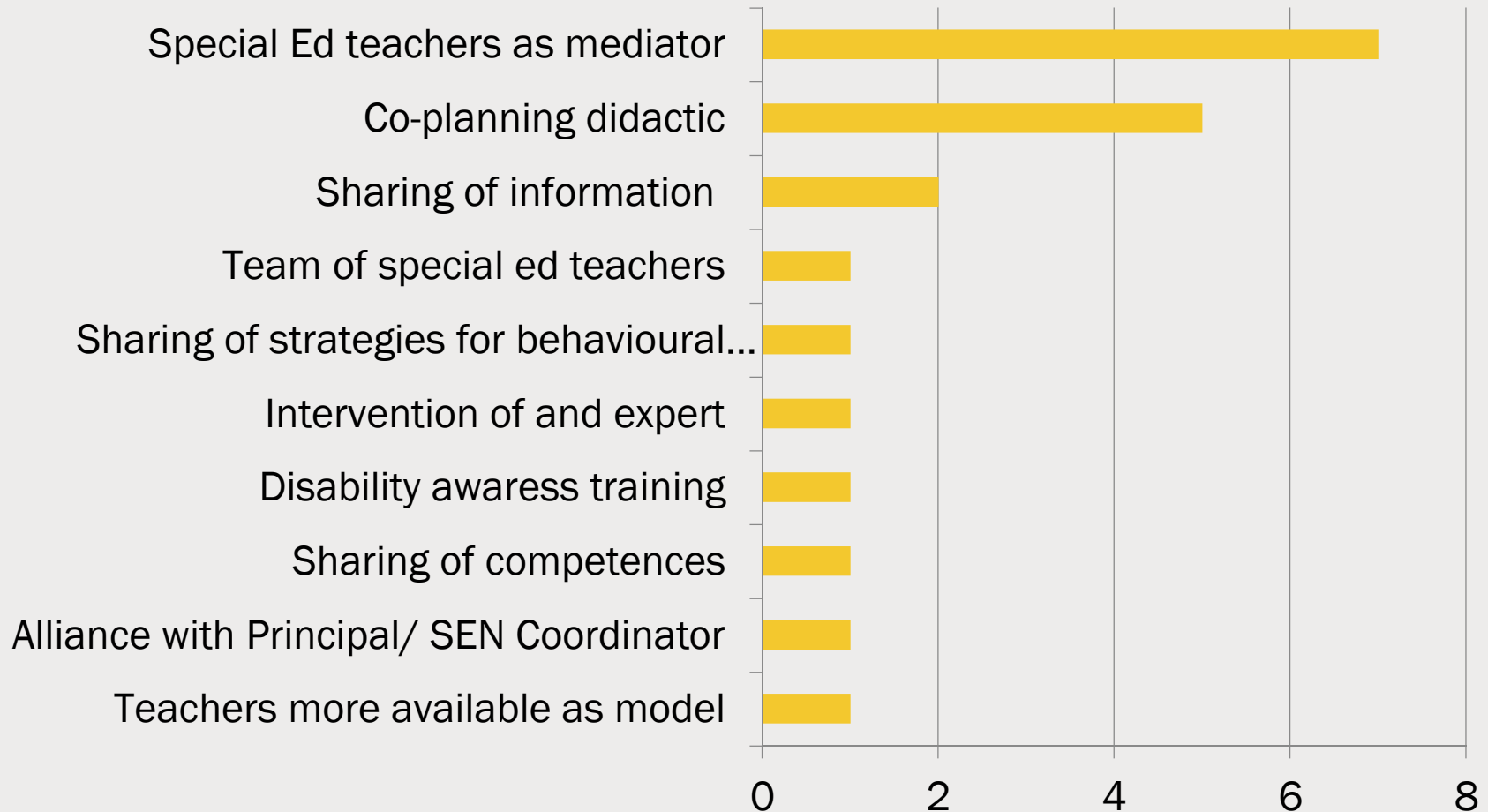
Collaboration between school and family

Facilitators

- Sharing of didactic strategies (GLHO): 8
- Frequent contacts (face to face, by phone..): 7
- Mutual trust: 3
- Empathy, respect and not intrusiveness: 2
- Clear roles and functions: 1
- Alliance with Principal: 1
- Family as mediator between school and expert: 1

Collaboration between school and family

Barriers

Parents' anxiety	3
Lack of trust	2
Interference of expert charged by family	1
Non acceptance of disability	1

Scale: 0, 0,5, 1, 1,5, 2, 2,5, 3, 3,5
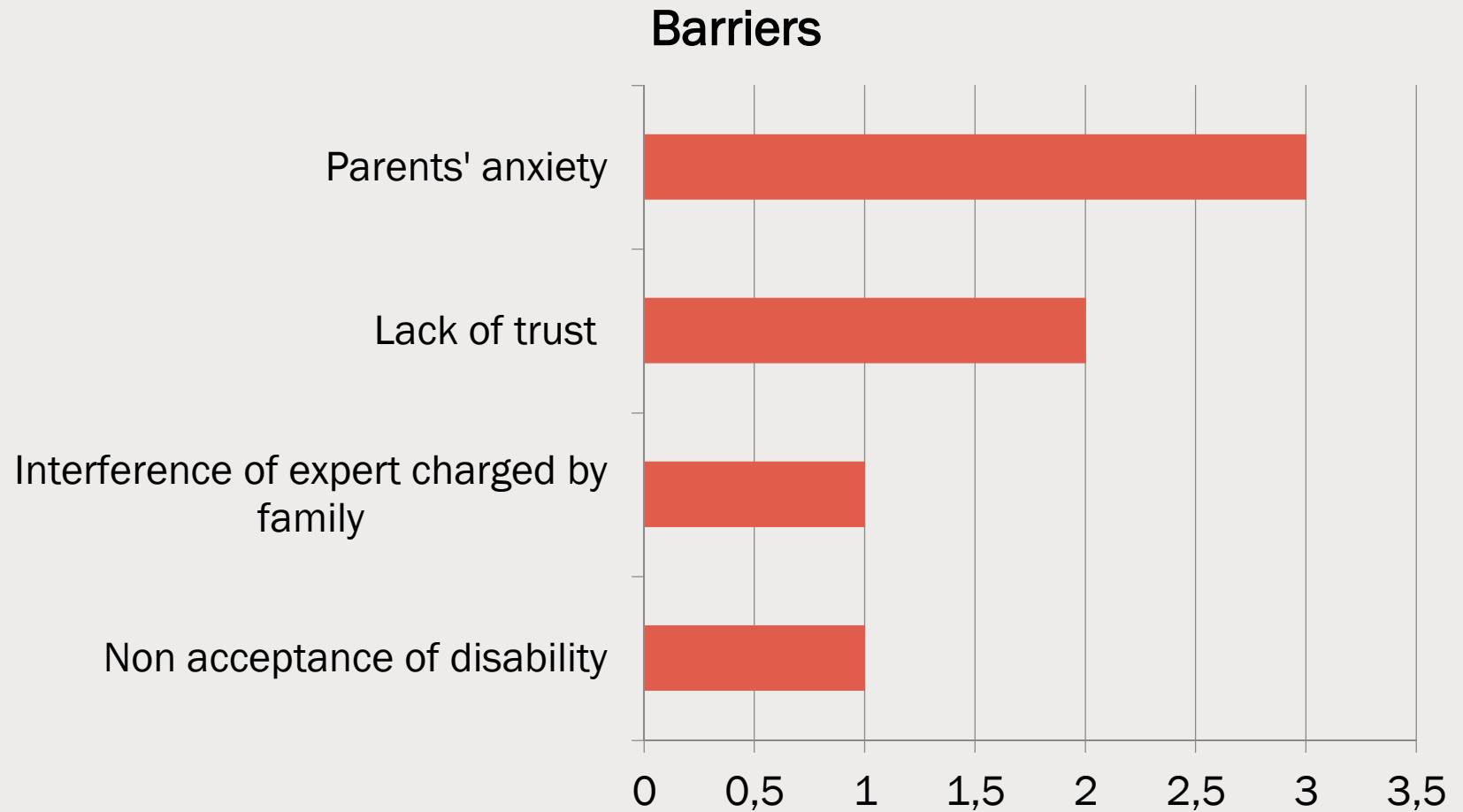
Friendly environment

Barriers

Barrier	Value
Classroom dimension	4
Lack of ICT	1
Lack of spaces outside the classroom	1
Noisy environment	1
Excessive number of desks	1
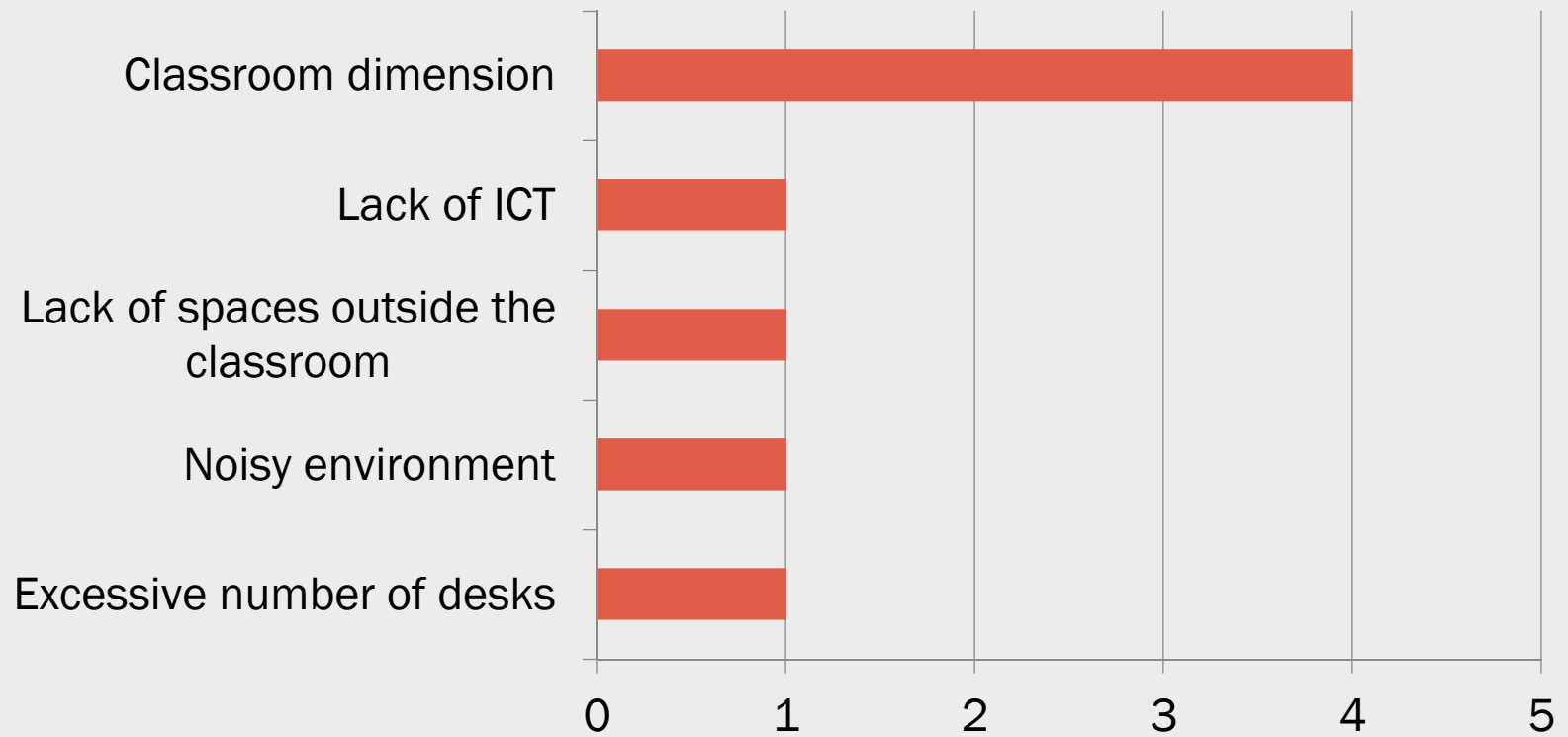
Friendly environment

Facilitators

Category	Value
Classroom organization	7
Laboratories (gym, music)	6
Spaces outside the classroom	3
Visual supports (e.g. agenda)	3
LIM and ICT	2
Library	1
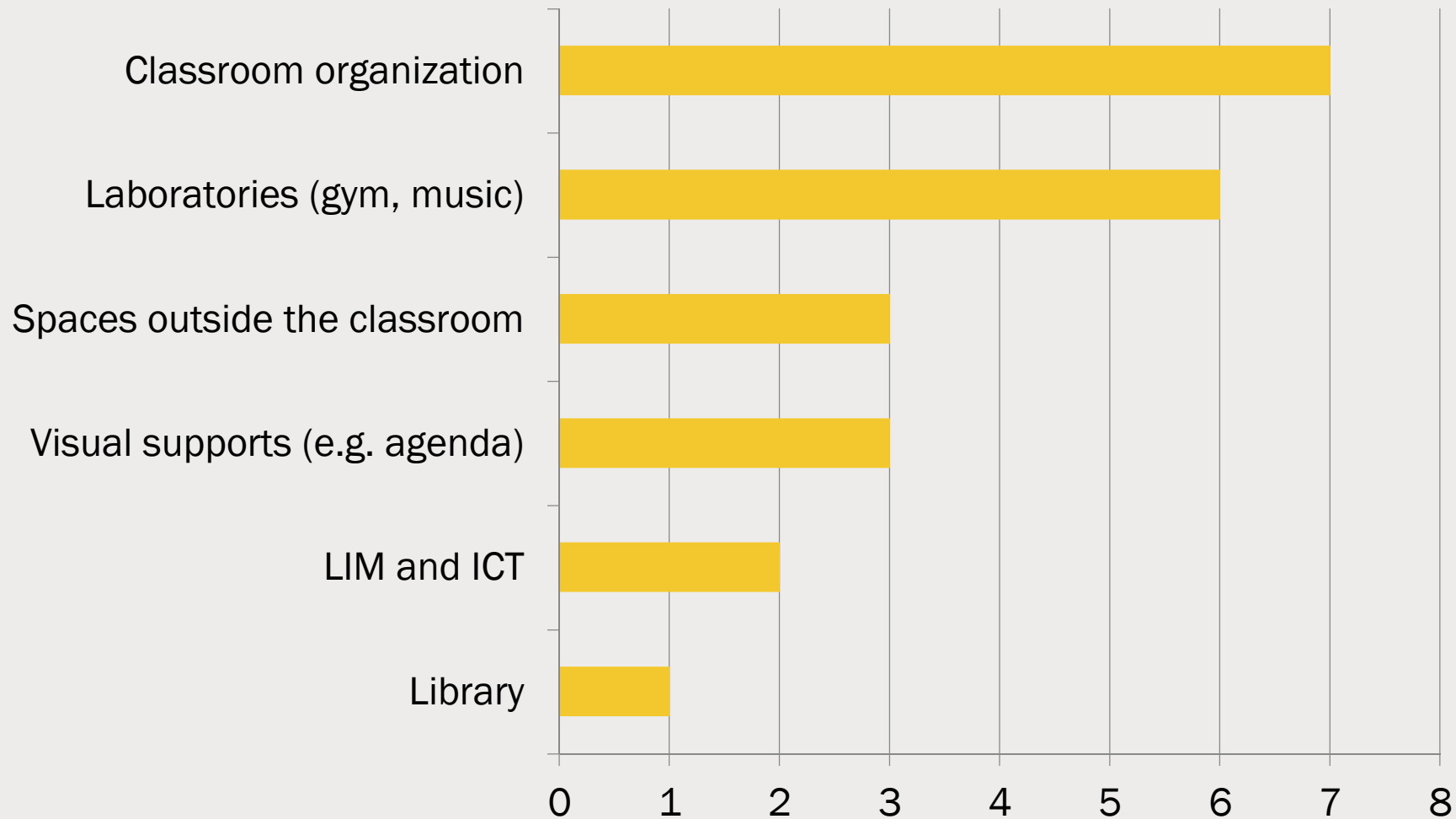
How to link IEP and general curriculum?

Facilitators

Facilitator	Value
IEP with min requirements linked to GC	7
Exploitation of strenghts and interests	5
Visual schedule and agendas	4
Didactic strategies (CA - PT)	4
Positive reinforcement	3
Use of visual channel	3
Active learning	2
Respect for student's timing	2
Use of AAC	2
ICT	1
Communication and social competences	1
Inclusive project as didactic frame	1
Observation of student with ASD	1

Peer relationships and inclusive culture

Facilitators
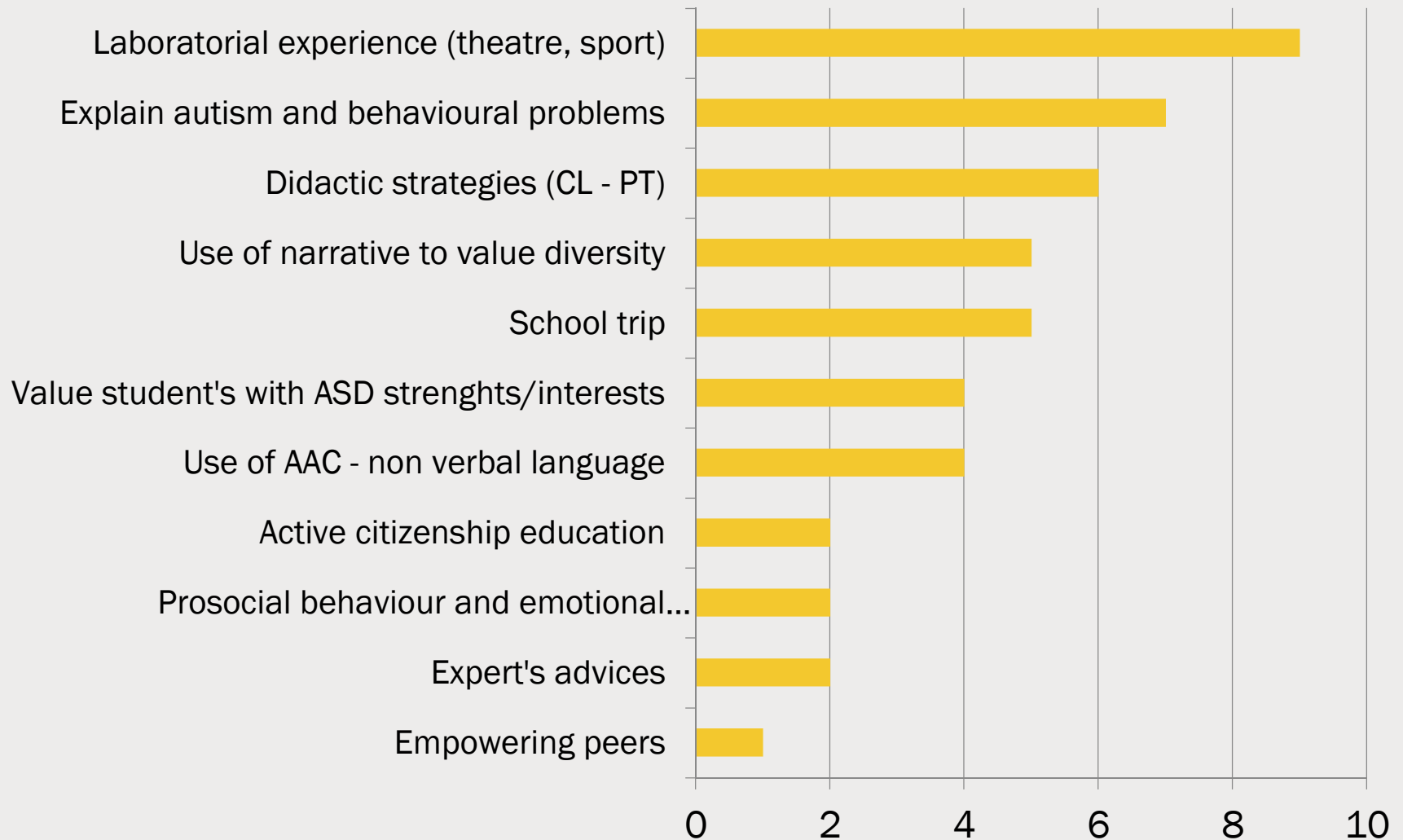
Facilitators to inclusive processes

Facilitators

Bar chart showing facilitators and their values:

- Communication and collaboration — 7
- Individualized education — 6
- Value strenghts and successes — 5
- Emotional intelligence and prosociality — 5
- Peer as resource — 4
- Visual languages — 4
- Cooperative learning — 4
- Structuring (space-activities) — 4
- Listening and pay attention — 3
- Laboratorial experiences and projects — 3
- Additional timing - less workload — 2
- Use of ICT — 2
- Prevention — 2
- Use of specific approach for autism — 1
- Focus on lived experience (life story) — 1

# Barriers to inclusive processes

Barriers
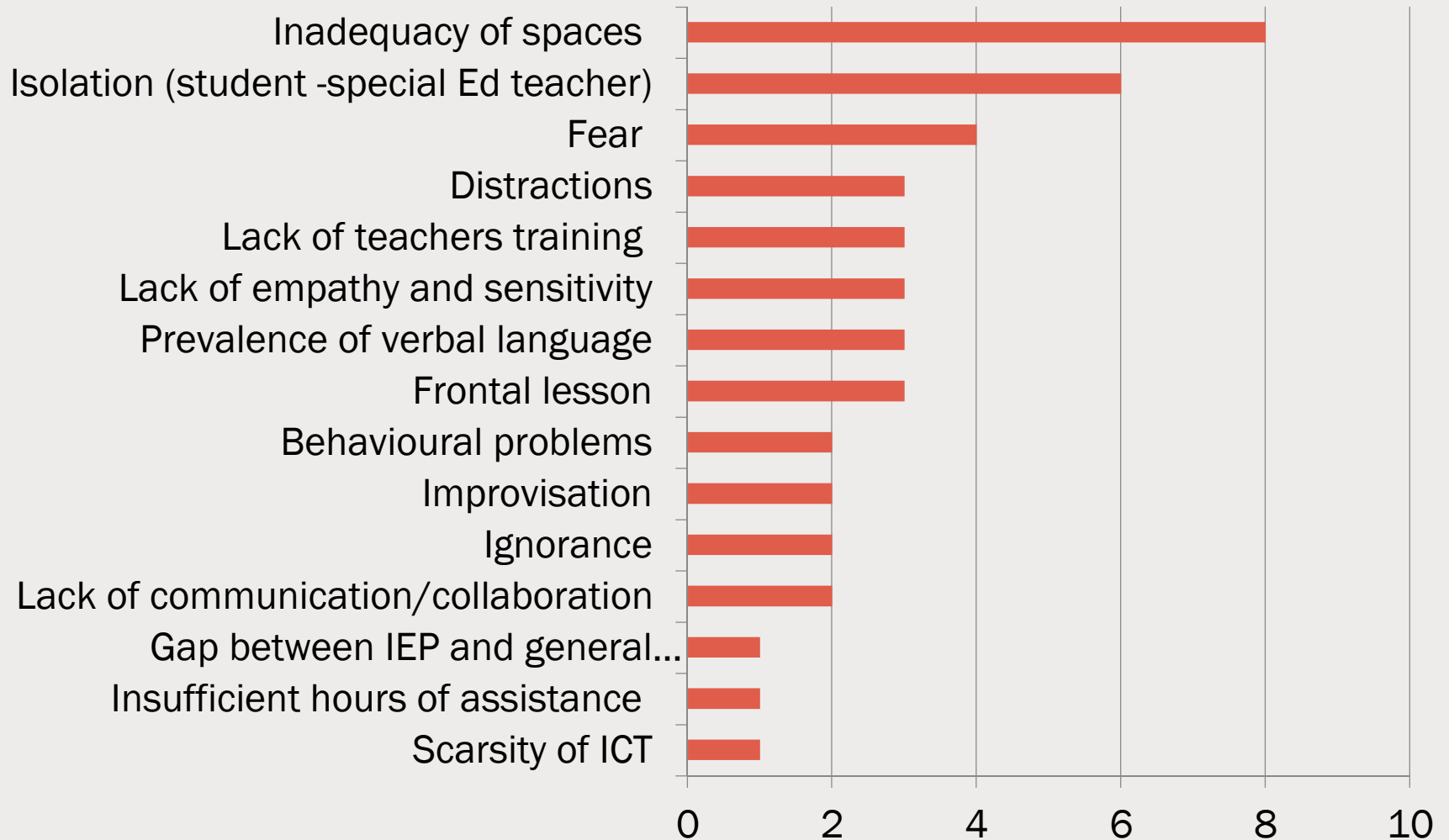
Plan for the future...a mixed approach to CPD for inclusive education

- **Conventional approaches** to CPD such as courses and workshops on specific issues

- **Reflection groups**, where special ed teachers, general teachers and researchers meet to share experiences of teaching and to examine evidence from their lessons (such as video recordings of teaching)

- **Professional learning communities**, through which groups of teachers and researchers meet (face to face or online) to examine critical issues in their schools and classrooms

- **Consultancy work,** through which appropriately-skilled researchers support the implementation of inclusive practices in school
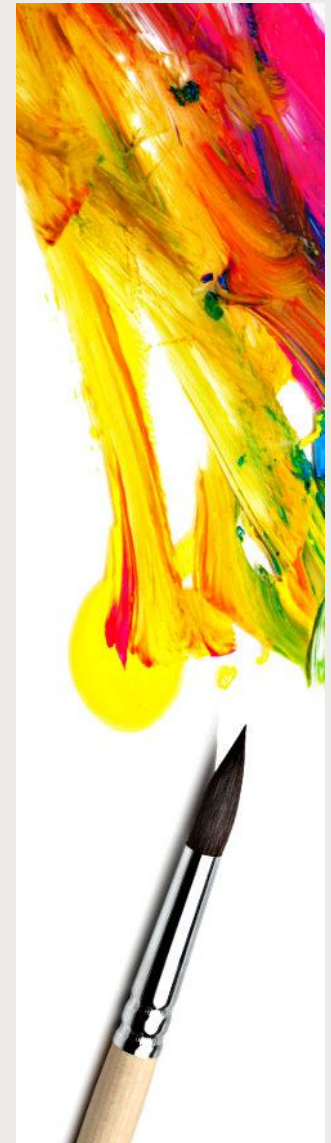
Plan for the future...
an action-research project

https://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/cpd_framework_for_teachers.pdf
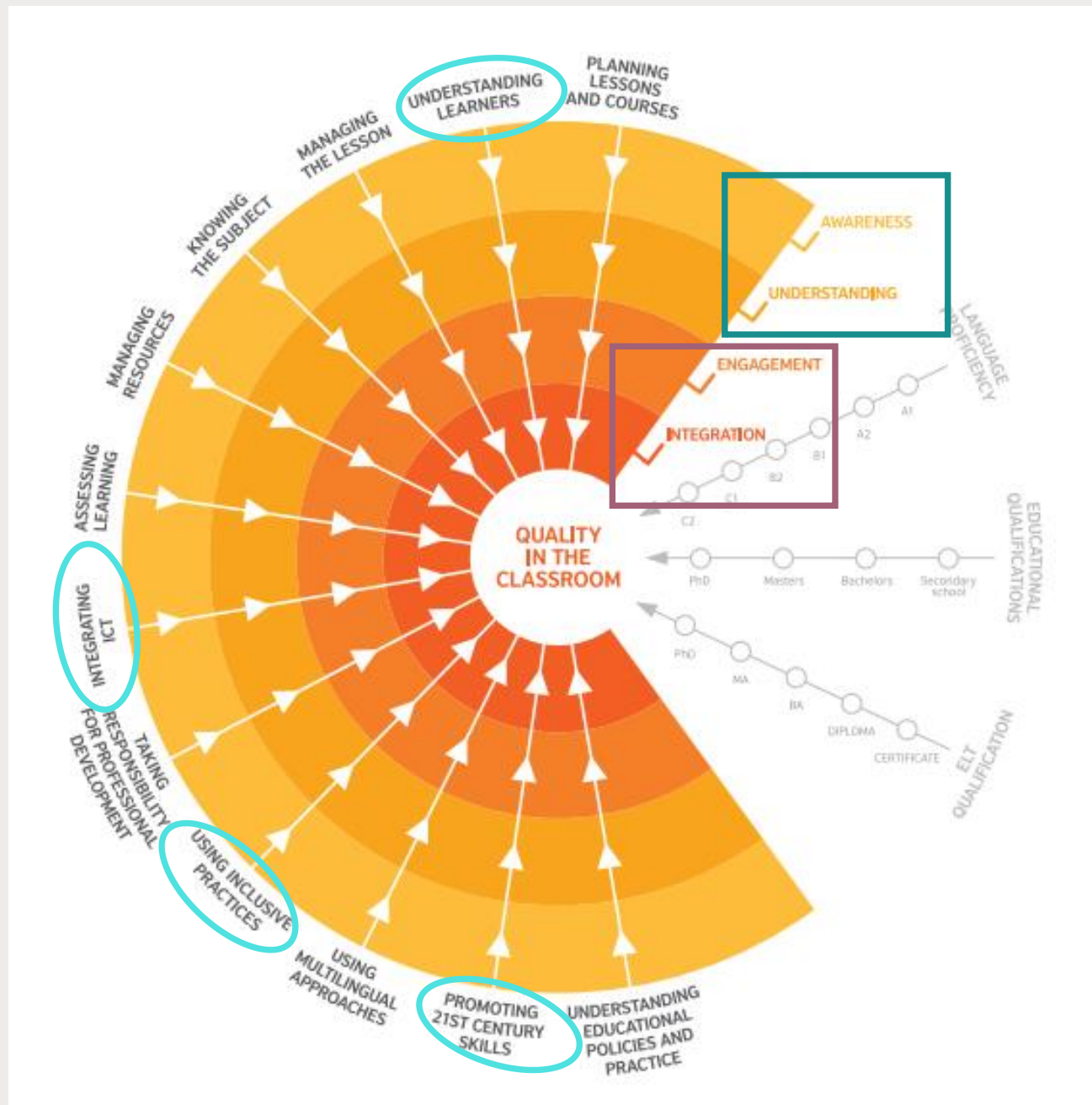
Thank you for your attention
Merci pour votre attention

"No educational system is better than its teachers"

lucia.deanna@uniroma4.it
marzia.mazzer@uniroma4.it

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